

News in Brief is designed to help you stay up-to-date with the latest news and developments from Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Health Secretary praises patient safety on visit to GWH

The Secretary of State for Health visited the Great Western Hospital in November as part of a nationwide tour to learn more about what individual NHS organisations are doing to maintain, improve and enhance patient safety.

During the visit on Friday 10 November, Jeremy Hunt MP heard from Dr Guy Rooney, Medical Director, about some of the Trust's recent safety achievements before giving his own presentation on what's happening at a national level to support safety in the NHS.

Before leaving, he said: "The Trust continues to set itself deliberately ambitious targets to remain focused on its vision of safety and quality and I want to thank all staff for continuing to prioritise this incredible work, even when our hospitals are busier than ever."

Preparing for another busy winter season

With winter fast approaching, the Trust has put robust plans in place to ensure it is in the best position to manage the expected increase in demand.

Building on what worked well last year, the Trust is confident the plans will have a positive impact on patients coming to hospital over the colder months.

Some of the initiatives being introduced include:

- Changing the working arrangements of staff to ensure there is cover for the busiest periods
- Increasing the number of staff working in the Urgent Care Centre
- Expanding the Acute Medical Unit to give more space to both patients and staff
- Reducing clinic work and elective surgery between Christmas and New Year
- Putting more specialist cardiology nurses in the Emergency Department

More than 70 per cent of staff given the flu jab

More staff than ever before have had the seasonal flu jab, increasing their chances of staying healthy during the colder winter months.

So far, around 72 per cent of staff have had the vaccine, making 2017 the Trust's most successful flu campaign to date.

It also means the Trust has not only met, but exceeded its initial target of giving the jab to 70 per cent of staff who have regular patient contact.

Much of this year's success can be attributed to the army of peer vaccinators, who have been giving the vaccine to colleagues as they work.

Update on the Trust's financial position

A number of spending control measures have been introduced to support the Trust's financial position.

Since April, overall spending has increased while performance against savings targets has been lower than expected, which means there is now potential for the Trust to end the year with a deficit higher than originally forecast.

However, it is hoped the new measures will enable the Trust to realign its finances and end the year in a better position.

Restrictions on the use of premium staffing agencies are set to be brought in and there will also be an ongoing review of all non-clinical vacancies.

Voice-banking software helps patients hold on to speech

Motor Neurone Disease patients at risk of permanently losing their voice can now continue to communicate with the help of state-of-the-art technology at the Great Western Hospital.

Patients are being supported by the Speech and Language Team to record a list of more than 1,000 common phrases into a specialist laptop, which then converts the audio files into a synthetic voice for the patient to use when they are no longer able to talk.

The technology is similar to that which has famously been used for many years by Professor Stephen Hawking.

Patient Jon Stephens has said that new technology will be a "great asset" when he eventually loses his voice.

Radiotherapy Appeal less than £100,000 away from £2 million mark

The grand total for Brighter Futures' Radiotherapy Appeal has now topped £1.9 million.

It means the charity, which is raising money to bring lifesaving cancer treatment to the Great Western Hospital, is less than £100,000 from the £2 million milestone and less than £1 million from the overall target.

The appeal continues to receive support from people and organisations across Swindon and Wiltshire, with the total being helped in recent weeks by a third donation of £25,000 from Malmesbury League of Friends.

Brighter Futures expects to reach £2 million before Christmas.

Red2Green helps patients get home sooner

The Trust has signed up to a new way of working which is helping patients get home from hospital quicker by enabling teams to spot potential delays much sooner than before.

Red2Green works on the premise that every day of a patient's stay in hospital can be defined as either red or green.

A red day is any day that does not justify a patient being in hospital – for example, a day spent waiting for test results.

A green day is the opposite, when a patient receives care or any other intervention that actually moves them closer to being discharged.

Teams start each day by looking at the patients they have and, for each person, asking whether it will be a red or green day.

Red day patients can then be highlighted with teams able to work together early on to resolve the issues and turn them from red to green.

Moving closer to accountable care

The Trust is continuing its work with local health and social care organisations across Swindon on bringing accountable care to the town.

A more joined-up way of working, accountable care involves organisations that once operated in isolation coming together to deliver care in a more efficient and effective way, while supporting people to live healthy, independent lives.

It is hoped that a shadow version of accountable care could be in place in select communities by next April, with the full Swindon-wide model coming a year later in 2019.

Progress on accountable care will continue throughout the winter months, with teams using feedback gathered from both staff and patients to shape the work taking place.

Creating a new Observation Unit at GWH

Recent visitors to the Surgical Assessment Unit at GWH will have noticed teams of contractors on site, as work to create a new observation unit continues.

The current observation area, which allows staff in the Emergency Department to closely monitor patients, is based within SAU but the ongoing work will see it given its own space away from the rest of the busy department.

This will ensure that patients needing round-the-clock monitoring, such as those with mental health needs, can be cared for in a safer and more secure environment with better access to specialist staff.

The work is expected to be complete by mid-December.

Electronic patient referrals coming soon

From next year, all referrals made to the Trust by GPs across Swindon will be electronic.

The move, which is part of a national project, is another step towards the NHS becoming completely paperless.

As well as referrals, the way in which GPs contact consultants and specialist doctors for advice and information is also moving to a digital system.

It is hoped that online referrals will allow both staff and patients to benefit from a much more streamlined process.

New app keeps parents and babies connected

The Special Care Baby Unit at GWH is the first in the region to help keep parents in touch with their little ones overnight with the help of an innovative new app.

Baby Diary allows nurses on the ward to send real-time updates and photos to mums and dads who are unable to stay by their newborn's side while in hospital.

The messages, which appear on the app as if they were written by the baby, ensure that parents do not miss out on any important or special moments while their child is away from home.

Consultant Dr Sarah Bates said the app can help comfort parents at what is often a very difficult time.

Thanks from BBC sports commentator

BBC sports commentator Rob Walker praised Trust staff in an open letter following his family's stay on the Children's Unit at GWH.

Rob, who has lent his voice to the BBC's coverage of some of the world's biggest sporting events, contacted the Trust after he and his wife were "blown away by the incredible professionalism" of staff on the ward.

The Walker family were in hospital for five days while their son Arthur was cared for on the Children's Unit.

He said: "Everyone in the hospital made our experience more bearable and it was so obvious to us they did it because they believe in what the NHS stands for."

[Click here](#) to read Rob's letter in full.

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