

# Staying connected

- updates, latest blogs, opportunities  
and support from the Academy team

Edition 5, 17th June

## Updates from the team

### "Hello" from Roger Stevens, Chairman of NASS Portsmouth



Hi there, my name is Roger Stevens and I live in Waterlooville, just north of Portsmouth. My working life was varied and eventful, and after a 31-year long career with the Royal Naval Supply and Transport (RNSTS) organisation, I was medically retired in 2013.

I have always been a busy and active person, despite suffering from inherited arthritic problems with my legs and feet (I had two major reconstructive operations before I was 11). I was a Scout Leader for 28 years, I've run church youth clubs in Bath and Havant, played football for local league sides (not very good ones!), qualified as a youth air gun Instructor for the National Small Bore Rifle Association, and for my sins, I've been an avid Pompey fan since the mid-70's.

I was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) in 1992; for those not familiar with AS, it's a chronic inflammatory arthritic condition that often affects the spine and other areas of the body. Following the diagnosis, I joined the Portsmouth branch of [NASS, the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society](#). NASS branches organise weekly local physiotherapist-led hydrotherapy and gym exercise sessions.

Joining NASS Portsmouth was a move that genuinely changed my life, giving me a focus and a way to tackle my AS, and in 2009/10 I became branch chairman. Since then, the branch has more than doubled in size, with Portsmouth now being the largest NASS branch in the country. The advanced Anti-TNF medication (medicine that helps to stop inflammation) has really helped my mobility, but I still have other MSK (Musculoskeletal) challenges.

I am currently the AS representative on the new British Society for Rheumatology (BSR) [National Early Inflammatory Arthritis Audit \(NEIAA\)](#) working group, and Vice-Chairman for the audit's Patient Panel. I am also a volunteer at Queen Alexandra Hospital (providing the patient viewpoint during AS daytime courses) and care for both my parents at home too.

I know there may be some reading this who are dealing with chronic inflammatory arthritic conditions during lockdown, or know some who is, so [I've written a blog about my personal experience](#) and the changes that have been made to NASS services. Please take a look - I hope you enjoy it.

## 2019/20 Annual Report - what we've been up to over the past year



The end of 2019/20 (March) saw our Academy activity change massively, and like all NHS services, we had to pause most of our normal tasks as we adapted to new ways of working and supporting the Trust.

Our latest Annual Report showcases some of the Research and Improvement work from across the organisation over the past year in Research, Quality Improvement, Audit and Patient Engagement. [Take a look at the report here.](#)

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## Latest blogs



### **Blog: Finding new ways to manage Ankylosing Spondylitis during Covid-19**

Roger Stevens shares his experience of managing AS during Covid-19, and the difficulties of not being able to access normal physiotherapy in lockdown.

[Read Roger's blog](#)



### **Blog: Not waiting until this is all over - Paediatric remote consultations**

Alexa Gayter is a wife and mother of two, who has been supported by the Solent Paediatric team through remote consultation during Covid-19.

[Read Alexa's story](#)



### **Blog: Embracing Zoom and virtual connectivity**

Dr Sarah Williams normally avoids video calls, but in lockdown has had to adapt to using Zoom and has discovered the joy in virtual connectivity.

[Read about Sarah's experience](#)

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## Opportunities to get involved

### **Join the Side-by-Side interview panel**

At the end of June (exact date TBC) Carl Adams, Head of People Participation, and Colin Barnes, Head of Improvement, will be interviewing candidates for a new role in the Academy and we want you to be part of this process.

A new 'Quality Improvement Practitioner' will join the Academy to facilitate our Quality Improvement Programme, and we greatly want to know your thoughts on the candidates.

We invite you to join us on the interview panel which will be conducted through Zoom, and will involve asking the interviewee questions and sharing your feedback. You won't need to commit to a whole day or have previous experience of interviewing; we'll be able to support your involvement before, during and after the process.

If you're interested please let us know: [involvement@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:involvement@solent.nhs.uk)

## 2020 Virtual Conference - we need your help!

We were meant to have held the 2020 Annual Conference this week but sadly, Covid-19 had other ideas 😞 Nevertheless, we're looking into the possibility of holding a virtual conference instead 🎉 but we need your help to do this.

We want to know what **you** would like to hear, see and learn about during a Research and Improvement virtual conference. This could be anything: sharing skills, Covid-19 research, how our services have adjusted to this "new normal" - all ideas are welcome.

You can let us know your thoughts by commenting on our [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) posts, or just dropping us an email: [involvement@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:involvement@solent.nhs.uk). We look forward to hearing from you!

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## Something to make you smile...

Harry White cycled over 170 miles during May, to raise more than £1,300 for the Solent NHS Trust charity, [Beacon](#).

We think Harry is an absolute superstar, and if you'd like to show your support, his fundraising page is still live: [Harrys Big Bike Ride](#).

If you've seen something that you think would bring a smile to someone's face, let us know: [involvement@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:involvement@solent.nhs.uk)



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## Support available

For the latest information and guidance on Coronavirus from Solent NHS Trust [please visit the trust website](#).

### NHS Mental Health Triage Service

If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis and needs urgent mental health support, please get in contact with the **NHS Mental Health Triage Service** by calling 111 or visiting <http://111.nhs.uk>. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

### Active at Home

We know that lots of people might not have been able to stay as active as you usually are during lockdown, and that this can effect your physical and mental wellbeing. This is why [Move More Sheffield](#) have developed the '[Active at Home](#)' guide which aims to provide you with useful advice on how to keep fit and healthy in your own home.

The guide includes details of strength and balance exercises as well as ways to build activity into your day, [so take a look](#).



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