

# Snapshot



**St Oswald's  
Hospice**

Autumn | Winter 2023  
News and update

## Remembering Jackie...

**Jackie was a larger-than-life member of our Focus on Living Ladies' Exercise Group, which she attended for several years after being diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.**

But as our Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Carole Taylor, remembers, it took a while for Jackie to fully embrace the group's support. She said:

**"When Jackie was referred to us, she was angry about her prognosis and did not speak for the first few weeks."**

The mum-of-one was understandably struggling with the complex emotions around her diagnosis, compounded by having to leave her job as a paediatric A&E nurse. But as the weeks passed, Jackie found comfort in being with women in a similar situation and she started making friends and joining in.

Carole also recognised Jackie's perceived loss of purpose and began giving her jobs, such as serving tea and coffee and helping new group members settle in. Here, Jackie thrived.

The group of women bonded in and out of their weekly sessions, helped by Jackie who set up a WhatsApp Group so that those who wanted to could keep in touch.

Carole recalls one week the Ladies' Group were talking about bucket lists and she overheard Jackie mention she wanted to learn the Haka – the ceremonial Māori war dance gifted to the All Blacks rugby team. Carole decided to speak to Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club, who put her in touch with two players from New Zealand.

The players visited the Ladies' Group and described a Haka that represents the journey into the afterlife. They taught the group some of the words and moves, after which Carole reveals the women asked if they could perform their Haka in the hospice garden.

**"Jackie and the ladies did their Haka in front of staff and volunteers. It was such a spiritual and moving experience."**

Death and dying are never too far from the women's minds, including Jackie, whose first thought was always how her beloved son, Daniel - who was still in his 20s - would cope without her.

As a result, Jackie worked with Carole to create a booklet that detailed important information such as wishes around end-of-life care, funeral arrangements and even information on pets (Jackie was the devoted owner of dog, Sebastian). The booklet is now offered to everyone who attends the Focus on Living Centre and features a special dedication to Jackie and Daniel on its opening page.

Sadly, Jackie died this summer leaving a void in all our hearts.

Asked how Carole will remember the former nurse, she replied:

**"I'll remember someone strong, funny and caring. Jackie made time for everyone. She never lost that nursing instinct."**

**"I'll also remember her as the 'Tattoo Lady'. Jackie got a new tattoo every time something significant happened in her life. You could point to any one and she'd tell you a story about it."**

This Tattoo Lady clearly left an indelible mark on everyone she met.

We will be remembering Jackie and all of the other people who have touched our lives at St Oswald's Hospice, by lighting a candle in their memory as part of our Light up a Life campaign. If you would like to remember someone special by dedicating a light in their memory, you can find out more in the flyer we have enclosed or by visiting [www.stoswaldsuk.org/light-up-a-life](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org/light-up-a-life)



**Jackie (right) with Carole.**



## Children and Young Adults Kitchen looks a treat!

Our children and young adults have been cooking up a storm in their newly refurbished kitchen.

Thanks to a generous donation, the kitchen has been fully transformed into a modern and accessible space – helping us to deliver ‘Quality time for everyone.’

It was great to see some of our children and young adults, Aaron, Caoimhe, Erin and Leroy, enjoying the new space.

Of course, they had to mark the opening with some baking – although we think most of the flour landed on Lauren, one of our Activity Coordinators!

Special thanks go to National Building & Maintenance Solutions (NBMS), which carried out the refurbishment work and donated the interactive media wall and coloured spotlights.

The refurbishment was made possible after proceeds from the auction of Banksy’s artwork, Game Changer, was gifted to Southampton Hospitals Charity in May 2020.

The funds are currently being distributed throughout the UK to benefit the wider community of healthcare providers and charities that enhance the care and treatment provided by the NHS.

“The new kitchen is a fantastic addition to the Children and Young Adults Service and provides a safe and modern environment for our children, young adults, families, staff and volunteers to use.

“They can enjoy activities such as cooking and baking, while added interactive and sensory experiences are provided by the media wall and lights.”

Holly Smith, Acting Matron of our Children and Young Adults Service



## Fresh new shower

Patients staying on our Adult Inpatient Unit can now enjoy a fresh experience, thanks to our sparkling new shower room.

The shower room has been made possible following a generous donation from P&G – one of our long-standing supporters.

Anne Tuck, Matron of our Adult Inpatient Unit, explained the difference the shower space makes to patients...

“It’s really important that we have a shower room for our patients – as some of them haven’t been able to enjoy a shower at home. It can be uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe for our patients to wash while coping with difficult physical problems. Yet patients tell us that maintaining their appearance and staying fresh and clean can have a significant impact on their wellbeing and quality of life.

“Thanks to this new shower space, we can help our patients relax and enjoy the experience of showering – something that we take for granted each day. They can even have music playing while they shower and sing along to their favourite songs! This new facility gives our patients space and time to relax and unwind, which is so important.”





# Bereavement café nurtures peer support and friendship

**This summer, the bereavement support team have been holding a drop-in café for anyone grieving.**

The bereavement café is fortnightly, two-hour sessions where people can meet others in a similar situation, talk about their loved ones and share how they are feeling over a cuppa and a biscuit or two.

Brenda Clayton, Bereavement Support Co-ordinator, has led the café. She said:

**“The team is really proud of how the bereavement café has gone. We’ve had a good amount of people at each session and everyone has got a lot out of sharing their stories.**

**“My colleagues and I have been on hand to provide support if needed, but we’ve found that the conversations among participants have flowed freely every time.”**

**“We know that grief is unique to everyone but by talking to others, it can help you understand your own journey better.”**

Feedback from the café has been overwhelmingly positive with attendees appreciating the opportunity to meet and chat with new friends. With the success of this summer's café, we're hoping to hold similar sessions next spring, as the benefits are clear to see.



## Focus on research...

At St Oswald's Hospice we're committed to improving the care and quality of life of our patients and their families through ongoing research, innovation, service transformation and improvement. We're proud of the work our research team do and we wanted to introduce you to one of the team...

### Meet Dr Jo Elverson...

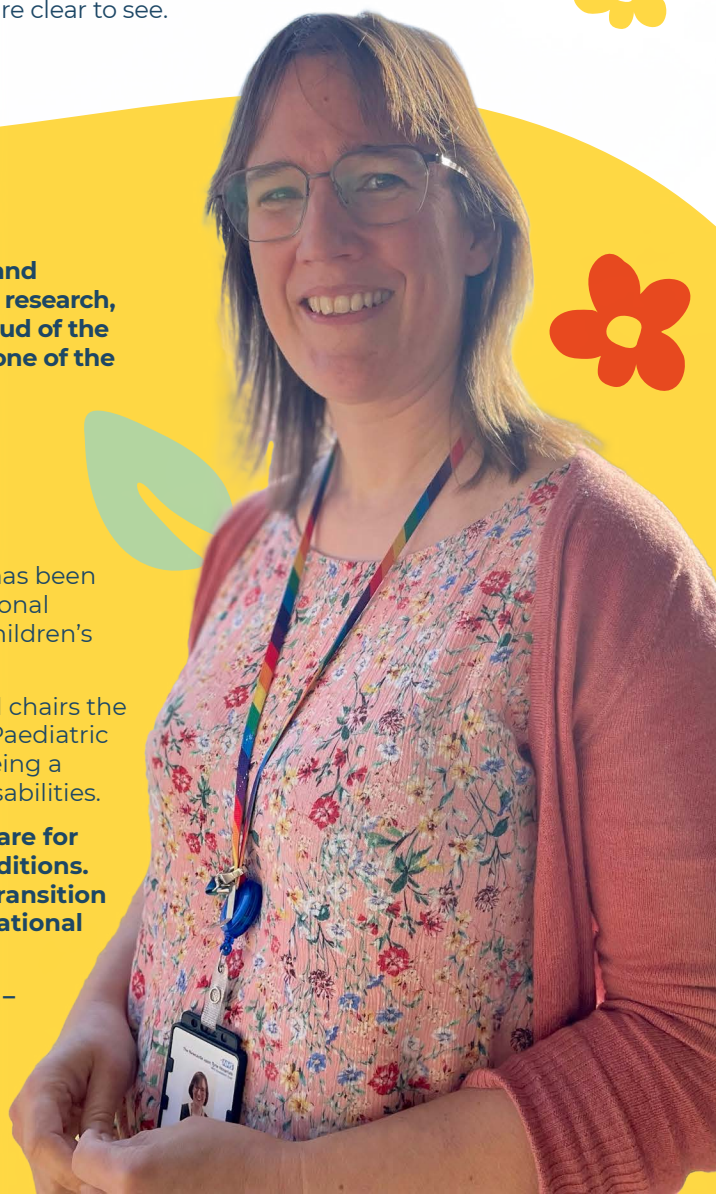
#### Consultant in Palliative Medicine

Jo is one of our amazing Consultants in Palliative Medicine and has been taking care of our patients since 2017. Jo also works with the regional Children's Palliative Care Service (CHIPS) based in Great North Children's Hospital.

Alongside her clinical role, Jo takes an active part in research and chairs the APM/APPM (Association for Palliative Medicine / Association for Paediatric Palliative Medicine) Transition and Young Adult Group, as well being a Trustee of the charity, Palliative Care for People with Learning Disabilities.

**“In my research role, I'm particularly interested in improving care for children and young adults with complex and life-limiting conditions. I've been involved with lots of brilliant initiatives to improve transition between children's and adult services at local, regional and national level.**

**“It's been fantastic to be part of the CoPPAR network recently – this has been a project bringing together children's palliative care services across the UK to support each other to develop and collaborate on research that makes a real difference to children and families.”**



# Portraits with purpose

We're excited to announce that we've partnered with local artist, Leanne Pearce, on an exciting project that will explore death and grief in the most beautiful and unique way.

Portraits with Purpose will see Leanne work with individuals and families connected to St Oswald's Hospice to create 12 oil paintings to show the continuing bonds families have with a loved one after they die.

The project will look to encourage more conversations about death and dying, while shining a light on the quality care we provide for everyone.

There will be a special exhibition of the artworks in Spring/Summer 2024, after which the paintings will be gifted to the families.



## Retail round up Celebrating all things second-hand!

It was a busy month as our retail team celebrated all things second-hand across **'Sustainable September'**. The annual campaign saw staff, volunteers and supporters come together to highlight why people should be first in line to shop second-hand. Our shops were a hub of creativity with pop-up make and mend desks, interactive window displays and dresses designed from plastic bottles. We even had a whole clothing collection that was upcycled and up for sale!

Falling in love with pre-loved didn't stop there as we launched the first instalment of our Sustainable Styling Sessions. Heading over to our Posh Frocks shop in Whitley Bay, we spent the morning with Abbie to see whether said 'yes!' to the (pre-loved) wedding dress!

September really was a month of celebrating as we highlighted how easy it is to look good, feel good and do good when shopping and donating at St Oswald's Hospice.



## New shop opening!

We are so excited to announce the opening of our newest shop in Blyth this Autumn!

Located on Albion Retail Park, Blyth will be our 24th shop and we can't wait to offer local residents the opportunity to re-cycle, re-use and re-love with St Oswald's Hospice.

To bring our Blyth shop to life, we knew we needed a terrific team in place. Meet Louise Tutte, who joins the team as Shop Manager, having already managed our locations in North Shields and Whitley Bay. Based in Blyth, Louise brings with her local knowledge and an expert understanding of all things charity retail.

Louise said:

**"As a resident of Blyth I am so excited to be part of the team that will be bringing a little of the St Oswald's Hospice magic to an area where we have never had a store before. As a manager I am most looking forward to meeting new staff and volunteers and seeing how the people of Blyth react to our sustainable superstore!"**

We're now looking for a fantastic team of volunteers! Whether you see yourself creatively dressing windows, sorting and preparing stock, or meeting customers behind the till, we'd love to hear from you! Email [volunteer@stoswaldsuk.org](mailto:volunteer@stoswaldsuk.org) to register your interest.

**See you in Blyth soon everyone!**

light up  
a life



Celebrate the life of a loved one this winter.

See enclosed leaflet or visit [www.stoswaldsuk.org/light-up-a-life](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org/light-up-a-life)

The **big** Car Raffle

Drawn 25th  
November

Enter on  
our website

[www.stoswaldsuk.org/big-car-raffle](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org/big-car-raffle)  
or at any of our charity shops.



Thank  
you!

Thank you for being part of the St Oswald's Family and supporting our patients and their families this year. We hope you enjoyed reading about all the things that have been made possible, thanks to your support.

0191 246 9123 | [supportercare@stoswaldsuk.org](mailto:supportercare@stoswaldsuk.org)  
[www.stoswaldsuk.org](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org)

St Oswald's Hospice, Regent Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1EE. Reg Charity No. 503396

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