



Great Western Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

What makes us  
**Great**

Looking back at 2023

# Introduction



Working in such a busy organisation, it's often easy to forget just how far we have come and the achievements we have made, as we focus on the immediate priorities in front of us.

Our Book of Great is intended to allow us all a few minutes to shift our focus back to what we've all achieved together.

In many different ways, 2023 was a really successful year for us with our new Integrated Front Door really beginning to take shape, the roll-out of our Improving Together way of working continuing, and the progress that's been made as we work to become a more inclusive organisation.

This short book offers a look back on these areas and many other good things that happened right across the organisation.

Whilst this book details some of our many successes, we know it doesn't tell the whole story and there are many achievements we had to leave out. If you have something you're really proud of, then please let us know by emailing [GWHcomms@nhs.net](mailto:GWHcomms@nhs.net)

Thank you for everything you do to help provide high quality care for our patients across Swindon and Wiltshire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Westbrook'.

Jon Westbrook,  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

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# Celebrating 75 years of the NHS

In July, we celebrated 75 years since the creation of the NHS.

Swindon helped inspire the modern healthcare system we know today, with the Great Western Railway Medical Fund and other medical funds leading Nye Bevan to create a form of public healthcare.

That's why we were proud to work with the Mechanics' Institution Trust and local historians to produce a video telling the story of healthcare in Swindon across nearly 200 years. The video was shared at local events celebrating the anniversary and on social media.

The importance of this link was recognised by Great Western Railway, who named a train after Nye Bevan,

which stopped at Swindon station on its first journey.

We also unveiled a new display at GWH, with the faces of 75 staff from across our Trust. These boards highlight the diversity that makes up our organisation and celebrate why we are a great place to work.

The Trust held several events to mark the occasion, including our first ever Nursing and Midwifery Conference, a 'Superhero Run' organised by Brighter Futures, and the national NHS Big Tea.

We were also proud to support national events marking this important anniversary, including some staff attending a service at Westminster Abbey.





# Outstanding patient care

## Integrating care in Swindon

We are proud to be one of the only local NHS trusts to provide healthcare both in hospital and in the community, in patients' homes and in health centres across Swindon.

We are now focused on further integrating health, social and voluntary care in Swindon and beyond, which will make it easier for us to provide care which feels joined-up for patients and their families.

Working in this collaborative way makes it easier to remove organisational barriers, which can cause delays or impact the experience of patients in other ways. It also makes it easier for us to design patient pathways which are truly patient focused, so patients have a more seamless experience of care between different providers.

Initiatives such as Home First, Urgent Community Response and NHS@Home - Virtual Wards, are enabling patients to leave hospital sooner and receive care at home which was traditionally only available in hospital. While the Swindon Integrated Care Alliance Coordination Centre, brings together multiple organisations in one space, improving communication, streamlining processes and enabling quicker decision making.

Alongside treating illness, our hospital and community teams also work together to help people better manage long-term conditions, so that they can stay well and live independently in their own homes.

Designing and providing care in partnership with others is helping to improve the patient experience in terms of consistency, access and quality, while also creating opportunities for system-wide improvements and a more sustainable local health and care system.

## First robotic surgery procedure carried out

We carried out our first robotic surgery procedure, having purchased a new machine as part of a region-wide investment into the latest technology.

The Versius machine allows our surgeons to operate in a less invasive way, while maintaining the highest levels of precision, lowering the risk of infection and complications, and helping patients spend less time in hospital.

Surgery using our new robots began by treating patients with bowel cancer and has since expanded into other departments including gynaecology.

The robot works by allowing surgeons to use 3D vision and increase their mobility by using instruments on a robotic arm controlled by a remote console.

As well as benefitting our patients, the new robot reduces physical demands on our surgeons and allows us to work more closely with other parts of the local healthcare system.

Robotic technology is continually advancing, and we look forward to being able to apply this new technology to more specialties and patients.



## Sharing patient records safely

A significant landmark was reached in the Acute Hospital Alliance project to deliver a Shared Electronic Patient Record (EPR), with the trust boards at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and here at Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, approving the programme's business case.

The EPR will allow us to standardise care across our system, reducing variation in clinical pathways and therefore providing a better experience for both staff and patients.

The digital solution will allow us to work more efficiently, avoiding the duplication of patient records and help us understand more about the populations we serve and how to tackle their differing health inequalities.

## National recognition for neonatal care

Our Neonatal Unit received a positive outlier status in the National Neonatal Audit Programme.

We are a significantly positive outlier at delivering the life-saving intervention of delayed cord clamping for babies born at 34 weeks or under. This is an intervention which is associated with a near 30% reduction in mortality.

We had the sixth highest rates out of nearly 200 units across the UK.

## ENT rated best in UK for training

Our Ear, Nose and Throat department was ranked as the best in the UK in the General Medical Council's annual national training survey.

The survey is used to build a comprehensive picture of the experiences of doctors in training across the UK, and the quality of postgraduate medical education and training.



## Lung Cancer Health Checks

In 2023, we welcomed the NHS Targeted Lung Health Check Programme to Swindon, in partnership with the Thames Valley Cancer Alliance.

Smokers and former smokers aged between 55 and 74 in Swindon have been invited for free NHS Lung Health Checks at a mobile screening unit in Asda, West Swindon.

Thousands of CT scans have taken place, with the Alliance achieving an uptake of 76% for our invitations to people across the local area to have Targeted Lung Health Checks.

The screening helps to identify signs of cancer at an early stage when it is much more treatable, ultimately saving more lives. More than 20 people have been identified as having cancer this year, through the programme.

This programme is taking place in conjunction with our work to encourage people across Swindon and the wider area to give up smoking, to improve general health and reduce the risk of smoking complications among the local population.



## Supporting families in Ukraine

In February 2023, the world marked a year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began.

To mark the occasion, we shared the story of a doctor who spent time working in our Cardiology department having fled Ukraine for Swindon at the start of the war. Olga Pantas' story attracted national media attention and reflects our commitment to welcoming staff from across the world.

We were also pleased that as part of our sustainability programme, and to support local and global humanitarian aid, around 250 old mattresses that the Trust no longer needed were donated to charitable causes, rather than being incinerated or disposed of.

This saw more than 50 mattresses donated to Swindon Humanitarian Aid Partnership being sent to Ukraine and other countries around the world, while a further 100 were given to Physio Net and taken directly to Ukraine.



## Improving Together

More than half of staff say they feel able to make improvements at work since the introduction of Improving Together, our Trust-wide approach to improvement.

This way of working has been used by teams across our organisation since 2021 to solve problems, explore ideas and make improvements to the working lives of staff and the experience of patients.

The approach is mirrored across our Acute Hospital Alliance with the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust.

Improving Together brings all staff in any area together for a short time each day in a huddle, giving everyone an opportunity to have their say. It's empowering people to speak up, share ideas and make changes that they may not have had the confidence to pursue before.

Improvement experts in the Transformation and Improvement Hub offer guidance, training and support and a dedicated area called Workspace provides staff with a space to come together.

In the past two years, 450 staff have been invited to some form of Improving Together training, with many more embracing the principles of this approach.

Improving Together is transforming how we bring people together, how we communicate and puts improvement at the heart of everything we do.

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# Making improvements



## Improving our IT infrastructure

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we have embarked on a programme of work that ensures we are able to continue providing outstanding healthcare by fully using the latest digital tools available to us.

We know that having access to the right digital technology makes a major difference to our staff and helps the patients we care for.

That's why, as well as developing our Shared Electronic Patient Record with colleagues in Bath and Salisbury, we are working through a five-year programme of work to upgrade our IT services.

This work has already seen us upgrade our electronic prescribing for medications software and involved the start of a programme to improve skill gaps across data literacy throughout the Trust.

We're also making plans to invest in newer technology across the organisation, update our Wi-Fi provision and make improvements to our cyber security.

Staff will be given the chance to shape this exciting programme of work. The programme is already enabling us to work more efficiently, while continuing to maintain the highest standard of patient care and safety.



## CQC National Maternity Survey

We were pleased to have received a mostly positive response from a Care Quality Commission survey which asked local people to review maternity services.

We scored within the top five trusts for experiences in labour and birth and postnatal care at home.

We also scored highest in the country for feeding your baby and support with breastfeeding.

Responses from women and birthing people across Swindon and Wiltshire showed the Trust was performing above the national average in the following areas:

- Women and birthing people being given enough information on induction before being induced
- Women and birthing people being given appropriate information and advice on the risks associated with an induced labour, before being induced
- Women and birthing people being able to get support or advice about feeding their baby during evenings, nights, or weekends, if they needed this
- Midwives or the doctor appearing to be aware of mothers' medical history during antenatal check-ups
- During pregnancy, women and birthing people receiving the help they needed when they contacted a midwifery team.

Our maternity team are now using the survey responses to identify areas that need further improvement, including postnatal mental health support and people being more involved in decisions during their labour.

## BSW Acute Hospital Alliance in first wave of national provider collaborative innovators scheme

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Acute Hospital Alliance is made up of our Trust working closely with the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust.

Together, we successfully bid to be part of the first wave of NHS England's new Provider Collaboratives Innovators Scheme.

As part of the new scheme, NHS England chose nine collaboratives – one from each region – to help accelerate their development, so being part of the first cohort is recognition of the work we've done so far, and our potential to do much more in the future.

We were the only collaborative chosen from the South West, with nearly 50 bids submitted across the country.

The new scheme recognises the critical role that providers play in helping systems deliver better care.

Being part of the first cohort will provide further opportunities for staff at our three organisations to collaborate more closely together.

It also means that our experience will help to improve future national policy around collaboratives and collaboration.



## Developing our leaders

More than 150 staff attended our first Leadership Conference 'Putting great behaviours at the heart of our leadership'.

Attendees heard from Professor Michael West, Senior Visiting Fellow at The King's Fund, who spoke about how to build successful teams who are compassionate about supporting excellent patient care.

At the session we launched our new leadership behaviours tool, and explored the behaviours we expect our leaders to demonstrate.



## Changes to the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework

Although we strive to provide the highest quality care to our patients every day, we are committed to learning when things don't go as planned, so we can improve and deliver safe patient care.

The Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) outlines how providers such as us should respond to patient safety incidents in order to learn from them.

The framework replaced the current Serious Incident Response Framework and represents a significant shift in the way the NHS responds to patient safety incidents.

It is focussed on:

- compassion and involving those affected
- system based approaches to learning and improvement
- considered and proportionate responses
- supportive oversight.

PSIRF is a major step towards improving safety management across the healthcare system and will support the NHS to embed the key principles of a patient safety culture. It will ensure the NHS focuses on understanding how incidents happen, rather than apportioning blame on individuals; allowing for more effective learning and improvement, and ultimately making care safer for patients.

PSIRF removes the requirement that only incidents meeting the criteria of a 'serious incident' are investigated, allowing for other incidents to be investigated and for learning to focus on areas with the greatest potential for patient safety improvement.

Alongside the framework, a 'Guide to engaging and involving patients, families and staff following a patient safety incident' has also been published, setting out expectations for how those affected by a patient safety incident should be treated with compassion and involved in any investigation process.

Find out more  
about the changes  
by scanning the  
QR code



## NHS CEO Amanda Pritchard visits GWH to see Integrated Front Door, Coordination Centre, and Pharmacy

We welcomed NHS Chief Executive Amanda Pritchard to the Trust for the first time in August.

Amanda was shown the work underway on our Integrated Front Door, and visited our Emergency Department and Urgent Treatment Centre (which recently celebrated its one year anniversary).

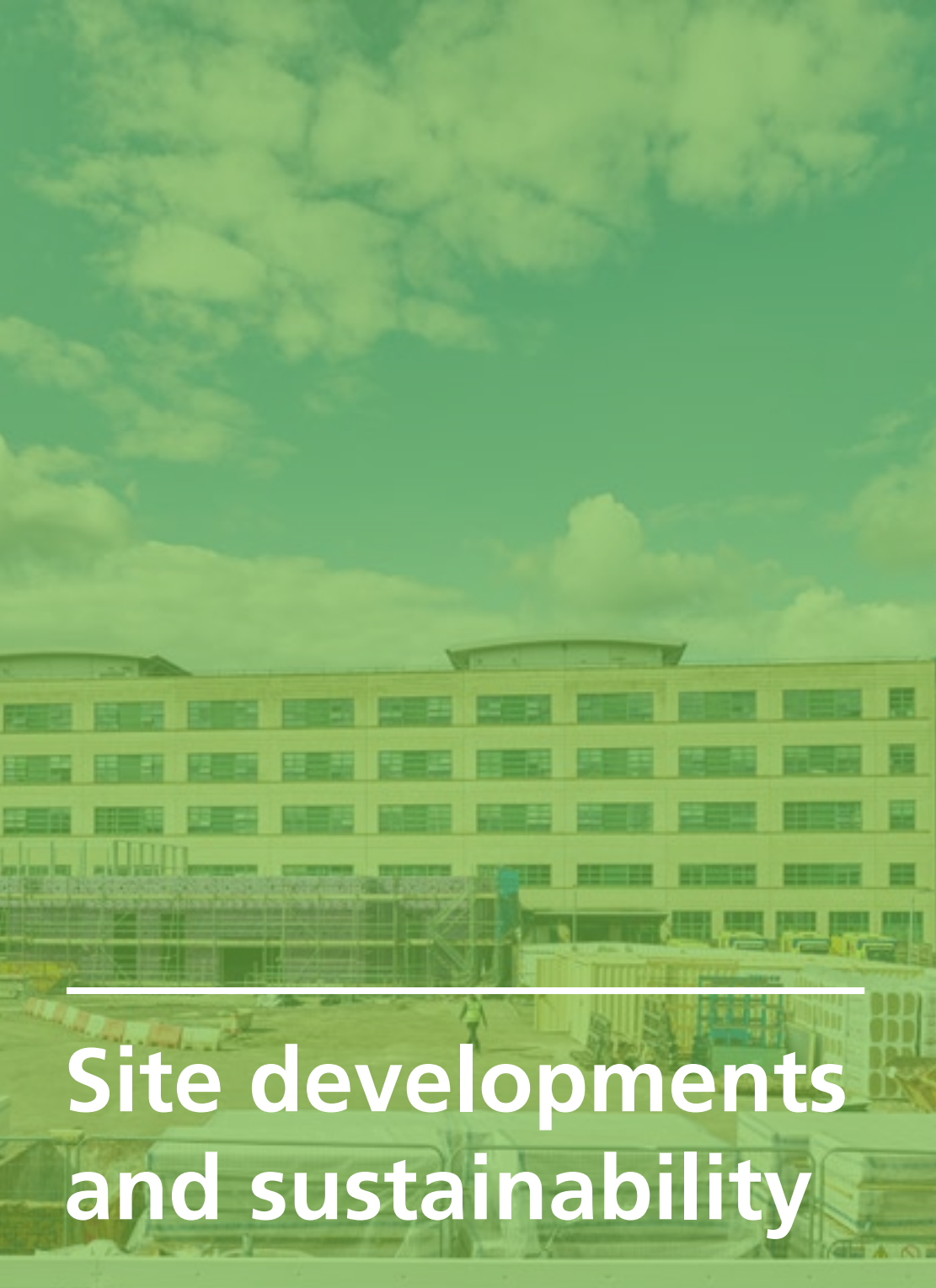
She also spoke to staff in our Coordination Centre and in our Pharmacy department, where she heard about developments in medicine across the Acute Hospital Alliance.

Amanda visited Workspace to hear about our Improving Together work and also spoke to staff about our work to improve training and career opportunities and our support for international nurses through the Stay and Thrive programme.

The visit was a significant milestone for our Trust and this was a great opportunity to showcase some of great work at the highest level.







# Site developments and sustainability





## An update on our Way Forward Programme

We are working hard to expand our Emergency Department, and relocate a number of other services, including assessment units, to create an improved and more joined-up urgent and emergency care service.

This new emergency 'front door' will also have a new Children's Emergency Unit, which will combine the current Children's Emergency Department and Paediatric Assessment Unit.

The new urgent and emergency care expansion will bring together a new large modern Emergency Department, assessment units, and our new Children's Emergency Unit, all in one big space.

All of these services will also link directly with our new Urgent Treatment Centre, so that patients can easily move between services to receive the right care depending on their clinical needs.

The co-location of services will ensure a more rapid discharge for patients who do not need admitting to a ward, and quicker handover times for ambulance crews so they can get back on the road.

Moving some services from other areas of the hospital, such as the Paediatric Assessment Unit currently located on the second floor, to the ground floor will also free up space for more clinical activity.

Work is also underway to unlock funding for developments on the expansion land, which could include a sterile services unit, staff and student accommodation, a rehabilitation facility and a private patients unit which will reinvest money back into the NHS.



## Celebrating one year of new developments at Great Western Hospital

### Urgent Treatment Centre

27 July 2023 marked one year since the first patient was treated in the new Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). During those 12 months, that patient was joined by over 63,600 others who have attended the UTC – resulting in one of the busiest periods for urgent and emergency care that the Trust has ever seen.

Despite this demand, the 60-strong UTC team, alongside colleagues across all urgent and emergency care services, have worked hard to provide exceptional quality care to every patient who needed it.

They've been working in new and innovative ways to help address the increase in attendances, including introducing a Clinical Navigator role to help triage patients to the right place for their care and working collaboratively across the UTC and the Emergency Department.

They've also been looking at ways to make the environment more positive for patients, such as working with a charity to provide 200 books and sensory play equipment to the children's waiting area.

Our Way Forward Programme team, and contractors and partners, were recognised nationally for their planning and construction of the Urgent Treatment Centre, which won 'Project of the Year' at the Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Estates Managers Awards.

### Radiotherapy

Over 600 people have received cancer treatment in the first year of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) Radiotherapy Centre @ Swindon being open to patients.

The centre, part of OUH and located on the Great Western Hospital site, was ceremonially opened in June 2022 and staff cared for their first patients on 11 October 2022.

Since then, as of 11 October 2023, 593 patients have been treated, involving 6,606 radiotherapy treatments and 544 CT scans.

Based on a 70-mile round trip from Swindon-Oxford, this has saved people driving approximately 500,000 miles – about 173.6 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e – and, based on a 2.5 hour-round trip, a total of 17,900 hours, or 744 days.

The centre is an expansion of OUH's radiotherapy service which, until its opening last year, was provided solely from the Churchill Hospital in Oxford, meaning many people can receive important treatment closer to home and without needing to travel to Oxford.

It houses two state-of-the-art linear accelerators, used for external beam radiotherapy, and a specialist radiotherapy CT scanner among other equipment.

OUH invested £18.4 million in this project and local people donated £2.9 million towards specialist equipment through our charity Brighter Futures' Radiotherapy Appeal.

## Upgrading our Theatre and Pharmacy facilities

Our operating theatres and robot conveyers in the Pharmacy department have both been upgraded this year.

Renovation work, which is being carried out across all our theatres sees repairs and improvements to theatre pendants and lighting, surgeon control panels, new flooring, and the redecoration of operating spaces.

Meanwhile, installing a new conveyer for the Pharmacy department helps to improve our storage of medicine, while reducing noise creating a friendlier environment for staff and visitors.

These refurbishments help ensure our teams can continue delivering safe and high-quality care to our patients.

This has only been possible thanks to hard work and collaboration by teams across the Trust, including our Estates and Facilities teams, the Health and Safety team, Serco and others including external suppliers.



## First trust in the south west to make gas and air carbon neutral

We became only the second NHS organisation in the country, and first in the South West, to install a Central Destruction Unit (CDU) to make entonox - also known as gas and air - carbon neutral.

New mum Sarah Clements became one of the first people at the Great Western Hospital to use a carbon neutral pain relief during labour.

Sarah exhaled the entonox, which was sent to the CDU, which is designed to 'crack' any nitrous oxide into oxygen and nitrogen; natural components of air.

This is a significant first for the Trust in our move to reduce our carbon footprint, as anaesthetic gases make up two per cent of the total NHS England footprint. Of this anaesthetic gas footprint, 75 per cent is contributed by entonox and nitrous oxide which are greenhouse gases.

The CDU is currently connected to four of our maternity delivery rooms, with plans to connect all 12 rooms in the near future.

# How we're becoming more sustainable

As development work continues across the Trust, so does our work to improve our carbon footprint and become a more environmentally friendly organisation.

There are a number of green initiatives currently underway to support the Trust's ambition to be carbon net zero by 2040, and we've provided an update on some of them here.

This work comes at a time when NHS England are making the Trust an exemplar site for the work being done on sustainable practices in infection prevention and control (IPC). This means the Trust has some funding to become a model of best practice to be shared with other organisations and to help drive progress nationally.

This is really positive recognition for the Trust, and for colleagues in the sustainability and IPC teams who have been working hard to embed practices such as reduction in glove use and cannulation.

We have also recently become one of just three trusts in the South West to have been awarded funding to progress a Heat Decarbonisation Plan which will provide us with a pathway to reduce emissions from heating; by powering the site by low carbon technology.

Other sustainable initiatives include:

- the launch of a new app, Act, which allows staff to compete with hospital colleagues in Bath and Salisbury to earn green points for every sustainable action.
- we also worked with Swindon Borough Council to provide staff bike marking and security checks to enjoy cycling to work, and refurbished our on-site changing facilities and bike lock-up.
- we were also pleased to be the first organisation in Swindon to be awarded the Stars Silver Certificate for our work on sustainable travel planning.



# Our people

## Supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff

We offer a comprehensive, 24/7 occupational health and wellbeing package for all staff.

This has been increased to include even more resources, sessions, training and support; including art therapy, compassionate care courses, menopause talks and new wellness cafes.

We have launched a new financial wellbeing app, and many staff have also taken the opportunity to have physical health checks, with blood pressure and other observations completed.

Since January 2023, 71 staff members have received training in Health and Wellbeing Conversations, 345 staff have become Mental Health First Aiders and 110 staff members have completed suicide prevention training.

In the same time, over 1,500 staff have had a one-to-one appointment with Occupational Health, 1,600 staff members have attended a counselling session, and nearly 450 staff have accessed support through our Employee Assistance Programme. The Trust also has 11 therapy dogs and two therapy ponies, who visit the hospital weekly to spend time with staff and patients.

**A culture of positivity**

**Team morale**  
Looking after myself and others

**Feeling in control**  
Having someone or someone to turn to for support

**Feeling supported and safe at work**  
Feeling well, both physically and mentally

**Quality of life**  
doing things I enjoy

**A calm mind**  
Feeling peaceful  
Feeling energised

**Work-life balance**  
Being able to switch off after a long shift

**Being included and accepted**  
Being kind

**Mindfulness**  
Job satisfaction

**Feeling motivated**  
Feeling appreciated

**Reassurance that I'm doing ok**  
Being valued

**Relaxed**  
Having a good night's sleep  
Being well rested

**Being outdoors**  
Having family time

**Health and Wellbeing**

**What it means to our staff**

## Welcoming Internationally Educated Nurses

In 2023, we achieved significant milestones in our recruitment of internationally educated nurses. In January, we proudly welcomed our 400th international nurse to our team, and in October, we reached a milestone of 500 new recruits.

These colleagues have come from all corners of the globe to join us during these challenging times as we recover from the pandemic, choosing Swindon as their new home.

Throughout the year, our teams have been committed to providing enhanced support for our international staff. We've implemented a range of measures to ensure a seamless transition, including an improved induction programme, a welcome pack, and a range of activities to help them become familiar with our organisation.

Career development is a key focus for us. With the help of our international support teams, new career development sessions have been set up as well as regular development away days. These initiatives are aimed at equipping our international colleagues with the support and resources they need to thrive in their careers with us.

Our Stay and Thrive programme is now in full swing, offering support to our international colleagues and making their move to the UK smoother and more enjoyable.

## Women's Staff Network launched

As part of our ongoing commitment to building a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across our organisation, we have launched our BAME, LGBTQ+ and Differently Abled staff networks, giving a collective voice to staff and opportunities to influence change.

This new group will be an opportunity to do that for women who work across the Great Western Hospital and in our community teams.

The Women's Network is fully inclusive, welcomes allies and is open for everyone to join.

Key themes for the network to focus on are:

- Helping colleagues to achieve a balance between life, work and childcare
- Women's health and wellbeing in the workplace
- Supporting women's careers through mentorship.

A launch event was held in March, where staff came together to share ideas and experiences. Guest speakers, including the Women's Network Chair from Nationwide, shared their own stories and staff discussed opportunities to break down barriers in gender inequality and how the Trust can raise more awareness of women's health.



## Three winners at the South West Maternity & Perinatal Awards

Dr Sarah Bates, Becky King and the entire Perinatal Team took home three awards at 2023's South West Maternity and Perinatal Awards.

Dr Bates won the leadership category in recognition of her coordination and management of the PERIPrem project and other key programmes of work to support premature babies and their families.

Becky King was celebrated in the Rising Star category for her work to support the local mental health services.

The Perinatal Team were recognised for their outstanding work on the PERIPrem project which seeks to save and change the lives of babies born prematurely.

## Home First initiative supports the discharge of over 500 patients

A bold new initiative has helped more than 500 people who no longer require care on a ward to safely continue their recovery at home.

Home First aims to get patients quickly back on their feet by putting appropriate support measures in place to ensure longer-term care needs can be assessed away from a hospital setting.

Supporting people who are no longer in need of ward-based care to return home not only aids individual recovery, but also helps in freeing up beds for those most in need.

Once a person has been selected for Home First, their current needs are assessed, and any longer-term support needed at home is put in place.

During the first three months of 2023, 53 per cent of Home First patients were able to leave hospital on the same day as they were told they no longer needed inpatient care.

Further to this, in March alone, the initiative saved the Great Western Hospital more than 350 bed days, meaning more ward space was available to those needing round-the-clock care.

Patients are informed about Home First as soon as they are admitted to a ward, with their families also provided with information on how to support the discharge process.

Small steps, such as being available for lifts, collecting groceries and prescriptions, and making sure the patient's home is ready for their return, can all help to speed up the journey out of hospital.



## Staff Excellence Awards

Our staff go above and beyond every day and we regularly recognise and celebrate this work. This year, our Staff Excellence Awards took place on Friday 9 June at the Steam Museum in Swindon. This location was particularly fitting for 2023, as we celebrated 75 years of the NHS which was founded by staff from the Great Western Railway.



**Team of the Year**  
Communications and Engagement



**STAR of the Year**  
Amanda Smith



**Beyond the Call of Duty**  
Stewart Chikukuza



**Championing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**  
PALS



**Improving Patient Experience**  
Acute Physiotherapy Rehabilitation



**Kindness Award**  
Claire Brice



**Leading the GWH Way**  
Timea Novak



**Lifetime Achievement**  
Sue Facey



**Patient Choice**  
Anne Kenall



**Rising Star**  
Eleanor Drew



**Wellbeing at Work**  
Leanne Kent

Here are just a few of the many photos taken from the evening:



## Three finalists in the national Parliamentary Awards

Two incredible individuals and one fantastic team from the Trust won the South West regional NHS Parliamentary Awards.

The Swindon Integrated Care Alliance Coordination Centre was recognised in the Excellence in Urgent and Emergency Care category, Consultant Nurse Bev Breen won the regional Nursing and Midwifery Award and recently retired Neonatal Nurse Toni Starr was celebrated in the Lifetime Achievement Award category.

### Swindon Integrated Care Alliance Coordination Centre

The Swindon ICA Coordination Centre was set up to tackle pressures felt across the healthcare system, when demand in urgent and emergency care services is impacting on movement through the hospital.

The first of its kind in the country, the ICA Coordination Centre displays live reporting of every patient currently in the hospital and every ambulance on route to the hospital. It also records the pathway a patient has entered through and the next steps in their care.

The team have given tours of the Coordination Centre to the local health overview and scrutiny committee, along with former Health Minister Will Quince, and has been mentioned in Parliament as an example of good practice.

### Bev Breen, Consultant Nurse

Bev has used her own initiative to set up successful women's health clinics for both staff and patients. Her staff screening clinic has seen 50 staff in the last 12 months access a smear test at the hospital site, with all clinics now booked up to August.

She also has six patients currently using the menopause clinic, and has ambitious plans to make this a self-refer clinic for staff too.

Bev is also working with Swindon Town Football Club's community group, offering menopause advice as part of their 12-week health and wellbeing cycle.

### Toni Starr, Neonatal Nurse

Toni Starr has retired from the organisation following 52 years of dedicated service to the NHS, most of which was based in Swindon.

Over this amazingly long career, she has shown the most incredible commitment to neonatal nursing. The babies, and the neonatal unit have, by Toni's admission, been the central focus of her life.

Toni was always willing to talk at academic conferences, leading conversations about breast milk, anatomy and medicines. She is also a huge advocate for the next generation of nurses and has inspired many around her to pursue a career in neonatal care.

The winners were successful among 700 nominees made up from right across the country.

They went onto represent the region at the national Parliamentary Awards in July, and the ICA Coordination Centre was highly commended in its category.

## Trust awarded Gold in the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

We were pleased to have been awarded the Gold Award in the 2023 Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

The award acknowledges employers who pledge, demonstrate and advocate their support for the Armed Forces and wider forces communities.

It shows our commitment to being a 'forces-friendly' organisation and is testament to the way we have embedded this into recruitment and selection processes, HR policies and advocacy work. We also have a bespoke policy that specifically supports and promotes the interests of reservists, veterans, and families who work for the organisation.

We have conducted initiatives to promote both external and internal advocacy, including setting up an internal Armed Forces Network to support ex-service personnel, reserves, and their families and friends amongst employees.

We have also raised awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant by encouraging other local businesses, including Nationwide and the National Trust, to pledge their support. In the last year, two Defence Medical Welfare Officers have also been appointed, who provide daily specialist support and signposting services to patients with links to the forces.

Lisa Cheek, Chief Nurse said: "The skills and experience of those who have served, or continue to serve, in the Forces has helped shape us as an organisation, diversifying our workforce and bringing together local communities.

"Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to help us reach this great achievement."



## Two finalists at Health Service Journal Awards

One Trust team and one collaborative team in the region were finalists at the 2023 Health Service Journal Patient Safety Awards.

Home First were recognised for their innovative approach to getting patients home to continue their recovery earlier, by introducing 72-hour assessments post discharge and closer working with partners in social care and the voluntary sector to ensure the necessary arrangements are made to a patient's home after they have left hospital.

The SHarED project is run between a number of NHS trusts, including Great Western Hospitals, and the West of England Academic Health Science Network. It means urgent and emergency care teams can introduce personalised care plans for high impact users – patients who frequently attend the Emergency Department.

These plans enabled staff to engage with patients about their behaviour and needs, provided recommendations on how to interact with and care for patients, and promoted collaboration between different specialist teams across the health and care system for more integrated care.

A recent evaluation of SHarED by NIHR ARC West has shown it to be successful in reducing Emergency Department attendance by 33% and hospital admissions by 67% among these patients.



## Supporting the younger generation

We continue to work to work with a wide group of people to provide opportunities for people to improve their health and life chances.

NHS Cadets is one of the initiatives we have been involved with – this is a new programme, aimed at young people aged 14 to 18, to provide opportunities for them to explore roles in healthcare. Cadets are able to learn about life in healthcare through first-hand experience and hearing from inspiring professional speakers. They are also taught first aid skills, such as resuscitation.

We are proud to be supporting NHS Cadets, including through offering facilities on the Great Western Hospital site for training sessions and inviting staff from across the organisation to share information about their roles.

Another initiative is Project Search, a programme which aims to support young adults with learning disabilities to develop their employability skills, obtain hands-on experience in the workplace, and receive support with securing paid employment after the programme.

We welcomed the newest cohort of students from New College Swindon who will be gaining work experience at our Trust by undertaking rotational placements with Serco.

## Staff survey

We received the highest response rate for the 2023 staff survey, with 69 per cent of the workforce taking the time to have their say. This is 10 per cent higher than the previous year, an additional 776 staff.

All divisions achieved an uplift on their response rates from last year, with Corporate services at 77 per cent, Integrated Care and Community at 75 per cent, Surgery, Women's and Children's at 69 per cent and Medicine at 62 per cent.

It's really positive that so many staff have completed the survey as this gives the Trust a really rich pool of feedback to help inform areas of focus and improvement in the coming year.

Since the results of the 2022 staff survey, we focused on developing the EDI agenda further, with Equity Data Walks, more recruitment of international staff and the introduction of a professional conversation support forum.

We've also invested in areas to make the working life better, including £2.2million in safer staffing and £3.4million in robotics, theatres, stroke and diagnostics.

## Two winners at regional Clinical Research Networks awards

Two incredible members of staff won awards at the Clinical Research Networks regional awards ceremony.

Donna Noonan, Head of Service for Research and Innovation, was the winner in the continuous improvement category which recognised her commitment and dedication in supporting our research team to continuously develop and improve.

Laura McCafferty, Clinical Research Practitioner, won the Rising Star Award for her enthusiasm and drive to implement great ideas which regularly become best practice.

As well as these two fantastic achievements, the Trust was also recognised for its contribution to the HARMONIE study, which is looking at new medicine which protects against RSV.





## Great West Fest

Our third Great West Fest took place in September 2023, and was the biggest and best yet with over 3,500 staff, volunteers and their families.

Taking place at Town Gardens in Old Town, Swindon, Great West Fest featured a great line-up of artists, bands and performers; including headline act Borrowed and Blue.

There were also funfair rides, a circus skills area, food vendors, face painting and more.



## Black History Month

Hundreds of staff joined our Black History Month celebrations in October, showing their support to black colleagues, learning about the inequalities experienced and inspiring one another to build a more inclusive culture.

It was a momentous celebration of the invaluable contribution black people make to the NHS in Swindon, with more than 200 of our staff being of black ethnicity.

An amazing line-up of guest speakers shared their experiences, including a former patient who talked about caring for curly and afro hair. Attendees also had the opportunity to meet the Race Equality Network, Swindon Community Support, Brighter Futures, Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and the Staff Health and Wellbeing team.

Organised by the Trust's Race Equality Network, there was delicious food and refreshments, and some staff wore traditional dress to celebrate the vibrant mix of cultures we represent.

The network aims to strengthen the voice of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, providing a safe and confidential environment to share experiences in a meaningful way and affect real change.

## Opening our doors to T-Level students and apprentices in our maternity services

In September 2023, we warmly welcomed our second cohort of second-year midwifery T-level students to our Trust.

Coming from two different local colleges in Swindon, the students gain valuable work experience by rotating across all our maternity clinical settings.

To further empower our staff and enhance the professional development of our maternity team, we're now offering functional skills courses in Maths and English to our maternity support workers.

We have also launched our first Midwifery Degree Apprenticeship Programme. Our first cohort is set to begin the programme in January 2024, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing mission to support the future of healthcare professionals.



## First Nursing and Midwifery Conference

On 7 July 2023, we hosted our first ever Nursing and Midwifery Conference.

Falling on the same week as the 75 year anniversary of the NHS, the conference was an opportunity to reflect on the progress of nursing through the years, on important achievements and milestones, and on the promising future.

Throughout the day, there was a great line-up of guest speakers who shared insightful experiences, advice, and lessons.

This included talks on sustainability in the NHS, creating a learning environment, bereavement and loss and the future of nursing and midwifery in the South West.

We also place great importance on continually improving the service we provide, and the conference was an opportunity for staff to hear from other nursing teams across the organisation and take on-board useful tips and new ways of working that could be implemented in individual areas.

## Supporting the Harbour Project

As one of Swindon's biggest employers, we strive to create opportunities for quality employment, apprenticeships and a healthy workplace, while ensuring that these opportunities are accessible to all.

Alongside schools, colleges and alternative education providers, we work with local charities such as The Harbour Project in Swindon to promote opportunities to people who may otherwise not come across them.

The Harbour Project provides advice, support, practical help and friendship to people seeking asylum or who have recently been granted refugee status.

We are proud to have welcomed 23 refugees and asylum seekers to our army of volunteers since April 2022. This is an opportunity to build confidence, improve their English and gain practical knowledge of a busy hospital.

This is just one of the ways we are starting to reach out, make connections and work together to improve the experiences of the most disadvantaged members of our community.

## Our volunteers

There are over 400 volunteers currently working across the Trust, who offer around 4,000 hours of service every month. Volunteer roles vary, with new additions to the team in Cancer Buddies and rapid response.

They support patients by acting as a listening ear, liaising with families and running tea rounds. They also support staff by helping with bed making, ward cleanliness and food orders.

Our Pets as Therapy animals are also part of our voluntary workforce. In fact, we are lucky to have 14 dogs and six miniature horses who offer their support to 65 different wards and areas across our Trust sites each month.



## Get involved

There are many different ways that you can be involved with the great work we are doing at the Trust.

You can fundraise for our Brighter Futures charity, become a Member or Governor, or join our incredible Voluntary Services team.

Scan the QR code or visit our website [gwh.nhs.uk/getinvolved](http://gwh.nhs.uk/getinvolved) to find out more.



## Success for staff vaccinations

Thanks to the hard work of teams across the Trust, including Occupational Health and Wellbeing, the Trust was delighted to be ranked highest among all NHS trusts in the South West in delivering both flu and Covid-19 vaccines to staff in 2022-23.

The Trust was also fifth in the country for Covid-19 vaccine take-up, and eighth nationally for flu vaccinations, with around 76% of frontline staff taking up the offer of a flu vaccine. In total, 65% of staff took up the offer of a Covid-19 vaccines.

Across the organisation, more than 10,000 vaccines were delivered in total, including more than a thousand that were given to both inpatients and those using our maternity services.

The vaccines were available to all our staff, students, volunteers, and colleagues at Serco.

The campaign required hard work by several teams to co-ordinate this offer and included several night-time and out-of-hours services being made available to help teams across the Trust protect themselves, their colleagues, and our patients.



## Return of our Great to Talk podcast

Our celebrations marking 75 years of the NHS also saw the return of the Trust's podcast, Great to Talk.



Sharing stories from teams across the organisation, the latest series of the podcast highlighted teams working both in the Great Western Hospital and among our community teams. The stories highlighted the difference that all our teams make to the care that we provide.

They include tales of what it is like to join the Trust as an International Nurse, the way two parents of a prematurely born baby have supported our Clinical Research and Innovation and an Anaesthetist who served in Afghanistan while working for the Trust.

We also reflected on the important work of our staff networks, told the story of a family touched by Huntington's disease, featured our Trust charity Brighter Futures and highlighted staff groups including Admiral Nurses, Advanced Clinical Practitioners, and our important volunteers.

The podcasts and their videos were interacted with thousands of times by both our local area and a national audience.

We will continue to produce special episodes of Great to Talk, telling the stories of our patients and staff.



**Share our  
success**

Together we are  
**Great**