

PRESS RELEASE 8th September 2025

Embargoed until 8th – not for release before this date

Strengthening Lifelong Aortic Care: Two NHS Trusts Awarded Grants for Specialist Nursing Roles

The Aortic Dissection Charitable Trust is pleased to announce that **Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust** and **Liverpool Heart & Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust** have been awarded funding to appoint dedicated Aortic Advanced Practitioners. These specialist nursing roles will enhance the care and support offered to hundreds of patients living with aortic dissection and related conditions.

Expanding Specialist Aortic Services Across the UK

Both Trusts are home to some of the country's most advanced aortic services, each caring for hundreds of patients under lifelong surveillance, with numbers continuing to grow every year. These newly funded Aortic Advanced Practitioners will play a vital role in delivering consistent, high-quality care as part of essential specialist follow-up. Their responsibilities will include coordinating and running dedicated weekly aortic clinics, supporting multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, managing patient referrals and acting as a vital point of contact for patients and their families at every stage of their care.

Improving Outcomes Through Personalised Support

Deborah Harrington, Consultant Aortic Surgeon at Liverpool Heart & Chest Hospital, said "This funding enables us to provide dedicated support for aortic dissection patients. This is a crucial step in meeting the complex and growing demands of our service and encompasses the requirements of the National Aortic Dissection Toolkit."

A Personal Story from Broadcaster Bob Harris

Broadcaster and BBC Radio 2 presenter Bob Harris OBE, who survived an aortic dissection in 2019, is a passionate ambassador for the charity.

"I know first-hand how frightening and life-changing an aortic dissection can be. While I was lucky to survive, the road to recovery is long and many patients are left without the follow-up care or emotional support they so desperately need. These new nursing roles will help ensure that no one faces that journey alone."

A National Commitment to Lifelong Care

The Aortic Dissection Charitable Trust's Aortic Advanced Practitioner Programme provides a three-year support package, including specialist training, a community of practice, and business case development to embed these roles long-term. The model is inspired by the proven success of Macmillan nurses, and we are grateful to Macmillan for their guidance and encouragement throughout this process.

By improving patient access to follow-up care, supporting families through genetic testing and surveillance, and easing demand on consultant-led services, these roles represent a transformative step in aortic dissection care.

For more information about this initiative, please visit tadct.org/APFunding

Photos:

<https://workdrive.zohoexternal.com/external/30b8629f167760cc2228f136deeb64924f691b69384d916096de4dfa40ebf5d1>

Aortic dissection affects 4,000 people in the UK each year, and incidence is rising. It is a progressive tear in the inner lining of the aorta, the main artery of the body, which blood surges through creating a new channel between the layers. This can rupture or interrupt the blood supply to vital organs. It is a time-critical medical emergency.

<https://aorticdissectioncharitabletrust.org/about-aortic-dissection/>