



Volume 3 Issue 1 26 January 2024

# CUH Volunteers' Voice

## New Year, New You?

For many of us the start of a new year can be the impetus needed to look at ways to improve our wellbeing, learn a new skill or look for a new challenge.

If you're mulling over different options, here are a few things you may like to consider:

**Eating and drinking well:** Diet always plays a large part in wellbeing; eating healthily and with the right portion size can help you feel better, stop you gaining weight and lower your risks of getting some diseases.

If you are interested in losing weight, there are a number of weight management plans available including a free NHS Weight Loss Plan which you may find helpful. The app is available from the App Store or Google Play. You may of course prefer to go it alone. Below are a few tips to help:



- Eat regular meals
- Aim for at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- Include wholegrain foods with each meal
- Reduce saturated fat intake and replace with unsaturated fat
- Reduce salt intake to less than 6g per day - there are high levels of salt in many foods including cheese, prawns, and ham
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, recommended as 2.5 litres per day for men and 2 litres per day for women
- Cut down on alcohol intake. It is recommended to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week. This is the equivalent 6 medium glasses of wine or 6 pints of 4% beer ([www.nhs.uk/better-health](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health)).



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## Getting active

When the weather is cold, wet, and windy it can be tempting to just snuggle down on the sofa with a hot chocolate and the TV remote. However, being active every day can really help your physical and mental health. The good news is that it doesn't even need to be very much activity, for instance just one minute of power walking counts as exercise. It is recommended that adults do 20-30 minutes exercise a day.

If the weather is foul, there are lots of home workout videos available online, all you need to do is clear some space and get moving. If this is not for you, just doing some vigorous (but careful!) dusting or pushing the vacuum cleaner around your home can also help get your heart rate pumping.

In the better weather, it is great to get outside in the open air. In this area we are so lucky to have access to some great countryside and there are many paths and trails to be followed. There are walking groups that you can join or you may prefer to walk with friends, following a trail or using an app, for example the Active 10 app. If you would like to take up running, having a running partner can be really motivational. If no one is keen to join you, then a running club or the Couch to 5K app could be the answer.



Often there are 'come and try it' sessions held - just look out for these in your local area. Of course as a volunteer you can join the onsite sport and leisure centre, the Frank Lee Centre. There are a number of different membership options, just go over to see them when you're next onsite or look at their website [www.frankleecentre.co.uk](http://www.frankleecentre.co.uk).

## Rest and sleep well

The importance of sleep for wellbeing has now been recognised and with an adult needing around 7-9 hours sleep per night, many of us are just not getting enough. Just one night's interrupted sleep can have a negative impact on concentration levels, irritability and forgetfulness but longer term sleep debt can impact on physical health, including on your immune system making you more susceptible to infection.

If you struggle to sleep, the Sleep Charity [www.thesleepcharity.org.uk](http://www.thesleepcharity.org.uk) has information which you may find helpful. There are trained sleep advisors available with further guidance on the National Sleep Helpline on 03303 530 541. Below are some tips on sleeping well:

- Ensure your bedroom is cool, dark and quiet
- Avoid screen time for at least an hour before bed
- Find ways to relax before bed, for example reading, warm bath, stretching or yoga
- It is claimed that lavender, camomile and Scot's pine help promote sleep



## Mental wellbeing

As well as exercise being good for both your physical and mental health if you join a group or team it can be a great way of meeting new people and reducing loneliness. You may also like to take up a new hobby, such as a painting, craft, genealogy, model building or even star gazing; search for clubs and groups to help get you started on all of these.



To help manage and improve your mental wellbeing, the Occupational Health team have produced a small publication with lots of tips and techniques. A free weekly drop-in meditation session is held on Monday's in Rosie Seminar room 2 from 12.15-12.45 and has proved popular.

## Here's how some of our team relax and recharge:

### Alex:

- Getting out for a walk in the fresh air – there's nothing quite like it for clearing your head, and one of my favourite things about Cambridge is how much green space there is to explore nearby
- Curling up with a good book and a cuppa – especially if it's a rainy day outside
- Cooking – whether I'm trying a new recipe for dinner or practicing my cake baking skills, getting creative in the kitchen (especially with some good tunes on in the background!) is a great way to unwind after a long day - and you have something tasty to enjoy at the end
- Doing things with my hands – from doodling to making jewellery, creative activities really help me take my mind off things (and you don't have to be very good at them to find them fun and satisfying –much of the pleasure is in the process!)
- Having a nice hot shower – sometimes it's the simple things that really make a difference!



### Kristina:

- Listening to music (any type)
- Go for long walks with the people that I enjoy being with
- Watch movies/series
- Yoga

### Jane:

- Reading a good book
- Wild swimming, especially in winter when the cold water makes your skin feel 'zingy'. Its also a fantastic way to meet new people
- Volunteering at my local care home with my PAT dog Flossy

## Free NHS health checks

As part of the Trust's commitment to support our staff and keep them well, there are additional NHS health check clinics available for CUH staff and volunteers.

These clinics - run by Healthy You - will complement the regular sessions held on the last Wednesday of each month at Occupational Health and Wellbeing.



The additional health check clinics will be held at OH on:

- Wednesday 07 February
- Wednesday 13 March

The NHS Health Check covers various aspects of your general health, including height, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels. You are eligible for an NHS Health Check every 5 years. Learn more about eligibility criteria and the purpose of an NHS Health Check [here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/what-is-an-nhs-health-check/):

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### What to Expect:

- 20-30-minute appointment with the Healthy You team at Occupational Health
- Immediate results shared with your GP.
- Valuable advice on improving your health.
- Assistance in getting specialist support if needed.

**Appointments:** Booking is now open!

To book your **FREE NHS Health Check** appointment, you can:

**Text:** HEALTHYU to 60777 **Call:** 0333 005 0093 **Visit** [www.healthyyou.org.uk](http://www.healthyyou.org.uk)

## Rising cases of flu

There has a significant rise in the number of flu cases in our hospitals and they are expected to further increase over the next few weeks.

Please ensure you practice effective hand hygiene and if feeling unwell on your usual volunteer day, please concentrate on getting better and don't come in for your shift.

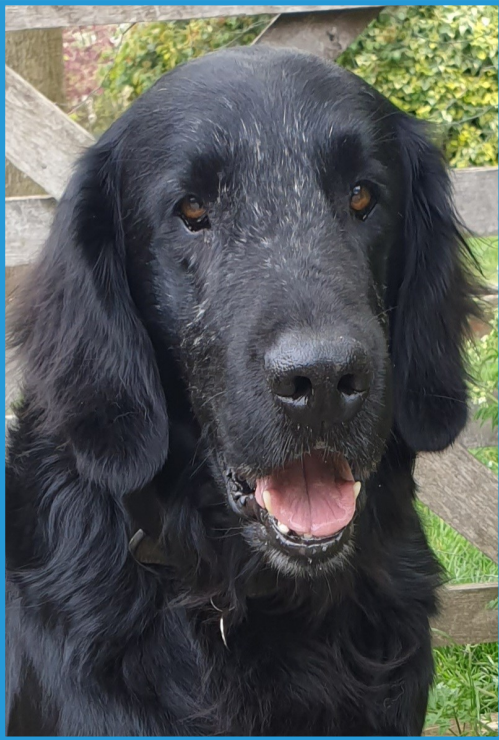
### Hand-washing technique with soap and water





## Saying goodbye to two Pets As Therapy Dogs

It has been a tough start to the 2024 for our volunteer PAT community, with two of our long-standing dog volunteers no longer able to volunteer.



The very handsome flat coated retriever Baloo was diagnosed with cancer in December 2023 and sadly passed away on 8 January. His owner, Charles, was an already established volunteer with Baloo joining the CUH team in November 2019. Spending his time visiting wards, Baloo brought a smile to the faces of our patients, from the young to the elderly as well as many staff.

In October 2022 Charles and Baloo helped to launch an Allied Health Professional therapy project using PAT dogs to motivate and encourage patients on the Lewin Rehab ward to engage in their physiotherapy. Baloo was such a gorgeous, calm and kind dog and an absolute asset to the team, always ready to roll over and have a tummy rub. He is of course greatly missed by his owner Charles, the Voluntary Services team as well as the many staff and patients who had the pleasure of meeting him.

Lisa and her labradoodle Poppy only managed a couple of shifts before the pandemic but since returning made an enormous impact on patients and staff alike. Some of you may even recognise Lisa and her PAT dog Poppy from their recent media stardom when they helped encourage a young patient, Evie, who was seriously ill, to relearn how to walk. Along with the paediatric physiotherapy team, Lisa and Poppy made such a huge impact that Evie was able to go home. Sadly just before Christmas Poppy was diagnosed with thyroid cancer and on her return from Christmas break she has had to retire. Poppy is awaiting surgery and Lisa and her family remain hopeful she will recover well.

We send our very best wishes and thanks to Charles and Lisa for introducing their gentlest of giants to CUH and bringing so much joy to us all.



## A few updates....

**A GREAT  
PLACE TO  
VOLUNTEER**

Voluntary Services  
Box 214  
Cambridge University NHS Foundation Trust  
Hills Road  
Cambridge CB2 0QQ

Phone: 01223 586616  
E-mail: [cuh.volunteer@nhs.net](mailto:cuh.volunteer@nhs.net)  
[www.volunteering.cuh.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.cuh.org.uk)

**CUH Volunteers**

**We're on the web!**  
**[www.volunteering.cuh.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.cuh.org.uk)**

### You Made a Difference

Many congratulations go to Joe and his PAT dog Alfie who have been nominated for a You Made a Difference award this month. The nomination highlighted the difference that having a dog to pet during the lunch break really helps boost the mood of staff. Thank you and well done Joe and Alfie



### We would love to hear from you

Whether you've been on a big or even small adventure, taken up a new hobby, maybe have an interest you're passionate about and want to share, or have taken some lovely photos, it would be wonderful to hear from you. Articles should be around 300-400 words long and if sending us photos, please let us know what they are of. Just send them to [cuh.volunteer@nhs.net](mailto:cuh.volunteer@nhs.net) with the 'Volunteer Voice' as the subject line.

We look forward to hearing from you!

### It's the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch Weekend

It's that time of the year again when we spend an hour looking out of a window counting birds for the RSPB and there's still time to sign-up to take part. Just follow the link [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk) and you'll have all the information at your fingertips. Happy Counting!



### Don't suffer in silence

Health Assured, our employee assistance programme is there to help 24 hours a day, just give them a call on 0800 028 0199. They have a brand new app called Wisdom. Wisdom is available on mobile, tablet, and desktop to ensure continuity throughout. Explore the app or browse on your computer and find out what works for you.

Download the app today on the Apple App Store or Google Play or [access via the Wisdom website](#)



Once you have opened Wisdom, use the same organisation code, **MHA140194**, to access this new app. Please note, you will need to create a new account with an email address and password.