Nursing at the Barts Heart Centre
Welcome to the Barts Heart Centre

The Barts Heart Centre is an exciting new Cardiovascular centre which offers excellent opportunities for all nurses wanting a career in cardiac nursing. As Director of Nursing for the Centre, I feel privileged to be able to influence and lead the design and establishment of the new centre and the development of the new teams working here. We already have motivated and excellent nurses working with us and as new nurses join, we want to support their integration into their team and into cardiac nursing to deliver a high standard of patient care.

My primary objective for the nursing workforce is to ensure excellent training and education for cardiac nurses to become experts. Our vision is to become a leading Education Academy for Cardiac Nursing over the next five years. I believe that clinical education is the core component to equip excellent nurses with the confidence to lead and deliver care to a high quality as part of the multi-professional team. We have an active education team that commissions a high percentage of specialist courses and also designs and hosts in-house courses in a number of cardiac conditions or specialties.

The Barts Heart Centre employs 800 nursing staff and offers career opportunities in all cardiac sub-specialties, including rotational programmes over 18 months through a number of specialty areas, detailed within this brochure.

Staff will be actively encouraged to develop and take promotion when they are able. We also value and support our nurses who prefer to remain in the same role, ensuring continuing educational and professional development is provided to enable them to develop as an individual. There are currently five nurses undertaking PhD programmes and the Associate Director for Research in Nursing is developing a strategy to significantly increase nurse led research output and publication over the next five years. Team building and development is important. We ensure regular team days occur to allow time to influence and re-design department procedures and policies to improve care and patient experience, and also contribute and engage in the planning of evolving models designed to deliver high quality care.

The Barts Heart Centre is an exciting opportunity for nurses at all levels to gain expert experience and belong to a new team focused on improving and embedding a new service which will become World Class. I welcome you to come and join our team and work with us on building and establishing an excellent service for Cardiac patients in East and Central London.

With kind regards,

Louise Crosby
Director of Nursing and Governance
Cardiovascular CAG
The Barts Heart Centre at St Bartholomew’s Hospital

The Barts Heart Centre is a new world class cardiovascular centre for patient care and research with the hub of its services at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, and will treat approximately 80,000 patients a year.

The Barts Heart Centre will be the UK’s largest heart centre. The state of the art facilities will include 10 theatres, 10 catheter labs, 250 general cardiac beds, 58 critical care beds, and 40 CCU beds, and staff will perform more heart surgery and cardiac procedures than any other centre in Europe. Clinicians estimate that an additional 1,000 lives could be saved every year.

The Barts Heart Centre is part of UCL Partners, the UK’s largest academic health science network and is aligned to a new joint cardiovascular institute run by Queen Mary University London and UCL. This will create a world leading platform for innovation, linking academic, genomics, industry and the NHS for the benefit of patients.

BARTS HOSPITAL THEN AND NOW…

St Bartholomew’s Hospital, also known simply as Barts and later more formally as The Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew, is a hospital located at Smithfield in London. It is the oldest hospital in Europe, having been founded in 1123 and is the oldest in the United Kingdom still occupying its original site. Today it forms part of Barts Health NHS Trust.

St Bartholomew’s Hospital has existed on the same site since its founding in the 12th century, surviving both the Great Fire of London and the Blitz. In 1843, St Bartholomew’s Hospital Medical College was established to train medics.

The new Barts Heart Centre situated within St. Bartholomew’s Hospital is centrally located near to Barbican, Blackfriars, Farringdon and St. Paul’s tube stations as well as a range of bus services. Blackfriars, City Thameslink and Liverpool Street are the nearest train stations. Minutes away from St. Paul’s Cathedral and situated close to the west end of London the area provides an eclectic mix of restaurants, bars, retail and much more.
Adult Critical Care Unit

The Adult Critical Care Unit (ACCU) at Barts Heart Centre provides combined level 2 and level 3 care for critically ill patients across four clinical areas, totalling 50 beds, and due to rise to 58 beds in late 2016 when a dedicated 16 bed general unit opens. The majority of the beds are for the care of patients who have undergone a wide variety of cardiac surgery including minimally invasive valve replacement, and some thoracic. The general unit admits complex cardiology patients through the emergency Heart Attack Centre (HAC) and angiography department, as well as some cancer patients. It also provides single or multi organ support for patients with respiratory conditions which include cystic fibrosis, and is supported by a small nurse led outreach team.

Currently 30% of bed provision is in single rooms and this will rise to 36% with the opening of the general unit, complementing the high standards of infection control and prevention practices. The ACCU has been equipped with new clinical equipment throughout providing a full range of monitoring capabilities and therapies, including interventional lung assist. Plans to expand the range of interventional devices are supported by dedicated training and assessment of equipment competencies.

Nursing staff benefit from a system of rotation through the ACCU areas where they experience all aspects of the specialism whilst working within an established team structure. A semi-structured request rota allows staff some flexibility in working pattern whilst benefitting from the support of working alongside their team members. Protocols and other mechanisms are in place to optimise communication between members of staff, and great emphasis is placed on this to continually improve evidence based standards of care, patient safety, and patient and staff experience. Patient care is inter-professional with anaesthetic staff taking the medical lead.

All staff receive comprehensive orientation to the critical care environment supported by appropriate supernumerary allocation, a dedicated mentor, and a programme of teaching. On-going professional development and appraisal is led by band 6 & 7 practitioners who manage and support teams of nurses. A dedicated critical care education team also facilitate learning and clinical experience through established programmes which utilise simulation exercises, formal classroom teaching sessions, personal coaching and comprehensive competency packages (based on the national competency framework). Clinical and managerial professional pathways exist for higher grades of staff and there are opportunities to rotate to other clinical areas in the CAG or Trust.

MY STORY Ciaran McCavigan
Registered Nurse, ACCU Cardiac

“I qualified in June 2012 and went to America for a Trans Atlantic Double Degree. I studied there for a year at Washburn University Kansas and qualified as a RN in the States. I then had a three month clinical placement placement on ambulances in Finland, as part of the Scholarship.

I then worked in Cardiac Surgery ICU in Belfast for one year before coming to Barts in May 2014. Since starting here, I have enrolled at London City University to study Developing Specialist Practice in Intensive Care. The course equips you with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in this environment. After I finish the course, I am very keen to commence studying an MSc in Nursing, with the support of Barts Trust.

I enjoy working for Barts as it provides opportunities to further my development as an intensive care nurse, and also as it provides excellent training to maintain a high quality care standard of patient care.”
Cardiac Surgery

The Barts Heart Centre is the largest cardiothoracic surgical centre in the UK. The cardiac surgery wards provide specialist care to patient’s pre and post cardiac surgery including those stepped down from critical care. The specialist patient groups on the ward include elective surgery such as CABG, Valve surgery, and GUCH as well as emergencies including aortic dissections.

Monitored beds on the ward enable patients requiring higher levels of observation to be cared for within the ward environment; this could include those receiving epicardial pacing, vasoactive infusions or those with arrhythmias.

A multi-disciplinary approach that includes the medical team, nursing team, AHP, and surgical care practitioners ensures high quality care is delivered twenty four hours a day seven days a week. Surgical nurse practitioners provide a complex wound service that includes the implementation of VAC therapy to aid wound healing.

The development of staff is essential to provide specialist cardiac nursing knowledge and skills, and is achieved through a structured development programme. This programme consists of study days, clinical supernumery time, and opportunities to observe cardiac care in other areas including theatres and the angiography labs. This programme is facilitated by the Cardiovascular education team in addition to the senior ward team.

There are opportunities to attend conferences and specialist courses to develop expert knowledge and skills within cardiac nursing. There is also the opportunity for staff to rotate to other areas within the cardiovascular group including critical care and specialist cardiac surgical wards to consolidate their specialist skills.

Thoracic Surgery

The Barts Heart Centre is the largest cardiothoracic surgical centre in the UK. Specialist thoracic surgery has seen a major expansion supported by its own specialist high dependency unit. The thoracic surgery ward provides specialist care to patient’s pre and post thoracic surgery including those stepped down from the HDU. The specialist patient groups on the ward include elective surgery such as VATS, Pluerectomy, and pneumonectomy as well as emergencies following trauma.

A multi-disciplinary team including specialist thoracic consultants and registrars, a nursing team with specialist thoracic knowledge and a team of AHP’s, ensures high quality care is delivered twenty four hours an day seven days a week. Close links with the Palliative care team ensure oncology patients receive gold standard care throughout their stay and beyond.

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Cardiac Catheterisation Suite

A 10-room cardiac catheter suite will support both electrophysiology (EP) and interventional interventions.

Interventional Cardiology procedures include Cardiac Catheterisation (angiography), Percutaneous Coronary Intervention, Alcohol Septal Ablations, TAVI, GUCH procedures, Percutaneous Pulmonary Valve implantation, Mitral Valvuloplasty and Structural heart procedures.

Electrophysiology Cardiology procedures include PPM & Biventricular PPM insertion, ICD and Biventricular ICD Insertion, Reveal insertion/removal, Temporary pacing, Device Extraction, Electrophysiology and Ablation studies, Complex Ablation and LAA Occluder procedures.

There will be close working relationships with the radiography department, cardiac physiology department, Coronary Care Unit, Cardiology Short Stay Ward, medical records, admissions, A&E and referring trusts.

All cath lab staff should be trained in resuscitation to ILS level. There will be on-going in house training for all staff groups, with the opportunity to attend external study days/conferences where available. High quality appraisals focussed on performance and the achievement of SMART and challenging objectives, contribute to patient outcomes by giving staff the best possible opportunity to be successful in their roles. We would like to develop education and training programmes for Nurse Angiography and a Multi-skilled practitioner.

MY STORY Emma Dunn
Junior Sister

“Hi, my name is Emma Dunn and I have recently been promoted to Band 6 Junior Sister within the Barts Heart Centre. I have been a qualified staff nurse for two years and started working at the Barts Heart Centre in May 2015. I moved to London in January 2015 and have loved the opportunities and support that this hospital offers. I am currently working on a cardiology and cardio-thoracic ward dealing with patients with chronic heart failure and patients who are pre/post-operative. I work with a brilliant team who are always supportive and helpful. When moving to the Barts Heart Centre I wanted to become a mentor to newly qualified nurses and I am looking forward to starting my mentorship course in September 2015.

There has been a number of training opportunities available to me and I have embraced this, for example, I have enrolled on the course which is designed to help nurses deal with the acutely ill patient. The manager on my ward has encouraged me to develop my learning and I have achieved this by organising training courses for all healthcare professionals within the Barts Heart Centre. The Barts Heart Centre is an exciting place to work and I have appreciated the support and guidance which all healthcare professionals have shown me.”
Specialist Nursing Teams

THE GROWN UP CONGENITAL HEART (GUCH)

The GUCH team provides specialist cardiology and surgical inpatient and outpatient services to people aged 18 and over who were born with a congenital heart condition, and many have previously received care at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Increasing numbers of patients are now presenting with complex lesions and many unique problems that require specialist multidisciplinary management.

INHERITED CARDIAC CONDITIONS SERVICE

The inherited cardiac conditions service at the Barts Heart Centre is the UK’s largest service, providing multi-disciplinary (MDT) care to individuals and families primarily with cardiomyopathy, or inherited arrhythmias. The service offers comprehensive inpatient and outpatient investigations and treatment, which includes alcohol septal ablation and surgical myectomy programmes. Conducting research and utilising the findings to enhance patient care is also a core element of the service.

HEART FAILURE CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST SERVICE

The Heart Failure CNS team attends the daily CCU Heart Failure Consultant of the week morning ward round and provides education and health promotion advice to Heart Failure inpatients at the Barts Heart Centre. The Heart Failure CNS is also available for advice to staff and general discussion of the care of the heart failure in-patients including Ultrafiltration. The team will then follow-up those patients once discharged in community based clinics which are linked to neighbouring boroughs and referring hospitals.

ARRHYTHMIA NURSE SPECIALIST SERVICE

The ANS service provides a telephone advice line available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. The aim is for every patient who has undergone a catheter ablation or device insertion to receive our telephone number prior to discharge. The telephone line is a vital part of the service provided and is paramount in ensuring patients discharged following a procedure are adequately supported. For example, it is very common for ablation patients to require symptom advice and/or psychological support following discharge. Considering that ablation patients have their follow up outpatient appointment at least three months after their procedure, the phone line enables ANSs to bridge the gap between discharge and follow up.

ANSs will visit CCU and the Day case unit at least once a day. On these visits the main aim is to educate the patient by explaining the procedure, advising on any required lifestyle modifications and answering questions from both the patient and their families. Some patients requiring a device would also benefit from Heart Failure input, so if it is not already organised, the ANS would liaise with the local heart failure team and refer them. More recently the ANS team are undertaking a pioneering Nurse-led Cardioversion service which aims to improve the patient experience and deliver excellent clinical outcomes.

MY STORY Carolyn Brennan
Arrhythmia Nurse Specialist

“I have been nursing for 36 years, and transferred to the Barts Heart Centre from The Heart Hospital in May 2015. My role is busy and varied and includes providing information, advice and support for people with heart rhythm problems. I also run a Nurse Led Cardioversion Service, contribute to the Nurse Led Rapid Access Heart Rhythm Clinic, and teach and provide support for staff and patients in the clinical area.”
Coronary Care Unit

The Coronary Care Unit at Barts Heart Centre will consist of 40 CCU beds specialising in Electrophysiology and interventional cardiology and is one of London’s largest Heart Attack Centres. We work closely with the cardiac catheter laboratories, cardiology wards in the Barts Heart Centre and other local hospitals.

We are able to offer experience of nursing patients in the acute cardiology environment including patients undergoing coronary interventions and cutting edge interventional procedures. Nurses will gain experience working with acutely unwell patients receiving therapies including undertaking Impella support for patients in cardiogenic shock, Aquadex fluid removal system for patients in heart failure, Nurse role supporting DAMI service, inotropic support, non-invasive ventilation and patients requiring intra-aortic balloon pump assistance. We also offer the opportunity to work closely with the research department who support many of our patients taking part in extended clinical trials whilst on the unit i.e. BAMI (stem cell).

Education, training and development are central to the working philosophy on the Coronary Care Unit. New staff are supported by experienced mentors and are enrolled on in-house development programmes together with having access to modules and study days at partner Universities. Currently we have nurses studying introduction to cardiac nursing, preceptorship and cardiac critical care modules.

Cardiology Ward

Vicary ward is a 26 bedded specialist cardiac ward with mixed cardiology and cardiac surgery patients. Of these 26 beds, there are 12 fixed monitor beds, eight telemetry and six non monitored beds. The ward concentrates on the care of patients with valvular problems as well as other specialities such as heart failure, interventional cardiology and heart surgery care. The nursing team works closely with the multidisciplinary team for the care of complex conditions such as aortic stenosis, endocarditis and heart failure and is a pioneer in the care of patients’ pre and post transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI) at the Barts Heart Centre. As well as inpatient care, Vicary ward also works with the echo service in the development of an echo nurse role, specialising in care of the elective trans-oesophageal echo (TOE) patients, including air management and post sedation recovery. Vicary ward is developing a ward specific development programme for staff to support career progression.

MY STORY Balbine Furi
Staff Nurse, Coronary Care Unit

“My name is Balbine and I have been working at Barts for the past three years. I qualified in 2012 from City University, and then started at Barts joining an 18 months cardiac rotation as a newly qualified nurse. The rotation was a brilliant experience as it exposed me to various areas of nursing, such as the Coronary Care Unit (CCU), respiratory, HDU and ITU. Working in these different areas as part of the rotation helped me to build confidence and become more knowledgeable. This also improved my patient care, as I understood more about the patient journey, and I was able to deliver holistic care.

I’m now working permanently in the Coronary Care Unit at the Barts Heart Centre. I enjoy every single moment working in CCU and looking after the patients in this unit. The nursing role in this unit is expanded as we also have a large Heart Attack Centre, which I enjoy being a part of.”
and has a protected teaching programme twice a month with interactive sessions including cardiac simulation training with the resuscitation service and sessions concentrating on giving high standards in fundamental nursing care including wound care. All staff also have an opportunity to support ward improvement and quality care through projects as part of a link nurse programme.

MY STORY Hugo Monedero
Staff Nurse

“Hi, my name is Hugo. I come from Spain and I am a staff nurse working at Vicary Ward.

I qualified in 2009 and worked as a nurse in Spain. I started here at the Barts Heart Centre in April this year although I started to work for the NHS a year ago. The reason why I left Spain to come over here is that I’ve always wanted to get experience from UK nurses and give myself the challenge of being a nurse abroad.

The ward I work at, Vicary, is a Cardiology/Cardio Thoracic ward where I look after patients both pre and post-surgery. I am also starting to be in charge sometimes so I also “look after” the staff.

I do like working here at Barts Health NHS Trust, specifically at Vicary, because of the working atmosphere and the staff. It is very important for me that the team work together, help each other and get on well and all these things are awesomely fulfilled here. Another important point is the training opportunities. You can always improve your knowledge by doing courses or training which I really like and think is really important. As a nurse you have to be up to date in many things and here they provide you with the tools to do it.”

Cardiac Admissions Unit (CAU)

The Cardiac Admissions Unit (CAU) forms part of the Barts Heart Centre tertiary referral unit. It provides care for patients with cardiovascular disease in the North-east and North-central area of London. Patients are referred to the Barts Heart Centre from any of the serving District General Hospitals (DGHs) within the region, which include Whipps Cross, Newham, The Royal London, Mile End, Queens, King George’s, The Homerton Hospital, North Middlesex, University College Hospital (UCH), The Whittington and Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals. The population is around 3.2 million.

The CAU receives patients electively from home and from other DGHs for cardiology procedures as inter-hospital transfers (IHTs). Care is provided for patients post procedure until they are discharged home, returned to their DGH or if necessitated admitted to the cardiology ward.

Cardiac catheterisation is an invasive procedure undertaken for the diagnosis of a variety of cardiac diseases. This includes left heart catheterisation (by far the most common procedure), left and right heart catheterisation, graft studies, left ventricular angiography and aortography. The decision to recommend cardiac catheterisation will be based on careful evaluation of the potential risks and benefits to the patient.

The main reasons to undertake elective outpatient cardiac catheterisation include: to establish a diagnosis of stable angina; in patients with significant valve disease who require valve surgery; in patients with heart failure and also a history of angina or where the aetiology of the left ventricular dysfunction is suspected to be ischaemic. The CAU ward will cater for most of the interventional cardiology patients and some EP patients.
The nursing team will rotate through the catheter labs and therefore require further radiation protection training. This includes reading the clinical and non-clinical booklets, attending in-house training and completing e-learning modules. The Trust purchases contract post graduate courses with funds provided by NHS London. The cardiovascular departments have commissioned some of the cardiac courses that the universities provide and staff are supported and encouraged to follow the cardiology development education pathway.

MY STORY Ellis Spencer-Ross
Student Nurse

“I am a third-year student nurse who has just completed my final placement on a cardiac ward at St Bartholomew’s Hospital. My nursing degree at City University gave me the opportunity to work as part of teams in a wide variety of settings in the Barts Health NHS Trust, and exposed me to a wide range of disciplines. These include an NHS Gastroenterology medical ward, various Older Adults medical and rehabilitation wards, an Endoscopy department, a range of Outpatient departments, High Dependency Units, theatres, and an Endocrine ward.

This breadth of experience has been crucial, allowing me to quickly develop the skills I needed, and an opportunity to look at different areas of adult nursing, whilst influencing the direction in which I want to take my career.

The training I received at Barts was well structured and I always felt supported and encouraged by other team members and my mentors. Even when I felt very inexperienced and of little use to the team, they were positive and encouraging. Senior nursing staff have been brilliant in their encouragement and support.

My final placement has been on the cardiac ward (Harvey) at the Barts Heart Centre, and I loved the fast-pace, and the continuous involvement with patients and their families. I am fortunate enough to have now been given the chance to continue my nursing journey at Barts as they have offered me my first job on a Cardiology ward. It is a little odd to think that I am no longer the most junior member of the team and others will be looking to me for guidance and support.”

Working at the Barts Heart Centre

If you work within the Cardiovascular CAG at Barts Health NHS Trust, there are a range of personal and professional benefits that we have to offer.

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Cardiovascular CAG offers rotation across all cardiac specialty areas. We support our staff to undertake nationally recognised courses through City and South Bank Universities. This provides access to a range of MSc and BSc courses such as the multi-professional MSc in Cardiac Critical Care, Cardiac Management I and II, MSc Physical Assessment and nurse prescribing courses. There are currently five nurses undertaking PhD programmes and the Associate Director for Research in Nursing is developing a strategy to significantly increase nurse led research output and publication over the next five years.

HIGH QUALITY INTERNAL COURSES

As well as standard in-service training, the Trust also runs regular inter-professional simulation training days for cardiac advanced life support, transport of the critically ill patient, and management of the difficult airway, SIREN and REACT courses, GUCH modules and acute care skills courses. We also have a simulation centre that aids our training.

Barts Heart Centre
CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Established development programmes and educational support ensures professional progression and practical competency acquisition in a wide range of therapies. In addition to complex respiratory support, advanced haemodynamic monitoring, renal replacement therapies, and mechanical cardiac support, the Trust is a centre for extra-corporeal (interventional) lung assist. You will also have the opportunity to participate in research.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Internal and external programmes are supported including the Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale courses and action learning sets.

STAFF BENEFITS

At Barts Health NHS Trust we care about the health and wellbeing of our staff and offer a wide range of standard benefits which staff can take advantage of. These include, but are not limited to: childcare vouchers; a cycle to work scheme; accommodation; excess travel reimbursement and season ticket loans; on-going deals and discounts; discounted holiday deals for staff with KPX travel; theatre, concert and event tickets; on-site exercise classes; discounted corporate gyms; and, discounts at local restaurants.

For more information please contact:
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Being a part of the Cardiovascular CAG at Barts Health offers a wealth of opportunities to gain experience in caring for cardiac patients across central and east and central London.