

# The difference you made in 2022

Whittington  
Health Charity



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## About Whittington Health Charity

Whittington Health Charity is the dedicated charity for Whittington Health NHS Trust. We enhance the quality of care and improve the experiences of patients and staff by funding projects that go above and beyond what the NHS is able to provide.

Everything we do has a positive impact on staff, patients and their families. Big or small, we make the difference with better equipment, facilities, training, research and improved patient and staff wellbeing.

## Our Reach

Our work makes a difference to over 500,000 people across north London. We're proud to serve our diverse local communities, whether they be patients and their families or our staff. We believe that everybody has a right to the very best care in the very best facilities.





## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic took a significant toll on NHS staff across the country and Whittington Health was severely impacted. During 2020 and 2021, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our supporters, we were able to fund an extensive range of staff wellbeing-focused projects, with the aim of keeping our staff safe and equipped to provide the very best care to patients.

In 2022, we placed a greater emphasis on directly patient-focused projects and in this report, you will read about some of the amazing work that was enabled through charitable donations, such as creative art projects to improve patient experiences and state-of-the-art equipment allowing more patients to receive treatment.

The year also saw us continue to support our staff. The Charity funded a comprehensive programme of mental health support, primarily delivered by clinical psychologists, with the aim of ensuring that patient care was unaffected by the toll that the pandemic had taken upon frontline health workers.

If you would like more information on the work that we do or you'd like to get involved with the Charity, our contact details are at the end of the report.

**Thank you  
for helping  
us to make a  
difference. We  
couldn't do it  
without you.**





## 2022 in numbers

- **£425,000 in new grants approved**
- **70 new projects funded**
- **39 different teams and departments supported**
  - With projects delivered at Whittington Hospital and within our local communities of Islington, Haringey and beyond
- **312 hours of classical music**
  - Ward visits from professional musicians played a key role in lifting the spirits of patients in the hospital
- **21 outings for young people at Simmons House**
  - Some children will spend the whole year in secure care to receive mental health treatment; funding trips and activities during term breaks had a hugely beneficial impact on their wellbeing
- **18,200 interactions with community-designed artwork**
  - 350 children each week benefitting from an environment at Tynemouth Road Community Health Centre specifically tailored to their needs
- **1,000+ staff members accessed mental health support**
  - Supporting the wellbeing of staff ensures that they are best-equipped to focus on delivering outstanding care to patients





When receiving difficult news, a comfortable, welcoming and private space is essential

## Every year, more than 4,000 babies are born under the care of Whittington Health.

At various stages in their pregnancy, expectant mothers visit Whittington Hospital for antenatal screening.

This includes a general check on the baby's health, as well as screening for infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B, and conditions such as sickle cell disease and thalassaemia.

Some mothers and families will have to receive difficult news; it might be that they have had a miscarriage, or that their unborn child has a condition such as Down's syndrome or a life-limiting illness.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our supporters, we have been able to convert an

unwelcoming clinical space into a safe, private and comfortable counselling room, with artwork, greenery, sofas, a coffee machine and soft lighting.

It gives patients the chance to process the information that they've been given in their own time, with privacy, and without the distraction of a bustling, harsh clinical environment.

"I know that women and families have appreciated the privacy it has offered within a calming environment. I have visibly seen their body language change by becoming more relaxed and more receptive to information."



## **Working with local artists and schools in east Haringey to turn a community health centre into a vibrant, fun and welcoming space.**

Tynemouth Road Community Health Centre is a new specialist hub, providing care and health assessments to children from across Haringey.

More than 350 children visit the Centre each week to access a range of services; it might be an assessment to see if a child requires support with their speech and language development, or it might be the first of many appointments to treat a child who's experiencing pain when they walk or run.

The Centre also supports children with special educational needs and disabilities; children who require regular specialist support and care and for whom the environment in which they're treated plays a huge part in how they feel about their regular visits.

In 2022, thanks to the support of our donors, the Charity was able to fund transformational artwork across the Centre.

Local artists led workshops in local schools to create whole-wall artwork that provides for inviting and fun journeys through the Centre.

What could have been a sterile and potentially threatening environment for children already anxious about their visit is, thanks to the support of our donors, now a place that allows them to feel relaxed and safe, regardless of whether it's a one-off visit, or somewhere that they'll visit hundreds of times in their childhood.



## Dealing with the lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Charity's single largest financial commitment over the past three years has been the provision of mental health support to Whittington Health staff, thousands of whom experienced significant trauma as a result of caring for patients through the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the pandemic progressed, our priorities shifted away from lessening the immediate impacts – such as providing basic items like cold drinking water and skin creams to staff who were spending dozens of hours in PPE clothing – to addressing some of the more complex and long-lasting effects of the pandemic.

Donor support allowed us to establish a staff psychological support programme, the main component of which was the employment of clinical psychologists.

Through a combination of group therapy sessions, peer-to-peer counselling, informal drop-ins, family bereavement conversations and even interactive theatre performances, the programme has since provided support to more than 2,500 Whittington Health staff members since it was created.

The nature of the support offered in 2022 differed somewhat from during the peaks of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, but the demand placed upon the clinical psychologists remained significant. More than 1,000 members of staff accessed psychological support, funded entirely by charitable donations.

The therapy provided by clinical psychologists such as Sue and Njinga (pictured below), played a crucial role in ensuring that staff at Whittington Health retained the capacity and ability to continue to provide the very best care to patients.

"I felt relieved, lighter - and that I could move forward almost immediately.

I may never have sought help if I had to go through a long referral process or seek external help.

I'm very aware that had I not had this intervention locally, free of charge and promptly, I may have suffered a long-term impact on my mental health."

**Senior Nurse, Whittington Health**



## State-of-the-art technology and equipment.

Technology can transform patient outcomes and experiences. Charitable donations enable us to purchase state-of-the-art, innovative equipment: equipment that cannot be bought with NHS-funds alone.

**In 2022, the Charity helped fund the purchase of two Innowalk Pro machines** for the Richard Cloudesley School, which is a specialist school in Islington attended by 80 pupils aged 2-19 years with physical disabilities and additional sensory needs.

The state-of-the-art robotic machines allow children with cerebral palsy to exercise in a way that simply isn't possible without such equipment. **Nearly 90% of children with cerebral palsy at the school reported that their quality of life was improved** after six months of using the machines.

**Some medical conditions require regular injections. For children, this can be a painful, traumatic and anxiety-inducing experience.**

In response, we purchased dozens of Buzzy devices, which are small, reusable devices that lessen the pain of an injection by using vibrations and skin cooling. The device is specially designed for young children who experience fear, pain and distress around blood sampling, injections and vaccinations.

One child who benefitted was Grace\*, a three-year-old with Severe Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. Grace needs weekly injections – and will need this treatment for the rest of her life. Each injection is painful. Understandably, Grace was getting increasingly anxious ahead of each injection.

By all but eliminating the pain of an injection, the Buzzy device has made a huge difference to Grace's life – and by purchasing so many of these devices, we've been able to ensure that every child receiving regular injections can benefit.



Innowalk Pro machine  
(image courtesy of madeformovement.com)

**We're helping to improve patient safety by funding training with advanced virtual reality (VR) headsets.** We've bought six headsets, which allow doctors and nurses to acquire skills through simulation-based practice scenarios – with no risk or fear of harming a real-life patient.

**Beyond the obvious benefit of real patients not being hurt, the positives of VR training are numerous:**

- Improve patient safety and better outcomes for patients
- Cost-effective and time-efficient – meaning staff can spend less time away from their patients
- VR simulations are scalable, replicable, and completely immersive
- Easily accessible: can be used anywhere, anytime to integrate simulation with everyday practice
- More engaging than traditional education methods, with learners remembering acquired skills for longer

\*Grace's name has been changed to protect her privacy



## Giving hope to children like Zac, aged 10, who stammer.

Established in 1993, the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering (MPC) is a world-renowned specialist speech and language therapy centre that delivers expert assessments and individually-tailored therapy to children, young people and adults who stammer. MPC has provided hope to thousands of these children and adults throughout the UK and further afield with their national helpline and therapy services.

Ten-year-old Zac had a severe stammer that was having a damaging effect on his confidence, his ability to communicate and his quality of life. He avoided speaking to minimise his stammering, causing him to do poorly in school, and sadly chose to avoid doing activities and other things he was interested in because he might stammer.

**"At school, I made presentations as short as possible, but I kind of wanted to speak for a long time."**

The Michael Palin Centre, as part of Whittington Health NHS Trust, is committed to making each person feel listened to, understood and respected, and is determined to help improve their communication skills and enable them to achieve their goals in life.

Zac was referred to MPC by his local therapist in Wiltshire. Specialist stammering therapy was not available in his area, so Zac's therapist turned to MPC.

**Around one in 12 children under the age of 12 in the UK will have a stammer at some point. Currently, there are around 150,000 children and young people living in the UK who have a persistent stammer.**

It was agreed with Zac and his mother that he would benefit from working at an intensive level, from meeting other children who stammer, from becoming more desensitised about stammering and addressing his increasing levels of avoidance. Such therapy was not available to Zac in his locality, so he attended MPC. At the beginning of his therapy, Zac said that his hope was 'to not be held back - to say what I want.'

Zac and his mother attended a two-week intensive group therapy course and continued to access support from MPC over the subsequent year. He's made significant progress through his therapy sessions.

**"When I'm speaking, I use more eye contact and hand gestures to show what I'm saying so the other person is more interested in what I'm saying. It makes me feel happier and other people are listening to me more".**

And Zac's mum has a strong sense of real excitement for Zac's future: "it will shape the man he will become".

**Thanks to support from the Charity, the Michael Palin Centre is able to employ three additional therapists, meaning more children like Zac can be given the best possible start in life.**

# Thank you for your support.

Whittington Health Charity is the working name of The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust Charitable Funds.

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