

News in Brief can help you stay up-to-date with our latest news and developments.

We hope it gives a helpful overview of what's been happening this last quarter.

Upcoming visit by the Care Quality Commission

The next routine inspection of the Trust by national healthcare regulator the Care Quality Commission will take place in the spring.

Inspectors will arrive at the Great Western Hospital for up to two weeks from Monday 20 March, with their visit also expected to cover the care being provided to patients in their homes across Swindon.

This is a unique opportunity to demonstrate the improvements that have been put in place since the CQC's initial inspection in September 2015 when the Trust was rated as requires improvement.

It is hoped the good work and changes that have been implemented over the last 18 months will help the Trust change its overall rating to good.

Operational pressures since the beginning of the year

Along with the majority of other NHS organisations, the Trust has experienced significant demand since the beginning of the year.

Rising numbers of emergency attendances and admissions, coupled with delays in getting patients home when they are well enough, has meant that some people have had to endure lengthy waits for a bed to be made available.

However, new measures such as moving the Ambulatory Care Unit closer to the Emergency Department, so that more people can be diagnosed, treated and discharged the same day, and the new Home to Assess Service, which enables patients to leave hospital and be assessed in their own home before being officially discharged, are helping to reduce waiting times.

Despite the pressure, teams have continued to show unfaltering dedication and professionalism and it is a testament to their hard work that the majority of patients in 2017 have continued to be admitted, transferred or discharged within the four hour national target.

UK's first four-lead pacemaker fitted at GWH

A groundbreaking operation to fit the UK's first four-lead pacemaker was carried out at GWH in November.

The new device was fitted by the Trust's Cardiology team as part of an international research project to assess the benefits of the cutting-edge technology.

Pacemakers, which use electrical pulses to control a patient's heart rate, traditionally have three leads although experts believe a fourth lead could benefit some people with specific heart rhythms.

Dr Badri Chandrasekaran carried out the operation and said the patient is recovering well and feeling much better.

Update on Swindon community healthcare services

Since October, the Trust has been providing adult community healthcare services in Swindon on a caretaker basis.

A permanent contract for this arrangement was expected to be signed in mid-February, but has now been pushed back until 1 April.

This is to allow the Trust time to continue gathering important information about the new services and agree the final terms and conditions of the new contract with

Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group.

It means that from Saturday 1 April, the Trust will move from a caretaker position to the official provider of community services, meaning local people will soon feel the benefits of a more joined-up healthcare system.

NICE approves pioneering cancer treatment

A pioneering treatment for breast cancer is to become available to NHS patients at GWH this summer following approval by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

The organisation responsible for recommending or refusing new treatments described the benefits of intraoperative radiotherapy as "promising".

Unlike traditional methods, it involves giving breast cancer patients a one-off dose of radiotherapy while they are still in the operating theatre.

GWH is one of only six hospitals in the UK capable of offering the service to patients.

The state-of-the-art equipment used for the procedure, which was part funded through an appeal by Trust charity Brighter Futures, has been at GWH since 2015 but has only been used sporadically as part of a pilot project.

Focus on sepsis helps 90 per cent of patients to full recovery

Latest statistics show nearly 90 per cent of patients at GWH make a full recovery from the potentially fatal infection sepsis.

Between October and December 2016, the hospital's dedicated sepsis team gave lifesaving treatment to 287 patients, with 87 per cent going on to survive the diagnosis.

The early diagnosis and treatment of sepsis, both of which greatly improve a person's chance of survival, have been among the Trust's key priorities in recent years.

A new Acute Sepsis and Kidney (ASK) team is providing medics with practical support and expert advice on how to spot and treat the life threatening condition.

In the last three months of 2016, more than 77 per cent of patients benefited from the Sepsis Six - a set of globally recognised medical interventions designed to counteract the impact of sepsis.

Waiting times for planned procedures

The target for treating patients within 18 weeks of their original referral was achieved during the last two months of 2016.

More than 92 per cent of patients who were on the list for a planned procedure in November and December had been waiting less than four and a half months.

Meeting the referral to treatment (RTT) target during the winter months can be difficult with elective procedures often being postponed to allow for the traditional increase in urgent and emergency operations.

Although data for January is not yet available, it's likely that RTT performance will be impacted given the significant demands placed on the healthcare system since the start of 2017.

Healthcare without an appointment

To help prevent unnecessary attendances to the Emergency Department, the Trust is continuing to remind local people of how to access on-the-day healthcare, advice and treatment.

Research suggests that some patients attend hospital if they have been unable to secure a timely appointment with their GP.

Posters outlining the alternative healthcare options in Swindon, such as the Urgent Care Centre and Walk-In Centre at Carfax Street, have been produced and are now

visible at GWH and GP surgeries across the town.

Leaflets with the same information are also being handed directly to patients as they are discharged from ED.

Helping to get patients home as early as possible

The Trust's Leaving Hospital campaign calls on local people to do what they can to help friends and relatives in hospital get home sooner.

While teams at GWH do all they can to ensure patients are not in hospital longer than necessary, practical steps by friends and family members can help prevent unnecessary delays.

Such measures include helping with transportation, collecting medicine from the pharmacy, beginning discussions around home adaptations and stocking the food cupboard with essential items.

The Trust has developed an information leaflet listing the steps, which is hoped will encourage family and friends to think about discharge planning at an earlier stage.

Stem cell service receives essential accreditation

The stem cell transplantation service at GWH was awarded a prestigious international accreditation at the end of 2016.

It means the team can continue providing lifesaving cancer treatment locally, as without the accreditation patients would face a long trip to either Bristol or Oxford.

Renewed every four years against a pass criteria continually increasing in difficulty, the achievement provides assurance of high quality patient care and laboratory performance.

It is the second time that GWH has secured the honour, making the team only the sixth in the country to do so.

Recruitment event for community staff

A special recruitment day specifically aimed at staff interested in providing care outside of hospital took place in January.

It was the first event of its kind since the Trust became responsible for providing community healthcare services in Swindon.

More than two dozen people came along to hear about the various positions available, with some even sitting an interview on the day.

Other similar events are already being planned for later in the year.

National award nomination for maternity support worker

A maternity support worker with more than 10 years experience of helping to deliver babies at GWH has been nominated for a national prize.

Kerry Wheeler, who has worked at the hospital since 2004, was shortlisted for the Pregnacare Maternity Support Worker of the Year Award in December.

The nomination came from colleagues who were moved to put Kerry's name forward after seeing the personal care and support she provides to each mother.

Kerry will find out if she will bring the prize back to Swindon at the awards ceremony in London on Tuesday 7 March.

Nominations open for annual Patients' Choice Award

Members of the public can shine a light on the staff whose care made a difference to them and their families with the Trust's annual Patients' Choice Award.

Presented each year at the Staff Excellence Award, the category recognises staff who have gone above and beyond with all nominations coming exclusively from patients and their families.

Last year's winner, Dr Sathish Kumar, was nominated by the wife of a patient who attended the Emergency Department with a rare condition on Christmas Day.

Dr Kumar's quick thinking and fast actions ensured a diagnosis was made early on and the treatment that would ultimately save his life could begin straight away.

Nominations can be made using the [online form](#).

Official opening of new Swindon nursing campus

Swindon's nurses of tomorrow will be able to start their career in a state-of-the-art location, following the opening of a new Oxford Brookes-run education facility.

The new campus in West Swindon, which replaces the outdated town centre building, will be the new home for the university's adult nursing students.

Currently, around 80 per cent of nursing graduates from Oxford Brookes will start their NHS career on the wards at GWH.

Renowned human rights lawyer Lord Joel Joffe, after whom the new building is named, spoke highly of GWH and the care staff provide to local people at the official opening in February.

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