

Connect

Members newsletter

Spring 2026



Together we are
Great

Urgent Treatment Centre

Welcome

Since our last edition, we've continued to actively engage in activities related to the Group transition. A new governance structure continues to take shape, and as a Council of Governors (CoG), we continue to play a key role in building strong working relationships with the Councils of Governors at Salisbury and Royal United Hospitals Bath.

We announced a new Chair for BSW Hospitals Group, Paul Von der Heyde, who stepped into his role on 1 April 2026. Paul brings a wealth of experience, including over 40 years of working at Board level in both the commercial sector and NHS.

We would also like to welcome our newest member to the Swindon constituency, Tim Poole. Now retired, Tim has had a varied career with senior leadership positions in both the private and voluntary sectors in Swindon, Bristol and Gloucestershire.

In his voluntary sector roles, Tim worked in partnership with the NHS, and understands both the pressures on acute services and the need for integrated, user-informed care.

Tim's motivation to be a public governor includes:

- Giving back to GWH: Tim and his family have been well cared for by the Trust over the years and this role offers an opportunity to give something back to the organisation.
- Championing community voices: As a long-time advocate for user and carer engagement, Tim values the membership model and sees the Governor role as a vital link between the hospital and the community it serves.

- Supporting unpaid carers: Through previous roles in carer organisations, Tim has first-hand experience of the challenges unpaid carers face. Tim wants to be a voice for carers and help ensure their experiences and needs are considered in hospital policy and practice.

I agree with Tim that there is constant change in the NHS and the membership / governor model provides an opportunity to ensure that, where appropriate, the voices of patients and carers are heard.

Thank you once again for your continued interest, support, and involvement with the Trust. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your family and friends - we always welcome new members to join us.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch. You can contact me via our Corporate Governance Assistant, Sharon Scott, at sharon.scott27@nhs.net.

Wishing you all good health,
Chris Callow, Lead Governor

[Full list of Public Governors](#)

In the news

Neonatal Transitional Care Unit expands to support more families

The Neonatal Transitional Care Unit is expanding at Great Western Hospital. In February, the unit broadened its criteria to now care for babies born from 34 weeks' gestation, having previously cared for babies born at 35 weeks and above. These babies may need specialised care, additional feeding support or closer monitoring after birth.

This expansion means more babies can stay with their mothers while receiving the specialist care they need, rather than being cared for on a separate unit. Steve and Becky recently welcomed their daughter, the first baby born at 34 weeks to be cared for under the new criteria, and praised the support they received.

Steve said: "Without the unit, we wouldn't have been able to learn how to care for her nearly as well as we have, especially at night. It's been invaluable to look after our own daughter with the team's support, rather than learning everything on our own once we got home."

This expansion would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our perinatal team, who continue to go above and beyond for the families in their care.

New service to support women's postnatal care

The Trust has also launched a new service to support women who have given birth and are experiencing high blood pressure. Developed in partnership with Health Innovation West of England and Greener NHS, this new service enables eligible women to monitor their blood pressure at



home after being discharged following birth.

This can reduce the need for frequent face-to-face appointments at the hospital or health centre, while empowering women to take an active role in monitoring their health during the postnatal period. Women who meet the inclusion criteria will be offered this pathway by their doctor before leaving the maternity unit.

Kat Simpson, Director of Midwifery and Neonatal Services, said: "I'm delighted to see this service launching, which will support women to safely monitor their blood pressure in the comfort of their own homes. By reducing the need for travel to hospital appointments, this service also supports our commitment to delivering more sustainable, environmentally friendly care."

Clinical Health Psychology Service transfers to the Trust

Earlier this year, the Clinical Health Psychology Service formally transferred to the Trust, marking an important step in strengthening psychologically informed care at Great Western Hospital (GWH).

Led by Dr Anna Lagerdahl, Head of Clinical Health Psychology and Chief Psychological Professions Officer, the team has been working on the GWH site for several years. The service was previously delivered by Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) and is now managed directly by Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

This transition will support closer integration across hospital services, enabling the team to work even more collaboratively with doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals.

Clinical health psychologists and their specialist psychological colleagues play a vital role in supporting patients to manage the psychological and emotional impact of physical health conditions. Living with illness can affect many aspects of a person's life, and psychological support can help patients cope with diagnosis, treatment and recovery. The team also works alongside clinical colleagues to ensure care takes account of both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Dr Lagerdahl said: "Becoming part of the Trust is an exciting and important milestone for our team. We will continue embedding psychological thinking into everyday practice and strengthening the support available to patients and colleagues. We also look forward to exploring opportunities to expand specialist psychological provision into areas where it is currently limited."

New information hub for patients and visitors

A new information hub for patients and visitors is now open. The Cherwell Information Hub is located on the ground floor of the Brunel Treatment Centre in an accessible, easy-to-find space.

It offers a wide range of information leaflets and signposting with a focus on unpaid carers and support during the discharge process.

Volunteers will be available Monday to Friday, to provide further advice, support, or simply a friendly chat. Pop along to speak with them or find out more.

Please also note that the hub replaces the previous weekly Carers Café. The team will continue to work closely with partners to expand the information and signposting available.



One year of our dedicated Angina clinic

In February we celebrated the one year anniversary of the launch of our dedicated Angina Clinic - one of the first services of its kind in the UK - to improve care for people living with chest pain.

Over the past year, the clinic has grown into a vital service for patients with complex or persistent anginal symptoms. Led by consultants and specialist nurses, and supported by our Trust's Improving Together approach, the clinic provides expert, holistic care tailored to individual patient needs.

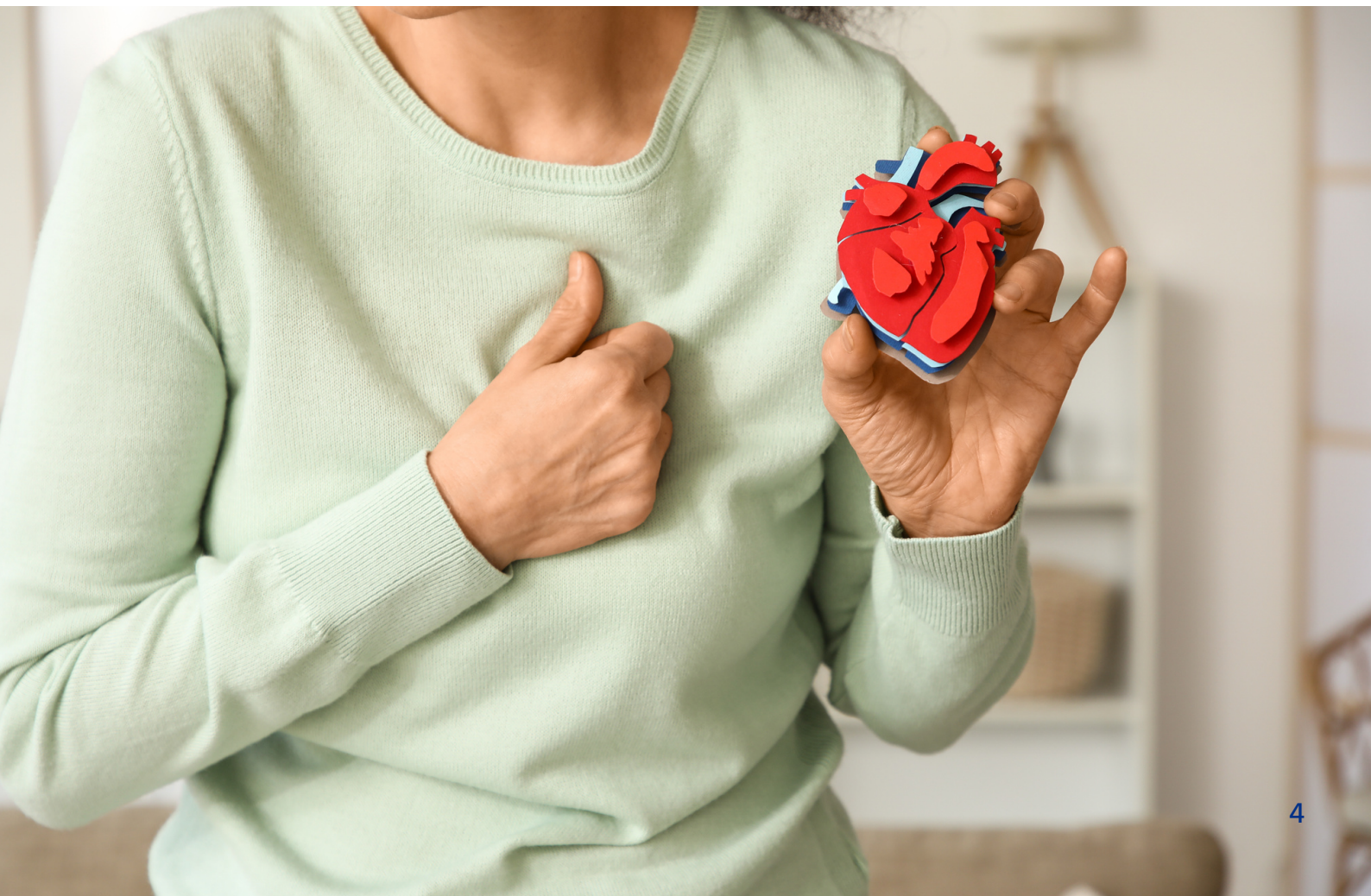
In its first 12 months, the clinic has seen 150 patients and maintained an average waiting time of less than one week for urgent cases. Although current routine waits across cardiology can be around three months, the angina clinic has been able to see urgent patients much sooner by adding extra capacity.

Plans are now underway to introduce additional clinics to help further reduce waiting times.

The team is also developing additional on-site support, including; psychological services for patients whose symptoms or diagnoses impact wellbeing, and pain services for those needing specialist support in managing chronic or complex discomfort.

Looking to the future, there is also the potential for on-site diagnostic tests to help identify conditions such as microvascular angina and coronary spasm - improving early diagnosis and personalised treatment.

This clinic represents another important step in developing the coronary care of the future. One that not only treats angina but helps prevent heart attacks and improves long-term patient health.



Get involved

Our Trust Charity, Brighter Futures

Our Brighter Futures charitable objectives are:

- Enhance the environment for patients and staff in which health services can be delivered
- Enable carers and staff caring for patients to benefit from education and facilities not normally available within the NHS funding, providing it has a link with patient care
- Donate extra equipment and staffing to the Trust above the NHS funding envelope
- Spend funds in accordance with the Charity Commission best practice and in support of the Trust's stated values and ten-year vision.

Pride of Swindon Winners

Carol Barwell, Emergency Department Assistant, and the entire volunteer team won a Pride of Swindon Award, a celebration of the people who make our town truly great.

Carol was recognised for her incredible 40-year long career working in emergency care here in Swindon.

The over 500-strong volunteer team were recognised for their dedication to providing an extra special helping hand to our patients, families and staff.

Well done to you all - an incredible achievement that is testament to the work you do to provide exceptional care to our local community.

Voluntary Services

Volunteers make a real difference to the experience of our patients and visitors by helping with practical tasks, being a friendly face, signposting around the hospital, and supporting staff with administrative duties.

The Trust currently has 380 volunteers. On average Trust volunteers give 2,330 hours per month of their time free of charge, with a minimum of three hours a week and a commitment to serve for a minimum of six months.

We welcome applications from local college and school students, and offer an opportunity that paves the way to allow young people to volunteer within their local hospital, and provide a platform for up and coming medical students and others interested in a career in the NHS, exposure into the life of a hospital, and the vast range of jobs available in the NHS.

Whilst we are one of very few hospitals who accept volunteers from the age of 16, we also have a more standardised approach for students who cannot get work experience, for which volunteering is a great avenue, especially when applying to UCAS.

We ask for a six-month commitment but we also have ad-hoc initiatives, such as audits or small projects that may suit some schools and colleges.

We are very keen to work with not only health and social care students, but a range of students on varying courses that will benefit our patients, such as business or administration and creative art students.

Stay connected

Health Talks

Our Health Talks provide valuable insight and knowledge, and an opportunity to answer any questions you may have around particular issues.

The talks take place on Microsoft Teams, with invites being sent out to all members in advance.

Our next health talk, focussed on menopause, will take place at 6pm on Tuesday 19 May.

Corporate Governance Assistant

Our Corporate Governance Assistant, Sharon Scott, supports our members and governors and is available to answer any questions you may have.

Sharon Scott - sharon.scott27@nhs.net

Become a member

If you have a friend or family member who would also like to join our membership, they can fill out the 'Become a Member' form on our website www.gwh.nhs.uk.

Follow us

You can keep up to date with our news and any new vacancies or opportunities to join our Trust by following us on social media:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [X](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Hospital Radio

Hospital Radio Swindon is the charity providing entertainment and information to the patients of Great Western Hospital and the wider community.

Well done to our Hospital Radio volunteer team who have also won a National Hospital Radio Award in the 'Best Station Promotion' category.

The judges enjoyed the many ways in which anyone can listen to the station, both in hospital and across the local community.

