

People's sight matters



# Visibility

Autumn 2022 | Issue 20



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## Viewpoint

Robert Dufton,  
our chief executive

Welcome to our autumn issue of Visibility. At the charity, we're there every step of the way throughout the year as Moorfields and UCL continue to push boundaries. We're supporting pioneering work to provide the best possible patient care, all driven by the power of research and training to bring quicker diagnoses and new treatments. We're delighted, along with our partners, to be moving closer to starting construction of the new state-of-the-art centre for eye health - Oriel.



Robert Dufton, our chief executive, after completing the London marathon on 2 October 2022 fundraising for Moorfields Eye Charity

In this issue, we update on research and innovation we're funding including a PhD studentship which has brought a greater understanding of microphthalmia, a condition where babies are born with abnormally small eyes – improving outcomes and the lives of patients and their families.

We also share tips from Moorfields on taking care of your eyes to ensure you're looking after your valuable sight. Moorfields patient Emily tells her very personal story about her treatment at Moorfields and why eye tests are so important.

Join us, along with patients, staff and researchers on Sunday 5 March 2023 for Eye to Eye, our annual fundraising walk and show your thanks to Moorfields.

Thank you to all our supporters including everyone who gave to the Thunder microscope appeal and have fundraised in incredible ways – you're an inspiration to us all and creating a better future for people with sight loss. If you're able to support more regularly or give more, this will make a big difference to what's possible.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

## Oriel – a year of major milestones

We've taken another significant step forwards in realising Oriel – the centre for advancing eye health opening in 2027. Camden Council has generated the decision notice which grants full approval for our planning application, following the Greater London Authority approval of our plans earlier this year. This is the final step in the planning process.

Oriel is the joint initiative between Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Charity that would see Moorfields and UCL move from current premises at City Road and Bath Street to a new centre in St Pancras, in the London Borough of Camden. This centre for advancing eye care, research and education will deliver the integration and innovative conditions needed to continue Moorfields' and UCL's



**“Our Trustees are delighted to be supporting Moorfields Eye Hospital, UCL and Moorfields Eye Charity in creating Oriel, a state-of-the-art integrated treatment, research and education centre which will benefit those affected by eye health conditions on a global scale.”**

Philippa Charles, Director of The Garfield Weston Foundation

groundbreaking work, enabling the speedier delivery of new treatments and therapies for patients worldwide.

The Moorfields Full Business Case is currently going through an approval process by NHS

and government regulators and engagement has started with the local Camden community on the Oriel construction plan ahead of construction starting in 2023. These are very exciting milestones in bringing this state-of-the-art centre to London's Knowledge Quarter.

There will be increased opportunities to hear more in particular through exhibitions and site visits so do look out for these.

**“The key vision for Oriel is creating collaboration between the hospital and the university where we will bring academic colleagues together with research clinicians and really achieve something spectacular to benefit patients at Moorfields and beyond.”**

Kieran McDaid, Director of capital estates and major projects, Moorfields Eye Hospital

**Thank you to the generous donors who are helping to secure the future of eye health worldwide. If you'd like to find out how you can get involved, contact Rachel Jones on [rachel.jones310@nhs.net](mailto:rachel.jones310@nhs.net) or 020 7521 4610.**

Architectural impression, courtesy of AECOM / Penoyre & Prasad / White Arkitekter



## Redefining the future of glaucoma care

We're very pleased to fund research into glaucoma care led by Dr Hari Jayaram, Moorfields consultant. This project, funded by a charity innovation grant, evaluated a risk stratification tool to identify patients with glaucoma at higher risk of vision loss.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable sight loss in the

UK with over 1 million glaucoma related appointments yearly in the NHS. The timely monitoring of glaucoma care is critical to prevent further sight loss.

This study validated the GLAUC-STRAT-fast tool developed by UK and international specialists.

It concluded that this is a useful tool for risk stratification in

open angle glaucoma and ocular hypertension. Further research is needed to explore use of the tool for advanced glaucoma and in a general clinical context.

This research helps support the delivery of safe and timely glaucoma care, and has the potential to support efficiencies in the delivery of glaucoma care at a national level.

## Moorfields Stars congratulations

The winners of this year's Moorfields Stars, the annual awards scheme celebrating the achievements of staff and volunteers at Moorfields and UCL, were announced on 28 September. As sponsors of the event, we're very pleased to invest in rewarding this incredible team working together to have a far-reaching impact.

We support two awards for Charity Champion, and

Innovation and Improvement.

The Charity Champion award is an opportunity to thank staff and volunteers for their support whether through fundraising activities, being an ambassador for the charity, showcasing what we do or helping in another way. We're pleased to announce that our trustees awarded the Charity Champion award to Professor Mariya Moosajee for so generously giving her time and



going beyond expectations – we couldn't have achieved what we have without her.

We congratulate all the Moorfields Stars winners and nominees!

## Fundraising news



### Launch of Eye to Eye 2023

Eye to Eye, our annual fundraising walk, is returning on Sunday 5 March 2023. We would love for you to join us and show your thanks to and support of Moorfields for the care they give.

#### Every 15 minutes, someone in the UK starts to lose their sight

You can choose to walk 5 or 15 miles on routes that explore London and pass by the site of Oriel, the new integrated home for Moorfields Eye Hospital and the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology,

due to open in 2027. The walks start at Moorfields Eye Hospital and finish at the Richard Desmond Children's Eye Centre - children under 16 walk for free! It's a great opportunity to come

together with the Moorfields community: with patients, staff, researchers and charity supporters all walking to raise money to support the essential and life-changing work of Moorfields.

And for those who wish to fundraise closer to home, we have My Eye to Eye - our virtual run, ride or walk event, held on 4-5 March 2023.



**“Our son Jack was diagnosed with congenital glaucoma when he was seven months old. He has undergone surgery twice and has been so brave - we will need to manage his condition for the rest of his life. The staff at Moorfields have been brilliant throughout, from the doctors and nurses, through to the play specialists Jack loves to play with. That's why we walked Eye to Eye to fundraise for Moorfields.”**

Hayley, Jack's mum

Find out more at [moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk/eyetoeye](http://moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk/eyetoeye) Email: [moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net](mailto:moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net)

### Christmas raffle – win £5,000

Get your raffle tickets today for the chance to win the perfect Christmas present!

Tickets only cost £1 and the top prize is £5,000. There is also a chance to win a £125 M&S voucher in the Early Bird draw! All proceeds go towards supporting

Moorfields and UCL, raising vital funds for research breakthroughs, leading education, state-of-the-art equipment and innovative new approaches to service delivery, which benefit patients with sight loss at Moorfields and worldwide.



You can buy tickets online at [mecraffle.org](http://mecraffle.org)

You can also contact us on 020 7566 2565 or email [moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net](mailto:moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net)



## Understanding microphthalmia

We supported a PhD studentship which investigated the causes of microphthalmia. Microphthalmia is diagnosed when a baby is born with abnormally small eyes. This project, carried out by Dr Philippa Harding, under the supervision of Professor Mariya Moosajee, has increased our understanding of this eye condition, and has the potential to help develop new treatments and improve outcomes for patients at Moorfields and elsewhere.

If a baby's eyes do not form properly during pregnancy, they can be born with underdeveloped eye conditions.

### Other rare eye conditions

- Anophthalmia, the most severe condition, is when a baby is born without one or both eyes. It affects 1 in 100,000 babies.
- Coloboma is a cleft or a gap in one or multiple structures of the eye, due to the eyeball not fusing completely during pregnancy. It is the most common of the underdeveloped eye conditions.

These conditions can affect one or both eyes and may occur with other eye conditions, such as childhood cataracts. They can also be associated with other conditions where other organs and parts of the body have not formed correctly.

Microphthalmia is reported in up to 11% of childhood blindness worldwide, but there is no treatment, resulting in a profound life-long impact on both patient and family. Current management focuses on preserving and maximising any

existing vision and enhancing cosmetic appearance. During her project, Philippa examined and compared clinical and genetic information from a cohort of 50 patients with microphthalmia, anophthalmia or coloboma from 44 families.



**Microphthalmia affects 17 per 100,000 births**

## Advances in research

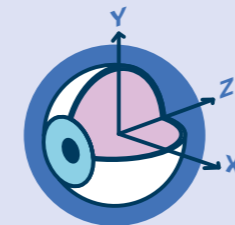
The key research discoveries and developments were:



increased rate of identifying genetic causes of microphthalmia from 8% to 33%. This increase in genetic diagnoses can inform genetic counselling and disease prognosis.



identified that the childhood cataract gene, EPHA2, is also involved in microphthalmia



established and optimised a 3D model of the developing human eye using stem cell technology and showed it capturing the stages of human eyes' development



derived a 3D model of microphthalmia with cells from a patient with a mutation in PAX6 gene and collected data to investigate how the early eye development is affected.

**“This project illuminated molecular mechanisms of microphthalmia pathogenesis using investigation of patients, as well as patient-derived laboratory models of early eye development. This robust microphthalmia model will enable further investigations into potential treatments that would encourage growth and development of the eye after birth.”**

**Professor Mariya Moosajee, consultant ophthalmologist at Moorfields, and professor of molecular ophthalmology at UCL**

## Achievements and next steps

Philippa was awarded her PhD which was supported by Moorfields Eye Charity in February 2022 and is continuing her academic career as a post-doctoral research associate at Kings College London.

**“One of the best opportunities in my PhD has been working directly with Moorfields Eye Hospital, including engaging with patients. This connection adds an extra dimension to the research I am doing as I can meet the people I am trying to help, and learn about what they want out of my research.”**

**Philippa Harding, Postdoctoral research associate**

Philippa's work has resulted in eight publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations at academic meetings and two best presentation prizes. In addition, she has participated in public engagement events at schools and for patients and families.



**Moorfields Eye Charity is also proud to support a Clinical Research Training Fellowship PhD student, Dr Daniel Jackson, who is continuing the advancement of research into eye development and microphthalmia in Professor Moosajee's lab.**

# Improving opportunities in the NHS for young people

We're funding a project encouraging young people from under-represented groups to volunteer at Moorfields Eye Hospital, to attract new talent from diverse backgrounds to the NHS.

Many young people face barriers to volunteering, especially those living with disabilities, those from ethnic minority groups and from less well-off families.

This initiative is reaching out to all young Londoners, including those from under-represented groups, to highlight volunteering opportunities at Moorfields and its network sites.

16–18 year-olds can join the Young Volunteers run by Friends of Moorfields and get involved in



supporting patients and our services. Younger people, age 11–16 years, will be able to join one of our young people's advisory groups: the clinical Young People's Forum or the Young Person's Advisory Group for Research.

The project will also develop new forms of volunteering at Moorfields to reduce barriers further, such as digital volunteering, where young volunteers support patients with accessing our digital services.

## Delivering workshops in schools

To encourage young people to get involved, the project team are delivering workshops either in-person or online at secondary schools near the Moorfields network sites.

The workshops will show young people how diverse the NHS workforce is, how many different professionals come together when looking after people with eye and vision problems, and which volunteering opportunities they can access.

**“We hope that we will be able to reach young people from all communities and show them that volunteering in the NHS can be flexible, a good use of their digital skills, and is, above all, immensely rewarding.”**

Liam Bays, project manager,  
Friends of Moorfields

## New careers at Moorfields

This project will provide young people with many of the skills they need to move onto more formal volunteering roles in the future, including at Moorfields. Working as Young Volunteers will give them the opportunity to start their own network with healthcare professionals and may inspire them to develop a career in the NHS.

It will also help spread awareness about eye health, such as:

- The importance of eye health in quality of life
- The access to NHS services, such as free eye tests
- The role of research in transforming the management of eye conditions.

Moorfields Eye Charity supports this project thanks to a grant from NHS Charities Together, match funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS).

# Tips on keeping your eyes healthy

We know how much you value your eyes. 1 in 5 people across the UK fear losing their sight over losing any other sense. The experts at Moorfields Eye Hospital have put together the following advice for looking after and loving your eyes.



**1 Know your drops - If you've been prescribed eye drops for your condition, remember to follow instructions on how and when to administer them**

Aiming eye drops at the correct angle or squeezing plastic containers can be difficult. By following instructions and asking for help if you need it, this can prevent further complications.



**2 Don't wash or shower with your contact lenses in, and ensure your lenses are purchased from a registered practitioner**

Avoid wearing contact lenses in the shower to reduce your risk of eye infection. And be sure to buy your contact lenses from an approved source.



**3 Eating a balanced diet and drinking alcohol in moderation will help to protect your peepers**

Eating a healthy balanced diet and drinking a moderate amount of alcohol can reduce your risk of developing common eye conditions. Eye friendly nutrients are found in many fruits and vegetables.



**4 Seek help to stop smoking - smoking causes damage to the eyes, which can be prevented**

If you quit smoking your risk of developing eye conditions such as age-related macular degeneration begins to decline.



**5 Take regular breaks from screens to help prevent eye strain and dry eyes**

Prolonged use can lead to blurred vision, eye fatigue, dry eyes and headaches. Set up your screen in the correct position, take the time to blink and make sure you have regular breaks.



**6 Have regular sight tests and keep up with your eye care appointments**

It is recommended that you have an eye examination once every two years. This will identify any problems with your vision and can prevent further sight loss. Did you know children aged under 16 qualify for a free NHS-funded eye test?

**An eye examination is an essential health check and helps to keep you and your eyes healthy. [www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/opticians](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/opticians)**

## Emily's journey with a sight condition

Emily, 27, has been a Moorfields patient since 2016. She was close to losing her sight, but thanks to the treatment she's received, her condition is now under control.



### When did you first notice a problem with your eyesight?

In university, at 21, I woke up one day with blurry eyesight and blood in my vision. I was admitted to hospital, and I'll never forget being told that I was just days away from totally losing my sight. I was diagnosed with intermediate uveitis and retinal vasculitis and referred to Moorfields.

### What was your experience like at Moorfields?

Over the past six years, I've received the most amazing care. Everyone, from the receptionists to the nurses and consultants, has been so reassuring, which has helped me get through this. I feel very safe in their hands. I still have floaters and my right eye has lost some vision, but thankfully, the treatments are helping to keep my condition stable. I know that everyone at Moorfields truly cares for their patients.

### What advice would you give someone who's newly diagnosed?

My best advice to someone going through a new eye diagnosis is to remember that feeling anxious about the future is completely normal. It's really important to share your feelings if you have people you're comfortable doing this with. I also found a fab uveitis Facebook page to chat to others who could relate and understand.

### Why is it important to get regular eye checks?

It's so important to get regular eye checks, regardless of age. I never went to get eye checks and it wasn't even something I knew about, but perhaps things may have been picked up before it got so bad.

**"If I could go back in time, I'd tell myself that this will be the hardest time of my life so far but eventually it would get better and, all in all, make me stronger."**

Emily Nott

Read more stories about patients at Moorfields in the new section on our website [moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk/peoplestories](http://moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk/peoplestories)



## What's new from our gifts in wills programme

We've launched a new free face-to-face will writing offer to sit alongside Bequeathed, our free online will writing scheme.

The Goodwill Partnership (TGP) is the largest provider of home visit solicitor written wills in England and Wales. You don't have to visit a solicitor. Instead, a trained TGP counsellor will come to your

home to take will instructions at a time convenient to you, during the day, evening or at the weekend. If you do decide to use either of our free will schemes to have

your will written, there's no obligation to include a gift to Moorfields Eye Charity in your will, but we will of course be delighted if you choose to do so.

For more information, please contact Jackie Birch on 020 521 4697 or email: [jacqueline.birch1@nhs.net](mailto:jacqueline.birch1@nhs.net)



A number of our supporters have also recently asked questions around **Lasting Powers of Attorney**: how to set one up, how expensive it is and whether you need a solicitor or not. Jackie is available to answer any questions you may have regarding Powers of Attorney and is of course on hand to help with any other will related matters.

# How you can get involved



There are many ways in which you can support us: set up a regular direct debit, leave a gift to us in your will, do your own fundraising, play the lottery, or donate to one of our seasonal appeals – these are just a few of them.

**Eye to Eye** – join us on our fundraising walk in London on Sunday 5 March 2023

**Regular giving** – support us with a regular gift and have an impact on the future of eye health

**Christmas raffle** – your chance to win £5000! Draw closes 12 December 2022

**Fundraising event** – cycling, running or walking – we have lots of challenges to get you active

**DIY fundraising** – hold a cake sale, play a 24 hour game-athon - you can be as creative as you like!

**Remember us in your will** - become part of our supporters' circle - the Moorfields Visionaries

**Lottery** – play our weekly lottery, win £25,000 and support Moorfields too

**Winter appeal** – look out for this launching in November and support artificial intelligence at Moorfields

**Visit [moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk](https://moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk) for more details on the projects we fund**

## Get in touch

For further details: **Tel:** 020 7566 2565 **Email:** [moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net](mailto:moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net)

### If you have a specific enquiry:

**Individual giving** – John Painter 020 7566 2633 or [john.painter1@nhs.net](mailto:john.painter1@nhs.net)

**Leaving a gift in your will** – Jackie Birch 020 7521 4697 or [jacqueline.birch1@nhs.net](mailto:jacqueline.birch1@nhs.net)

**Fundraising events** – Joanne Green 020 7521 4614 or [joanne.green28@nhs.net](mailto:joanne.green28@nhs.net)

**Major giving, trusts and foundations** – Julide Troedson 020 7521 4610 or [julide.troedson@nhs.net](mailto:julide.troedson@nhs.net)

**Oriel fundraising campaign** – Rachel Jones 020 7521 4610 or [rachel.jones310@nhs.net](mailto:rachel.jones310@nhs.net)

**Research and grant making programme** – Ailish Murray 020 7566 2632 or [ailish.murray1@nhs.net](mailto:ailish.murray1@nhs.net)

**Volunteering** – Kate James 020 7566 2566 or [kate.james12@nhs.net](mailto:kate.james12@nhs.net)



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