

As someone with an interest in what we do, News in Brief can help you stay up-to-date with our latest news and developments. We hope it gives you a helpful overview of what's been happening over the last quarter.

Summer 2015

Focusing on our financial recovery

We continue to work with Monitor, the regulator for health services in England, to improve our financial position.

Our financial recovery plan sets out a range of schemes that will deliver savings to bring our deficit down to at least £14 million by the end of the financial year, rather than the £18.6 million initially forecast.

Work is well underway on a number of areas to help with the long-term task of balancing our finances.

We are already reducing discretionary spending and reviewing previously agreed investments.

We have introduced strict new controls on premium agency spend to help reduce spend on expensive agency staff.

We are also looking to save money by reducing wastage, getting better value from the huge number of products we buy and doing things more efficiently.

Although outside of our control, an increasing demand for our services and a national shortage of qualified nursing staff also remain major contributors to our financial position.

Our longer term plan for the next five years is progressing well and will be

shared with Monitor in October.

For the foreseeable future, recovering our financial position, whilst maintaining safe, efficient and high quality patient services, remains our absolute priority.

Care Quality Commission visit confirmed

The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health services in England, has announced the date when they will start their routine inspection of the Trust.

Their visit, which begins on Monday 28 September and could last up to two weeks, is part of new wave of inspections that all trusts will experience, to ensure that care is safe, effective, caring, well-led and response.

We welcome the inspection as an important opportunity to reflect on the quality of care we provide. This is a chance to show how patient safety and high quality care remain our absolute priority, despite our challenging financial position.

Staff have been encouraged to share their experiences of working at the Trust, including what works well and any areas of concern.

We are also encouraging patients and visitors to share their experiences of our services, including what we do well and areas for improvement.

Plans to bring radiotherapy to Swindon a step closer

A landmark decision by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust (OUH) means we are a step closer to working with OUH to bring radiotherapy to Swindon.

On July 8 the OUH board formally approved plans to build a radiotherapy facility at the Great Western Hospital, which would make a massive difference to the 340,000 people who live within the Swindon and Wiltshire area.

Around 700 local cancer patients a year are faced with the 70 mile round trip to Oxford's Churchill Hospital for radiotherapy treatment, which usually lasts

for four to seven weeks, made up of daily visits.

We are working closely with OUH to bring radiotherapy to Swindon and planning stages are well advanced. Treatment could be available locally by the end of 2017 if the Trust Development Authority and NHS England give final funding approval later in the summer.

Our charity, [Brighter Futures](#), has already raised more than £140,000 towards our £2.9 million [Radiotherapy Appeal](#) which will fund the specialist equipment needed to provide radiotherapy at the new facility.

Emergency Department waiting times

Waiting times continue to be a key focus for the Trust and over the last few months (April, May & June 2015) we admitted, transferred or discharged 95.50% of patients attending the Emergency Department and the minor injuries units at Chippenham and Trowbridge, within four hours of arrival.

This achievement was despite it being a very busy time, with 20,046 people attending the Emergency Department. This is a 0.8% increase on the same period last year, with staff seeing 166 more people.

The focus for the Trust is now sustaining this achievement which 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.

This new service means that patients are examined by a senior clinician sooner and therefore decisions about diagnostic tests, treatment and care plans are made more quickly and the patient experience is likely to be improved.

18 weeks referral to treatment times

We welcome NHS England's recommendations for hospitals to focus on the incomplete standard as a measurement of waiting times.

The incomplete standard captures the experience of all patients still waiting

at the end of each month – so it includes every patient on the waiting list, not just those treated in that particular month.

The incomplete target is for 92% of all patients waiting for treatment to have been waiting for less than 18 weeks from the time of their referral. In June 88.4% of all patients waiting for treatment, had waited less than 18 weeks from the time of their referral.

The recommendation to only measure the incomplete standard will incentivise hospitals to treat patients who have been waiting the longest, which is something we have been doing for some time and is one of the reasons we have missed this target in the past.

We continue to work with our commissioners on robust plans to reduce waiting times and will be looking at the recommendations in more detail.

Return to Practice programme nominated for award

Our commitment to getting nurses on a career break back into the profession was recognised when the Trust was nominated for a prestigious regional award.

Health Education South West shortlisted the Trust for the Employer Award at July's annual Return to Practice Awards.

Our Return to Practice programme, run three times a year by the University of the West of England at the Great Western Hospital, offers nurses, midwives and health visitors the chance to develop their skills and confidence to return to work.

We also offer a Return to Acute Care programme which supports healthcare professionals working in community based health or social care services, such as residential care homes, prepare for a career in a busy hospital setting.

Our nomination shows recognition for our recruitment drive, which since 2013 has seen 514 nurses, 42 midwives and 89 doctors join the Trust.

The next Return to Practice course will take place in October.

New service for Wiltshire parents and carers

A new children's learning disability nursing service has been introduced to improve the support available to parents and carers of children and young people with learning disabilities in Wiltshire.

The new service will provide much needed early intervention to support parents and carers when they say they need it most.

Local parents and carers now have access to support in their own homes, schools or early years settings, from children's learning disability nurses and healthcare workers. There has also been an investment in specialist foster carers, who offer overnight short breaks in a welcoming family environment.

For some time now the Trust has been working with NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Wiltshire Council, who have been consulting with local families and partners, such as Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, on how to improve services.

This new service will replace the overnight short break service which was offered at Hillcote, a 10 bedded centre in Salisbury.

The highly valued team at Hillcote have made a big difference to the lives of many children and young people with learning disabilities and their families and carers over the years. Staff will continue working with children and their families or carers within the new service and other children's services in the community across Wiltshire.

We will continue to work closely with the council and commissioners to ensure that all local children and their families and carers continue to have access to safe and high quality care and support.

£1.35 million technology boost to improve patient care

A successful £1.35 million funding bid from NHS England will be invested in our Real Time (to) Care Programme, which is transforming how we use technology to improve patient care.

One of the Programme's main aims is to move away from using paper-based patient notes to having more information available electronically, allowing quicker and more accurate decision-making.

The funding will be invested in a range of technology including additional digital information boards which display important operational information such as bed availability.

Our electronic patient information system, Medway, will also be developed so that a wider range of information is available electronically.

The new technology will support more efficient ways of working, ensure information is as up-to-date as possible and give staff more time to spend directly with patients.

The new technology will be developed and implemented over the next year.

Trust invests in leading blood tracking system

Great Western Hospital patients will soon benefit from an innovative new blood tracking system, which includes the use of touch-screen devices by the bedside.

The system will track blood products, support the administration of blood transfusions and be used to label pathology samples, once it is introduced from November.

It will also help reduce the risk of errors, with an in-depth audit of bloods across each stage of the transfusion process and strict control over access to and from blood fridges.

The touch-screen devices will also mean bar-coded blood units can be matched with the patient's bar-coded wristband in seconds.

The system is another example of how the Trust is using modern technology to support more efficient ways of working, ensuring the very best care for patients.

Staff Excellence Award winners announced

Winners of our Staff Excellence Awards, which celebrate the exceptional care our staff provide to patients throughout the year, were announced in June.

A total of 33 staff were in the running for eight awards, which mark the outstanding dedication of staff working at the Great Western Hospital and across our community healthcare services in Wiltshire, including community hospitals and services in people's homes.

The People's Choice Award which includes nominations from patients and local people, was awarded to Caroline Critchley, a Sister from our Paediatric Oncology Team. Caroline was nominated by the parent of a young girl for her care and compassion.

A full list of this year's winners can be found on our [website](#).

Wiltshire patients' lives transformed by new treatment for leg ulcers

Patients across Wiltshire are the first in the South West to benefit from an innovative new treatment for leg ulcers which has already changed the lives of around 40 patients.

Our Community Nursing Teams have invested in a sleek compression treatment, which means patients with venous leg ulcers can now fit trousers over the top of the treatment and wear shoes, transforming the lives of many with this long term condition.

Previously, patients relied on cumbersome layered bandages, which not only required regular and lengthy applications, but also restricted mobility and clothing choices.

The treatment, initially trialled in Melksham, Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge, will be rolled out to a further 100 patients across Wiltshire throughout August. It is hoped that by the end of the year around 250 patients will benefit, accessing the treatment through community nursing teams and practice nurses.

It is also expected to save the Trust at least £40,000 a year by reducing the length and frequency of nursing visits, with time saved being used to visit more patients.

The older style bandages can take up to an hour to apply and have to be changed regularly. The new treatment can be applied in just 20 minutes and adjusted by the patient themselves where appropriate, helping to maintain independence.

An article on the subject will be published in the August edition of The Journal of Community Nursing.

Personalised Care Plans for dying patients

Dying patients are now more involved in decisions about their care at the end of their lives, thanks to the introduction of Personalised Care Plans across the Great Western Hospital.

The plans will be used to prompt discussions with patients at the end of their lives, involving their loved ones and carers in decisions about their care, including where patients want to spend their final days and how loved ones should be supported.

The plans also include information for patients and families about possible symptoms and how they can be treated, ensuring spiritual and cultural needs are met, whether patients wish to donate their organs or body tissues and information about the hospital for friends, family and carers.

Across the Trust we work hard to provide compassionate care tailored to the individual needs and wishes of patients in the last days and hours of life and those closest to them.

Our priority is for every patient at the end of life to experience a dignified and peaceful death.

Inpatients' medication now prescribed electronically

Inpatients at the Great Western Hospital now have their medication prescribed electronically through portable computers thanks to the Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (EPMA) system.

Rolled out across all 22 wards, it replaces handwritten charts and allows better communication between staff, enabling them to have real-time access to accurate patient information.

It improves patient safety by giving staff access to automatic warnings about allergic reactions and drug interactions.

The new system was introduced thanks to a successful application to NHS England's Safer Hospitals, Safer Wards Technology Fund.

Healthcare simulation day for local students

St John's Marlborough students visited the Great Western Hospital in June to experience a day in the life of a range of healthcare professionals during a special simulation day.

The 17 pupils were taken through a real-life scenario of a patient's journey following a road traffic accident, which was aimed at encouraging younger people to consider a healthcare career.

The simulation - the first of its kind at the hospital - complements the Trust's popular Dare to Doctor and Dare to Nurse programmes, which invite older A-level students to shadow ward staff, learn about basic clinical skills and gain support for medical school interviews.

If you have any questions about News in Brief, please email comms@gwh.nhs.uk.