

Spring 2015

Working with Monitor to improve our financial situation

We have agreed with Monitor, the regulator for health services in England, to a series of actions to improve our financial performance, sustainability and governance.

We ended 2014/15 with an £8.6 million deficit and we forecast this figure to be £18.7 million by the end of March 2016. We are therefore working closely with Monitor on a financial recovery plan to get our books back into balance and save £12 million by the end of this financial year. We are also in the process of developing a long-term savings plan which will save the Trust £60 million over the next five years.

We are in a similar place to other NHS Trusts and the reasons for our poor financial position are complex, however they stem from the fact that demand for our services continues to grow at an unprecedented rate.

As well as being busier than ever, more patients are now likely to require admission into hospital. We now admit around 1,300 more patients every month than we did three years ago and it is often a challenge to discharge patients in a timely manner when they no longer need to be cared for in hospital.

We're also spending a large amount of money on agency staff, which is very expensive, but necessary, to ensure safe and high quality care, at a time when recruitment is a challenge due to a national shortage of qualified nurses.

As an absolute priority we are also working to reduce our dependence on agency staff. We are making good progress, although it will take time due to the size of the challenge.

Since 2013 we have recruited 491 nurses, as well as 68 midwives and 85 doctors (30 April 2015). Our spend on agency staff has also reduced by £1.5 million since 2013/14, however last year (2014/15) we still had to spend £11.2 million on agency staff which was 5.9% of the total pay bill.

Despite our financial position, it is important to recognise that no concerns have been raised about the quality of treatment and care we provide to patients.

Our financial position is complex and cannot be fixed overnight, but our plans show we are focused in the right direction. As a priority over the coming months we will be working hard towards building a financially secure future, whilst maintaining safe and high quality patient care.

Brighter Futures' fundraising appeal launched to help bring radiotherapy cancer treatment to Swindon

A new £2.9 million fundraising appeal to bring radiotherapy treatment to the Great Western Hospital (GWH) in Swindon launched on 28 May, supporting plans to bring cancer treatment closer to home for the 340,000 people living in the Swindon and Wiltshire area.

The appeal by Brighter Futures, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's charity, will fund the equipment which will deliver the treatment provided by Oxford University Hospitals Trust (OUH) in a new radiotherapy centre.

Currently around 3,000 people are diagnosed with some form of cancer each year at GWH. In 2013/14 around 700 patients made the 70 mile round-trip to OUH's Churchill Hospital in Oxford for radiotherapy. Treatment usually lasts for four to seven weeks, made up of daily visits.

While the expansion of the OUH service is subject to a final approval process, the planning stages are well advanced and it is envisaged that treatment could be available locally by the end of 2017.

A ceremony to launch the appeal took place at GWH on 28 May, where 284 balloons were released into the sky to mark the number patients who are diagnosed with cancer each month at GWH.

Further information about the Radiotherapy Appeal is available on the new Brighter Futures website www.brighterfuturesgwh.nhs.uk.

Emergency Department waiting times

The Emergency Department saw a 2% increase in attendances in Q4 (January, February and March 2015) compared to last, this equates to an extra 322 attendances. During this period, staff admitted, transferred or discharged 80.99% of patients within four hours of arrival to the Emergency Department.

We expect demand to become more manageable as we move towards the summer months with an increase in minor injuries.

For the week ending 24 May, almost all patients (99.59%) who attended the Emergency Department were admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of arrival. During this week, 1,448 people were seen by our emergency staff (just over 200 a day), with almost a third (27.62%) being admitted into hospital for further treatment.

This achievement follows extensive work on advanced discharge planning for inpatients as well as the introduction of a Rapid Assessment and Triage Service in the Emergency Department, which means that patients are examined by a senior clinician sooner.

Decisions about diagnostic tests and treatment and care plans are therefore made more quickly and patients' experience of the emergency department is likely to be improved.

We are already working on plans to increase our ambulatory capacity ahead of another busy winter.

Trust nominated for national patient safety award

The Trust was nominated for a prestigious Top Hospitals Award in the category of Patient Safety by the country's leading provider of healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services, CHKS.

This national award recognises outstanding performance from Trusts that provide a safe hospital environment.

The Top Hospital Awards are the only data-driven healthcare awards in the country, with finalists being chosen after their performance has been compared against a number of industry-specific indicators.

This year indicators included sepsis mortality rates and the number of patients suffering from pressure ulcers, both of which are priorities in the Trust's Sign up to Safety pledge.

Recently mortality levels within the Trust have fallen by 30%, due to successful work in a number of areas, including infection control, risk assessments and early consultant reviews. The Trust is currently ranked fourth-best out of 35 trusts in southern England when it comes to mortality rates, having been third worst 18 months ago.

Unfortunately, the Trust just missed out on the award, though being a finalist was a great achievement and recognises that safe and high quality care is our number one priority.

Referral to treatment waiting times

Similarly to other Trusts across the country, we experienced significant pressure in quarter 4 (Q4) (January, February March 2015).

We managed to treat 89.5% of admitted patients within 18 weeks of referral, against a target of 90% and 92.5% of non-admitted patients within 18 weeks of referral, against a target of 95%.

The busy winter period meant making the difficult decision to postpone some routine operations so that patients needing urgent treatment, such as cancer, emergency and trauma patients, could be prioritised. Patients affected were offered another date at the earliest opportunity, however this high demand and subsequent delays have impacted on waiting times.

A big focus over the coming months is reducing and maintaining lower waiting times.

More training places for local nurses

The Great Western Hospital is set to benefit from Oxford Brookes University's decision to increase the number of places on its nurse teaching courses to 880.

We have welcomed this news as more places for locally trained nurses will help us to continue providing high quality care for patients while supporting local people into a rewarding career in healthcare.

New Outpatients Centre at Savernake Hospital

Building work on Prospect Hospice's new Outpatients Centre at Savernake Hospital started in May, meaning that people living in and around Marlborough will soon no longer need to travel to the Prospect Hospice in Wroughton for end-of-life care.

This development was made possible thanks to the Trust's special partnership with Prospect Hospice.

The Trust has provided the space for the new centre as part of its on-going commitment to investing in community services. When completed, the centre will provide services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and anxiety management.

Refurbished Minor Injuries Unit at Chippenham Community Hospital now open

Following an extensive two month refurbishment, the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at Chippenham Community Hospital has reopened to the public.

The MIU has been transformed into an ultra-modern healthcare environment, creating a better quality environment for patients and working space for staff.

New sexual health walk-in service trialled at GWH

A new sexual health walk-in clinic opened at the Great Western Hospital on 7 April. This is an addition to the successful walk-in clinic at Carfax Medical Centre in Swindon, giving local people more choice.

The clinic is running on a three month trial basis on Tuesdays between 9am and 11am.

To find out more about the Trust's sexual health services visit www.swindonsexualhealth.nhs.uk.

Dying Matters Week: 18 - 22 May

We joined forces with Prospect Hospice and other local organisations during Dying Matters Week (18-22 May) to raise the profile of local end-of-life care services and to encourage people to talk about dying and the care they would like to receive at the end of their life.

The new Advanced Care Plan was launched during the week. This is a personalised plan, held by each patient, where they are encouraged to record the decisions they have already made about their care during the end of their life.

Members of the public were also encouraged to complete the What Matters to You questionnaire as a way of documenting what they see as the main priorities of end-of-life care.

Dementia Awareness Week: 18 - 22 May

To mark the national Dementia Awareness Week, the Trust staged a series of information events, open to both staff and the public, at the Great Western Hospital in Swindon.

The Dementia Care Team were on hand throughout the week to inform and educate people about the good work that has been taking place across the Trust over the last 12 months to support people living with dementia.

In November, we opened our first dementia-friendly ward and more recently have launched a dedicated welcome service to help people living with dementia navigate their around the hospital.

WiFi comes to GWH

Patients, visitors and staff at the Great Western Hospital now have access to 15 minutes of free WiFi every day.

This means anyone can access the internet using a laptop, tablet computer

or phone, from hotspots around the hospital, including wards, waiting areas and the restaurant.

Access is free for cancer and renal patients in Dove, Osprey and the Day Therapy Unit, who often have to spend long periods of time in hospital. Everyone else will have 15 minutes of free WiFi a day, with the option to buy more as part of a pay-as-you-go service.

WiFi Spark is providing the service at no cost to the Trust.

More information is available on the Trust website, www.gwh.nhs.uk.

If you have any questions about News In Brief, please

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