



# Trust update

Summer 2017

**NHS**

**West Hertfordshire  
Hospitals**  
NHS Trust



## Message from the Chair

**Professor Steve Barnett**  
Chairman of  
West Hertfordshire Hospitals  
NHS Trust

**Welcome** to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter for stakeholders.

There's a great deal of positive news to share, especially the progress on our ambitious plans to redevelop our hospitals so that we can provide patient care from first class facilities. This is a huge project so we won't see the results for some years yet but the transformation will be well worth the wait. We look forward to welcoming patients into bright, modern buildings.

This issue features our impressive diagnostic waiting times, better than expected mortality rates, top-rated stroke services, and our collaborative work in saving on agency staffing.

We also report on the official openings of our newest facilities. That's something that has really struck me since joining West Herts – the buildings may look old from the outside but inside we have some amazing equipment and services that punch that well above their weight.

We are currently preparing for our CQC inspection at the end of August. I am confident the result will reflect our excellent patient care and the hard work of our staff.

Thank you to all our partners for your support with the our continuous improvement – do get in touch if you would like to arrange a meeting with me or if you have any comments on this newsletter.

You can contact me via:  
[Communications@whht.nhs.uk](mailto:Communications@whht.nhs.uk)

## Redeveloping our hospitals

Over the next decade we hope to see Watford General Hospital transformed and major improvements to St Albans City Hospital, where we plan to provide more services, particularly surgery. We are also considering what services can move off the Watford site and we will be developing some exciting options for our services in Hemel Hempstead.

We reached a milestone in June when Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) approved our [strategic outline case](#) (SOC) which sets out our ambition for new and redeveloped hospital buildings and states why Watford will remain as the location for emergency and specialised care. Ahead of new buildings for clinical care at Watford, there will be a much-needed new car park – removing the need to hike up the hill.

In the surrounding area, work continues on [Watford Riverwell](#) – previously known as Watford Health Campus. The clean-up of the River Colne and adjacent land is well under way as are plans for a trade park, shops, green spaces, housing and a school. We are pleased to be part of this major regeneration scheme.

Hertfordshire County, Watford Borough and St Albans District councils all support our redevelopment plans as does the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP). Our STP is comprised of NHS and local authorities across Hertfordshire and west Essex. Having STP support enabled us to seek NHS approval which will result in a submission to HM Treasury.

While we await news about funding for Watford and St Albans, we will focus on services in Hemel Hempstead. We are committed to providing a wide range of services in the town and we are working with GPs, our own clinicians, CCG colleagues and community representatives to scope these.



## Fabulous facilities

### Endoscopy

The endoscopy unit has doubled in capacity to meet the increasing need for early diagnosis. Clinical lead for the bowel cancer screening programme Dr Bruce Macfarlane said: “This expansion and the full roll out of the bowel scope programme and the enhanced facilities for advanced therapeutic endoscopy will provide a great service for our local population.”

### West Herts Cardiac Centre

The new cardiac centre is staffed by an increased number of consultants and more than double the number of specialist nurses. It includes clinics for chest pain, arrhythmia, heart failure, elective diagnostics, echo cardiology and pacemakers.

Nearchos Hadjiloizou, clinical lead for cardiology, said: “Our patients are benefitting from enhanced care on site thanks to the arrival of state-of-the-art cardiac scanning equipment.”

### Simulation suite

Our new simulation suite replicates an acute care environment, providing realistic clinical training. It enables multi-disciplinary staff to take part in simulated scenarios, such as management of acutely unwell patients, and improve technical and communication skills. The suite includes a ‘sim man’ (below) who can cry real tears and scream when in pain.



## Clinical update

### Cancer waiting times

We are meeting six of the seven cancer standards and are better than the national average in all. We have significantly improved on waiting times for breast cancer symptom appointments – 94.7% of these patients are now seen within two weeks.

### Bowel cancer screening

We achieve the highest performance in the region on a number of measures for bowel cancer screening. Notably, we are the only centre in the region to achieve 100% on providing diagnostic test results within 14 days.

### Stroke services

We are achieving ‘A star’ rating for our stroke services and we are in the top 16% of trusts nationally. We have maintained this top rating for a year.

### Cardiac imaging

A new MRI/CT scanner means we now offer both CT coronary angiography and cardiac MRI to enable definitive assessment of cardiomyopathy and structural heart disease. We are the only district general hospital in England to offer both modalities of cardiac imaging.

### Mortality rate

Our impressive mortality rates remain ‘lower than expected’ in a national audit. This is a very positive indicator of the importance we place on patient safety. We are now being benchmarked against the Shelford group (the top 10 teaching trusts in England) which is a great sign of our progress. We have maintained our ‘lower than expected’ status for more than two years now.

## Saving agency staff costs

The Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Agency Consortium – health trusts across Herts and Beds which collaborate to save money – has won a [British Medical Journal Careers Award](#) for ‘working smarter’ and saving staffing costs. Judges said they were “really impressed with the collaborative approach” of the consortium which works together to get the best deals when using agency staff. In total it has saved nearly £1m for our trust with combined savings of more than £6m across trusts in the two counties.