Hospitals that make history

The NHS was created in 1948. With a continuing commitment to provide care for all, based on clinical need and free at the point of delivery, it remains one of the UK's proudest achievements. It has enabled and supported some of the biggest advances in health and care worldwide.

While the hospitals and people who make up Imperial College Healthcare have an even longer track record of innovation and achievement, they have played an important role in shaping the NHS – and being shaped by the NHS – from the start.

1949 First daily pollen count in the UK begins – set up by Dr AW Frankland at St Mary's Hospital to cover London.

1952 NHS prescription charges first introduced.

1953 Prof Francis Crick and Dr James Watson discover the structure of DNA.

1953 First successful separation of conjoined twins in the UK is performed by Mr Hugh Elliott and Mr Selwyn Taylor at Hammersmith Hospital.

1954 St Mary's Hospital medical student Roger Bannister runs the first ever 4-minute mile.

1954 Sir Richard Doll establishes a clear link between smoking and lung cancer.

1954 UK's first carotid endarterectomy to prevent stroke performed by Mr HHG Earlcott at St Mary's Hospital.

1955 Hammersmith Hospital becomes the first hospital in the world to have a medical unit with a cobalt-60 accelerator with many applications including radiotherapy and advanced imaging.

1956 Prof Ralph Shackman establishes one of the UK's first artificial kidney units at Hammersmith Hospital and helps pioneer the development of dialysis.

1957 The UK's first heart-lung machine, developed by Prof Denis Melrose, is used at Hammersmith Hospital, which also develops a technique for safely stopping the heart during surgery.

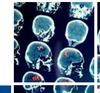
1957 Prof Rodney Porter, working at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, discovers the 4-chain structure of the immunoglobulin molecules, for which he later receives a Nobel Prize.

1958 The NHS launches a programme to vaccinate everyone under the age of 15 against polio and diphtheria.

1960 The UK's first successful kidney transplant takes place at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

1961 The contraceptive pill is made widely available.

1962 Her Majesty the Queen officially opens the new Charing Cross Hospital on Fulham Palace Road.



1967 Queen Charlotte's consultant obstetrician Sultan Karim is the first to report on the clinical use of prostaglandins to initiate labour.

1970 CT scans are introduced.

1973 Merger of St Mary's Hospital Medical School with Imperial College.

1974 As part of a major NHS reorganisation, our hospitals come under the control of their respective local health authorities.

1975 Prof John Goldman pioneers the use of bone marrow transplants to treat chronic myeloid leukaemia at Hammersmith Hospital; over these decades, he continues to develop understanding of the condition and new treatments.

1981 The first case of AIDS in the UK is identified at the Praed Street Clinic at St Mary's Hospital.

1982 Hammersmith Hospital helps pioneer the use of magnetic resonance imaging in medicine.

1982 Hammersmith Hospital becomes a special health authority.

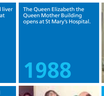
1983 Charing Cross Hospital establishes one of two centres providing a national service for women with cervical cancer, a rare cancer linked to pregnancy.

1984 Merger of Charing Cross and Westminster hospitals medical schools.

1984 Queen Charlotte's Hospital and Chelsea Hospital for Women merges with St Mary's Hospital and Lying-in to form the Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's Special Health Authority.

1986 The first heart, lung, and liver transplant is carried out at Papworth Hospital.

1988 The Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Building opens at St Mary's Hospital.



1988 Comprehensive national breast-screening programme is introduced.

1988 A block opens at Hammersmith Hospital.

1990 NHS and Community Care Act introduces the NHS internal market and NHS trusts.

1992 The children's intensive care unit at St Mary's Hospital opens, led by Dr Paviaj Hubble.

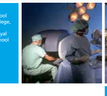
1993 Averil Mansfield, consultant vascular surgeon at St Mary's Hospital, becomes the first female professor of surgery.

1993 St Mary's NHS Trust and Charing Cross NHS Trust are formed.

1994 Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust is formed from the merger of Hammersmith, the Royal Brompton, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea and Acton hospitals.

1994 The NHS Organ Donor Register is launched.

1996 Former St Mary's Hospital consultant Prof John Collinge demonstrates that the new disease, variant CJD, is caused by a pathogen similar to that causing BSE in cattle.



1997 Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School merge with Imperial College. The Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Lung Institute and the Royal Postgraduate Medical School to form Imperial College School of Medicine.

1998 New HIV test is developed at Hammersmith Hospital.

1999 Creation of NICE, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (now National Institute for Health and Care Excellence).

2001 The new Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital next to Hammersmith Hospital is opened by HRH Princess Anne.

2001 The da Vinci robot is first used in the UK for heart surgery by Prof Lord Ara Darzi at St Mary's Hospital.

2002 Led by Prof Robert Winston, the Institute of Reproductive and Regenerative Biology opens at Hammersmith Hospital.

2006 The first virtual reality ophthalmic simulator in the UK is unveiled at the Western Eye Hospital.

2006 Imperial Biomedical Research Centre is one of the first 13 such NHS and academic partnerships funded by the NIHR National Institute of Health Research.

2007 Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is formed by the merger of St Mary's and Hammersmith Hospitals NHS trusts.

2007 In a world first, high intensity ultrasound is used at Hammersmith Hospital to remove part of a patient's rectal tumour.

2009 With academic partner Imperial College, the Trust becomes one of the UK's first academic health science centres.

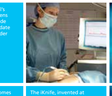
2009 The hyper-acute stroke unit opens at Charing Cross Hospital as part of a London-wide programme to consolidate specialist stroke services in order to improve outcomes.

2010 Hammersmith Hospital's heart attack centre opens as part of a London-wide programme to consolidate specialist services in order to improve outcomes.

2010 St Mary's Hospital becomes one of four major trauma centres designated for London.

2010 Christine Norton becomes the Trust's first professor of nursing, in a joint appointment with Bucks New University.

2012 The Health and Social Care Act establishes clinical commissioning groups.



2013 The Knife, invented at Imperial College, is used as first tracks to identify tissue in brain tumour in real time during surgery in our hospitals.

2013 Connecting care for children service is established, pioneering an integrated care approach across north west London.

2014 The Trust leads one of 13 genomic medicine centres established by NHS England to support the 100,000 Genome Project.

2014 NHS Five Year Forward View published, setting out a vision for more integrated care.

2014 Imperial Biomedical Research Centre and Imperial Health Charity launches the research fellowship awards to support non-medics at the Trust to undertake research.

2015 The first human trial using kisspeptin to improve IVF treatment takes place at Hammersmith Hospital.

2016 Imperial College Academic Health Science Centre expands to include The Royal Marsden and Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS foundation trusts.

2016 The first Trust-wide electronic patient record system begins to roll out.

2016 Hammersmith and Fulham Integrated Care Partnership is established with primary care, acute, community and mental health partners.

2016 In a UK first, focused ultrasound is used at Charing Cross Hospital to treat debilitating tremors, avoiding brain surgery.

2018 Charing Cross Hospital trials a new one-stop service for men with suspected prostate cancer, reducing diagnosis times from six weeks to just one week.

A bright future

Our hospitals and people remain committed to research, innovation and improvement as we explore new opportunities including those made possible by recent developments in genomics, artificial intelligence, 'big data' and digital technology. And we must respond to new challenges too, including health issues relating to changes in our lifestyles and our ageing population.

Stay in touch with our developments or, even better, get involved – such as by taking part in a clinical trial, volunteering or becoming a 'lay partner'. For more information, visit:

www.imperial.nhs.uk/get-involved