New Heart Unit Opens
in West Hertfordshire at Hemel Hempstead General Hospital

Over 50 invited guests celebrated the official opening of the new Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory by Dr Roger Boyle, National Director for Heart Disease, on Wednesday 12 May 2004.

Consultant cardiologist, Dr John Bayliss, said: “The opening of this new unit is the culmination of many years of continuing improvements in cardiac services in West Herts. It is a credit to all those who have worked so hard on this project that we can celebrate today in this wonderful environment. We are now even more able to deliver better, modern cardiac care more locally.

“Patients will now have far easier access locally for these life-saving cardiac assessments and treatments, and the waiting times will be reduced substantially – for example, by next April no patient will have to wait longer than three months for a routine coronary angiogram.

Pride in your Hospital 2004

The second Pride Day took place on May 22 at Hemel Hempstead and Watford General Hospitals. The day was a great success where volunteers helped garden, tidy the site and clean signs. Everyone enjoyed themselves. We will feature more on Pride Day in the next edition of On the Pulse.
Doctors to take a new lead in Trust matters

Doctors are to take on a far more active role in the leadership and direction of the Trust in future. The *Your Clinical Voice* project has involved the drawing up of a new structure which puts clinicians at the heart of managing, planning and developing services at the Trust in future.

The structure has been drawn up by a team of clinicians and managers led by Dr Sarah Hill, the Associate Medical Director. Dr Hill said: “The new arrangements will enable doctors to take an active role in the way the Trust is managed and the direction hospital services are taking. We have already seen with the work of the Emergency Care Task Force, that when clinicians become actively engaged, solutions are found quickly and effective action taken.”

Key innovations from the new structure include:

✱ The setting up of a Medical Executive – made up of five clinical leaders – who will be invited to contribute to the Trust Board’s deliberations as co-opted members;

✱ Making appropriate arrangements to identify and appoint suitable individuals to key posts on the Medical Executive and as Clinical Directors;

✱ Undertaking further work to define the specific roles and responsibilities of the new Clinical leads, clarifying their relationships with other senior managers and ensuring training and support is provided.

Patient and public involvement

The Trust is still on the lookout for staff to lead in Patient and Public Involvement. Involving patients and the public in our day-to-day work is becoming increasingly important as funding and service improvements are focused on a patient-centred NHS. Much work has already been done in the Trust to develop networks for patients’ panels and an evolving Patients’ Forum, but we need staff input too. For more on PPI please contact Lesley Lopez on HH 2656.

Well done, West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust

The Trust has recently scored a double whammy in being awarded Risk Pooling Scheme for Trusts Level 1 status for the first time and retained its Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts (CNST) Level 1 status after its assessment by Willis on behalf of the NHS Litigation Authority on 10 February 2004 and 27 February 2004 respectively.

The Trust was assessed against a number of standards around organisational and clinical risk management and this pass reflects the enormous amount of work put in during the last year to improve risk management related standards around accountability, strategy, systems, processes and structure covering a wide range of areas including training, blood transfusion, medical devices, infection control, medical records, resuscitation, incident reporting and recruitment.

The overall compliance score for RPST was 84% and for CNST was 96% (4 out of 6 standards scoring 100% and an improvement upon the score for Medical Records at 94%). CNST Criterion relating to Infection Control was assessed for the first time as part of the assessment of which their score was 100%!

Gary Etheridge, Director of Nursing, Midwifery, Quality and Risk said: “These scores are outstanding and this success is a real boost for the Trust. It is a reflection upon the incredible commitment and dedication of key staff working under enormous pressure and everyone involved in contributing to this result. Well done and keep up the good work!”

Official opening of MRI and Nuclear Medicine Scanners

The Deputy Mayor and Watford footballers Jack Smith and Elliot Godfrey recently visited Hemel Hempstead General Hospital to officially open the new MRI and Nuclear Medicine Scanners.

They had the opportunity to meet patients and staff and visit a number of hospital departments including X-Ray, MRI and Nuclear Medicine.

Divisional Director, Clinical Support, Dr Tony Divers said: “Everyone in the Trust is delighted with the new MRI and Nuclear Medicine scanners. This will benefit many of our patients across West Hertfordshire with various conditions including cancer. The X-ray reception area has also been improved and has modernised our service fit for the 21st century.”

Pictured above: The Deputy Mayor, Cllr David Smedley with Rita Gree, Superintendent of MRI and Mrs Smedley

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Every day, hundreds of letters, notes, cards and leaflets are sent to patients from wards, offices and departments throughout the Trust. We are committed to ensuring that these correspondence are:

- Clear – and concise, with relevant information which informs patients;
- Corporate – clearly showing the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust logo;
- Helpful – ensuring that patients feel reassured and supported by the information they receive.

Lynn Hill, Quality Manager at the Trust, said: “We have complaints from patients where they are confused and bemused by some of the letters they receive from hospital departments. Others who have complained, have said that their problems began with the communication from the hospital which gave them misleading or inaccurate information.

“By being clear, concise and helpful, staff could avoid many of these complaints and ensure that patients come to our hospitals in a more positive frame of mind.”

Lesley Lopez, Patients and Public Involvement Manager, said: “We are working closely with the evolving Patients’ Panel in gaining a patient’s perspective on what we send out. We hope to develop new patient information material which is patient friendly and helps staff do their job by explaining in simple terms what patients should expect when they come for their particular treatment.

“It is already proved that by giving them easy to read, well illustrated messages, it helps to take some of the fear out of coming to hospital and begins the healing process even before they set foot in the building. We will be sending out further details on how we can help to develop patient information material over the coming months.”

Members of the Patients’ Information Group are happy to give help and advice on all matters about patient information material and other correspondence.

Get the message right by contacting either Lesley Lopez (on 07881 623836), Lynn Hill (ext 7736) or Nikki Moore, the Trust’s Risk Manager (ext 7051).

Lead Pharmacist in Surgery qualifies as Supplementary Prescriber

Congratulations to Rekha Shah, Lead Pharmacist, Surgical Services on qualifying as a Supplementary Prescriber. Rekha was in the first cohort to undergo the training at King’s College, London and is the first pharmacist in this Trust to gain this qualification. Having worked in Surgery for a number of years Rekha has considerable experience and expertise. She is regularly involved in writing treatment protocols, managing patients at the pre-operative assessment clinics and on the wards.

Rekha said: “All our systems are already in place to implement Supplementary Prescribing at Pre-Operative Clinics. I would like to see more of my colleagues take up this exciting challenge.

I would like to say a really big thank you to Mr John Meyrick Thomas for all his help and support.”

Joan Craig, Chief Pharmacist said: “I am very proud that Rekha has achieved this qualification and was one of the first pharmacists in the country to do so.”

Hospital Volunteer raises money for elderly care wards

A really big thank you to John Bullock who is a well-known hospital volunteer and has recently raised funds to purchase portable suction equipment for the Elderly Care Wards at Hemel Hempstead Hospital.

Francis Flynn, Lead Nurse for Elderly Care said: “John has worked tirelessly in fundraising for Hemel Hospital over a number of years, especially for Elderly Care. He started fundraising after having been a patient in the hospital on the St Paul’s site.”

Francis added: “As well as fundraising, John has also helped patients by organising events, taking them out of hospital for birthday parties and to see shows. He is undoubtedly a champion for the hospital with a dedication far beyond the call of duty and the staff at the hospital really appreciate his good will.”

John also runs a stall at the hospital to generate funds for the John Bullock Fund which supports the hospital.
Hand Hygiene Awareness Days – MVH and SACH

Following the successful Hand Hygiene Awareness Days at WGH and HHGH, further events were held at MVH & SACH in January and February 2004. The format was the same as at the other sites, with Infection Control Nurses visiting wards and departments with the ‘Glow & Tell’ machine encouraging staff to participate in the practical hand washing exercise.

Finger samples were also collected on agar plates and the results were kindly collated by microbiology staff at WGH and HHGH. A prize of £30 of Marks & Spencer vouchers (donated by company reps) was awarded for the person with the lowest bacterial count on the agar plates across the four Trust sites. The winner was Staff Nurse Joy Dabula from Ward 11, MVH.

Evening Standard NHS Champions Award

Congratulations to Dr Glynne-Jones, Consultant Clinical Oncologist at Mount Vernon, who has received an Award of Merit certificate in the recent Evening Standard King’s Fund NHS Champions.

Springboard Personal Development Programme

Eighteen participants joined the first Springboard women’s development programme in January at the Elton John Suite, Watford Football Club. A personal development programme, which takes a holistic look at work, career, education and home environment, consists of four workshops spread over three months supported by a comprehensive workbook. Topics covered include assertiveness, personal development and presentation skills. Each workshop had a guest speaker talk about their career progression and how they got the roles they are in currently.

Feedback from delegates has been very positive: “Excellent course, all topics covered were relevant and useful and have developed a good support network within the group”; “Would definitely recommend this course to other women”.

A second Springboard programme for the Trust is currently being run at Hemel Hempstead.

For further information contact Deborah Fogden, Workforce Development Manager on 01923 217799.

LETTERS

Liz says a big thank you to staff

We are a group of 30 very hard-working inpatient physiotherapists and assistants based at Hemel Hempstead General Hospital. We assess and treat up to 500 initial patient contacts a month under a blanket referral system and are part of a wider multidisciplinary team who are responsible for referring acute patients to slow stream rehabilitation, the community services, and/or ensuring safe discharge home.

Members of our team also rotate across site to the physiotherapy outpatient departments of St Albans, Harpenden Memorial, Gossoms End, and the West Herts Rehabilitation Unit.

Over the past two years the West Herts Therapy Services have undergone an exciting review of their services in line with NHS Plan and NSF targets. Meeting the Challenge and Making a Difference both of which set out drivers for developing and supporting the Allied Health Professions. Our physiotherapy service at Hemel Hempstead Hospital and West Herts Therapy Service is seeking to help create a structure increasingly focused on the patients and their needs.

The Physiotherapy department at Hemel is supportive with a robust clinical supervision and appraisal system, but also giving placement to a large number of work experience and clinical physiotherapy students. We have undertaken several audits this year; attended clinical governance, clinical effectiveness meetings, and clinical network care groups and development of some of the acute integrated care pathways.

Above all we are a friendly and fun department. We have regular weekly social outings and have just held our annual Therapy Ball.

As the Inpatient Physiotherapy Superintendent I would like to say a big thank you and well done to everyone for such dedicated and professional work.

Liz Mowbray
Superintendent Physiotherapist

Impressions of life on the Patients’ Panel

One of the things I have learnt quite quickly is that being on the Patients’ Panel means you need to have a good sense of direction.

All the sites in the Trust are complex and very different. I was guided at Watford towards the ‘black hole’ in the restaurant entrance and after much traversing of underground passages arrived in Maternity. There seem to be a lot of strange underground passages at Watford. I wonder what secrets they hold!!

Not so at Hemel Hempstead; there one needs a head for heights. There seem to be sky walks and bridges on several different levels. One bridge is aptly named ‘heart attack bridge’. I’m still trying to work the Hemel site out. In comparison St Albans is quite easy, although you can get lost there. It took me ten minutes to find the Postgrad Centre, and has anyone found the restaurant yet?

As for Mount Vernon, at least it’s nearly all on ground level and you can stand outside a building and try to get your bearings.

Airports have signs saying ‘10 minutes to Gate 22’. Perhaps these should be put up around the hospitals. Try getting round your site as a first-time visitor and see if it is as easy as you think.

So if you see someone standing with a compass, map and a ball of string and a puzzled look it’s probably a member of the Patients’ Panel trying to find their way around your site; please offer help.

Virginia Barber
Art exhibition comes to outpatients

The walls of the outpatients department at Watford General were transformed recently into an art gallery, full of contemporary paintings of differing sizes, textures and colours. The paintings were all done by local artists and art students and the exhibition organised by Hospart.

David Waterman from Hospart said: “The aim of the exhibition was to transform, through contemporary art, the Outpatients Department by creating a visual and vocal talking point for both patients and staff. The project is funded by Unltd which is funded by the Millennium Fund.”

Rosie Sanderson, Chairwoman said: “I am really pleased that patients and staff will have this opportunity to view art works produced by local people.”

Research studies have shown that visual art can be of enormous benefit to patients and staff by providing interesting and colourful images and paintings, which enhance the hospital environment.

Children to design christmas cards for charity

Calling all school children who would like to see their art designs in print. Local schools are invited to enter a competition to design the Christmas cards to be sold by Paul Strickland Scanner Centre, a registered charity in the grounds of Mount Vernon Hospital which provides scans to diagnose and treat cancer.

Entrants will be in two age groups: Juniors, aged 11-13 and Seniors, aged 14-16 and there will be first, second and third prizes for each. The winning designs will be printed as Christmas cards and all proceeds will go towards the purchase of a new scanner.

For more information including an entry form and terms and conditions of the competition please contact Appeals Office at Paul Strickland Scanner Centre on 01923 844290. Closing date for entries is July 1, 2004.

Fitter, healthier, stronger...

How we can help you!

You are invited to come and find out more about the work of the Occupational Health Department at a staff Fun Day.

Find out more about our service and take advantage of some of our healthy lifestyle sessions including:

✱ Head massage
✱ Aromatherapy
✱ Blood pressure tests
✱ Fat analysis
✱ Cholesterol tests

Sessions will be between 10am and 3pm at:

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<tr>
<td>Hemel Hempstead General Hospital</td>
<td>Tuesday June 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watford Gen Hospital</td>
<td>Thursday July 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount Vernon Hospital</td>
<td>Thursday July 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Albans City Hospital</td>
<td>Wednesday Nov 24</td>
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Hope to see you.

Opening of Dick Edmonds Stroke Unit

The Dick Edmonds Stroke Unit was recently opened for patients at Watford General Hospital, and has made a major contribution to the development of stroke services at the hospital. The unit is a specialised six-bedded acute stroke unit specifically designed to take patients immediately after they have had a stroke. All the specialist stroke equipment in the unit has been purchased with monies raised by the Dick Edmonds Stroke Appeal. The unit has a vast array of specialist equipment including state-of-the-art monitors to record blood pressure, respiration, oxygen saturation, temperature and electrocardiogram which enables staff to detect and correct disturbances at an early stage. The new beds are electrically operated and break into four sections to allow patients to be easily positioned from lying flat to fully seated. All the staff including nurses, physiotherapists, speech and occupational therapists and the consultant physician have been specially trained in looking after stroke patients.
Dear all,

Many thanks for the calls and emails asking how the London Marathon went. In a nutshell: could have been better.

The plan was to do under five hours as my daughter’s previous best was 5.09.

We knew that would always be a tough target so after a 5.30am awakening on Sunday morning we got to the start at 7.10am. Settled down in the Lipton tea tent and started the mental preparation. Horrible morning, misty rain, not bad for running, but easy to get cold. Toilets soon attracted massive queues, so with 45 minutes to go, Helen joined the ladies’ (I think it’s a woman thing). Thirty-five minutes later she got to the destination!

Hurriedly took our bags to the baggage trailers and went to our places in pen 7 to await the gun. Didn’t hear it, but the huge crowd started a slow walk forward. Didn’t particularly like the fella next to me dressed as the grim reaper and pushing a coffin on wheels collecting money! Seven minutes later, over the start line and away.

We knew that we needed to get some time banked to allow us to walk and run later to try to get under that five hour mark. So the first mile, 10.13 then 10.02, 9.12, 9.07, 9.25. To do a sub-5 hour, you need to average 10.30 minute miles, so the plan should have worked. Sadly, if that isn’t what you do normally, it’s amazing how hard those few seconds per mile hurt. Helen was clearly uncomfortable at this pace so we reined back, but the damage was done. With nearly 20 miles to go you do normally, it’s amazing how hard those few seconds per mile hurt. Helen was clearly uncomfortable at this pace so we reined back, but the damage was done. With nearly 20 miles to go and feeling bad, imagine how hard it is to be confident about getting to the end! We had a really gutsy run/walk for the rest of the course, coming in at a time of 5hrs 21mins.

I was really disappointed when I realised so early on that we weren’t going to make the target, but utterly amazed by Helen’s determination, albeit with a large amount of prompting, to get to the end. Sure, she moaned a bit, but we actually made it around, thanking the crowd for their fantastic support, jelly babies and fruit sweets, and we sprinted in at the end hand-in-hand over the line to suck in all the cheers from the supporters and marshals that make the London Marathon so special.

Got the medals, got the photo, proud dad and daughter with that special look of achievement, then the heavens opened! We made it back to Horseguards Parade and our family and supporters, balancing one-legged to change from the shorts to something a little warmer.

So if you saw us en route and shouted encouragement: thank you, sorry if we missed you. If you think that this time is slow, and that getting beaten by a wormie or two is a failure, you try it! And if you think that a girl who at eight miles says she’ll never run the marathon again sticks to her word, don’t be daft! Last night I heard the words, “Next year, I’ll start a little slower!” I suppose that I shouldn’t be surprised; I did get her into it in the first place!

And the tutu? I got so many offers, that I could probably deal with the Trust deficit by myself! (Worryingly, by some rather dodgy characters, who I wouldn’t talk to on a dark night!) The tutu was great, shortly to become the new uniform for the FM teams!

Seriously, please remember that I ran the marathon for the Dick Edmonds Stroke Appeal on the Watford site. If you pledged, please pay up; I’ll show you the medal if you need proof. And if you didn’t pledge, you won’t miss a couple of quid for a really good cause.

Thanks.

Paul Mosley Divisional Facilities Manager

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A new health campus – and casino!

Many of you will have read in the local press about outline proposals for a new community sports and entertainment facility – including a casino – being developed on land adjoining Watford General Hospital and Watford Football Club.

We can confirm that the Trust has been in talks with the Football Club, along with the Borough Council, Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust, Watford and Three Rivers PCT and the East of England Development Agency about how this new facility might be included in the masterplan for a Health Campus in Cardif Road.

Trust Chairwoman, Rosie Sanderson, said: “We welcome the proposal from the Football Club to expand their non-match day activities. We believe that the proposed community sports and entertainment facility could bring substantial benefits for the Health Campus in terms of improvements to the local environment, a shared nursery/crèche and shared education and leisure facilities.

“We further believe that the redevelopment at the Watford Health Campus should encompass measures to dramatically reduce the volume of traffic along Vicarage Road. We will only support masterplan options which positively contribute towards this aim. The proposal for the community sports and entertainment facility can only be considered as an option at this stage – in order that it does not prejudice the case for a major redevelopment at Watford General Hospital.”

We will keep staff informed on progress for these proposals.

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Radiographer Award

Congratulations to Sheila Jones, Deputy Radiology Services Manager, X-Ray Department at Watford General Hospital who has been awarded the South-East Region award by the Society of Radiographers as the radiographer who has contributed most to patient care.

Sheila was congratulated by all the staff and presented with her certificate, cheque, flowers and champagne by Clare Starkey, Senior Radiographer at Watford General Hospital, who nominated her for the award.

Sue Daniels, Radiology Services Manager, said: “Sheila highly deserves this recognition and we are proud of her achievement.”
Congratulations to Medirest ‘Be a Star’ Winners

Congratulations to Sandra Jones, Kadi Sarjo and Anthony Reid who received their ‘Be a Star’ awards at a recent awards ceremony at London Zoo.

The highlight of the day was when Sandra was awarded second prize in the annual awards, much to her surprise. She received a ‘very heavy’ glass award and also travel vouchers to spend on a holiday of her choice.

Sandra received her award for her continuing outstanding work at Mount Vernon and also when we had heavy snow Sandra didn’t get home till 1.00am in the morning, but still managed to be back at work the next morning.

Danny Carpio also received a long service award, for working at Mount Vernon under the Trust and then Medirest for 25 years.

Trust receives top hospital award for second year in succession

The West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust’s commitment to patients has been officially recognised again with the prestigious 40 Top Hospitals award for the second year running.

This independent study included major teaching and regional trusts. The top 40 hospital trusts have all been recognised in reaching a high level of performance in an independent study carried out by the country’s leading hospital benchmarking company, CHKS.

All the hospital trusts entered for the programme because they wanted their performance to be measured against recognised health care standards. The data are the latest available and are based on the calendar year 2003. All the trusts involved in this programme have reached a high level of performance.

David Law, Interim Chief Executive, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, said: “We are absolutely delighted to receive this award which is a real achievement for the Trust. It highlights the excellent work being carried out by all our staff and the Trust’s commitment to patient care.”

June Dodds and Gill Savage (West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust) receiving the CHKS 40 Top Hospital Award from Graham Harries, Chief Executive, CHKS International (left) and Niall Dickson, Chief Executive of the King’s Fund.

Do you have a burning idea? A budget-busting brainwave? A time-saving scheme?

The best ideas for improving the way we work are not limited to the boardroom table. More often than not they come from staff who are working in different departments and understand how systems can be improved quickly and easily.

The Trust’s Enterprising Ideas Scheme is designed to allow all staff to have their ideas heard and put into practice. If your idea is believed to be ‘Enterprising’ then you will receive a £20 gift voucher and your idea will be publicised and the committee will encourage departments to put ideas into action.

At the last committee meeting the following ideas were given an award:

✱ To formulate a standard numbering system for beds on wards. This will save time and confusion for staff, patients and visitors.
✱ To keep the intranet telephone directory up to date to help reduce calls to mobile phones and increase efficiency generally.
✱ To devise a glossary of abbreviations on the intranet, as increasingly in both meetings and documents an abbreviated version of a title, service or word is used.
✱ To organise staff health days that can be linked to national health promotion days. This can also be used as an opportunity for Trust fundraising.

If you would like to submit an idea, please either ring Jean Hickman on HH 2620 or go to the link below:
http://wghintra01/communications1/Enterprising%20Ideas.htm
Recruitment update

West Herts NHS Trust continues to attract an increasing number of high-quality candidates. The headcount has increased to approximately 4,500 people, with a very good response to a number of vacancies. Whilst there remain some specialties with a high vacancy level due to international shortages (such as Therapeutic Radiography and Midwifery), a number of actions have been taken to improve the situation. These include:

urst the recruitment process being re-engineered so that it is much quicker. Further developments include fully integrated on-line applications through the DoH e-recruitment project.

Working closely with local education providers, including taking part in Insight Into Industry Days.

Working with a number of partners such as the armed forces, Remploy, and European Job Centres.

Improving the benefits and discounts that the Trust offers.

Recruitment and retention

The Trust has continued to improve both its processes and its ability to attract good quality candidates. Of particular interest this month:

A new IT system is in place, ensuring that any candidates for hard-to-fill posts have their application forms emailed to the appropriate departmental head on the day of receipt for swift action, helping us beat the competition.

The Trust had a huge response for its supervised placement nursing course, meaning that only very high quality and experienced applicants will be shortlisted and consequently appointed.

The Trust’s Return to Practice course continues from strength to strength. This award winning programme is the presentational highlight of the forthcoming Nursing Times Conference in Manchester.

The NHS has funded another eight NVQ HCAs, who will start their nurse training this month.

The Trust is continuing to ensure that we get to full establishment. In particular:

The number of NMC registered nurses applying for posts within the Trust has increased, with the Trust recruiting over 100 qualified nurses since the start of February (until the end of March), with many more likely to be appointed.

The length of time for the process for recruiting staff has dramatically fallen.

Most staff are now starting in post with a full induction process, which has been shown to dramatically help retention.

The Trust programmes, such as Return To Practice and the HCA Cohorts, continue to be held up as national examples of good practice with a team presenting the RTP scheme recently at a national conference.

In January 2003 the Trust launched a new way of recruiting, training and supporting nursing assistants (Health Care Assistants/Support Workers).

Each month a cohort of 12 support workers join the Trust together and have a five-day induction course which covers many of the essential nursing skills required of the role. These include communication skills, manual handling and basic life support, to name a few!

Once working on a ward/department, all support workers should be assigned a buddy, a more experienced member of the team who observes them in practice, checking their understanding of the task or situation and feeding back.

Each health care assistant will carry with them a record of competencies required of their role which needs to be signed off by their mentor. This is a record of their progress and informs wards of the level of skill to expect from an individual.

Once the HCAs/support workers have successfully completed their competencies, they are given the opportunity to apply for an NVQ in Care. They will be interviewed for a place and then start on the next available course at a local college.

As part of the Government’s modernisation of the Health Service and to open up opportunities for all staff, a Widening Access Scheme was developed. This helps HCAs with prerequisite qualifications to enter the Diploma in Adult Nurse Training at University.

Maria Valori said: “The HCAs are an invaluable part of the nursing team and contribute a great deal within the wards and departments, and go on to undertake further training to become qualified nurses and midwives, through the widening access scheme.”

Harassment advisers

If you feel you are being bullied or harassed at work you may approach one of the Harassment Advisers listed below for a confidential, no-obligation discussion. All the advisers have been trained especially to help – at the very least they will provide a listening ear. More importantly they can help you think through what to do next:

Sharon Andrews, Breast Feeding Advisor WGH x7366
Diane Edghill, Medical Secretary WGH x7506
Pat Jacob, Specialist Nurse WGH bleep 1004
Carol Nolan, Chaplain HHGH x2600
Yvonne Beaumont, Site Services Manager HHGH x2130
Wendy Fowler, Superintendent Radiographer HHGH x2330
Paula Doyle, Occupational Health Advisor HHGH x2576
Daisy Peets, Medical Secretary WGH x7363
John Salsbury, Medical Technical Officer HHGH x2154
Nursery opens at St Albans

TLC’s newest children’s nursery at St Albans City Hospital is now open and accepting registrations. To arrange a visit and experience a little TLC for yourself contact Helen Harbar today on 01727 897602.

Generous staff discounts are now available for all Trust staff, but please hurry as places are strictly limited.

National learning at work campaign

This year the Trust will be hosting events titled ‘Time to Learn’ in conjunction with the National Learning at Work campaign. These will take place on:

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<tr>
<td>Wednesday June 30</td>
<td>Postgrad Centre, HHGH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday October 4</td>
<td>Postgrad Centre, MVH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday November 24</td>
<td>Postgrad Centre, SACH</td>
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The Trust will be using these events as a showcase for various educational partners, affiliates or training providers to promote learning and development opportunities available for all levels of staff.

There will be Learning Advisors available to promote the benefits of learning, to help individuals address and overcome barriers to learning and to assist them in making realistic and informed choices about their careers and development. In turn, this should provide staff with a more informed approach to their personal development plans (PDPs) and allow them to be more proactive within their appraisals.

Advice and guidance will also be available for managers planning staff appraisals and seeking help and support in identifying skill gaps and how to close those gaps through learning and development. Most of this learning and development is funded through Confederation, Learning Accounts and the Learning Skills Council.

There will be free pampering sessions on offer promoting the belief that learning relates to personal health, increasing confidence and self-esteem. For more details and to book your free pampering session, please look out for promotional posters and leaflets coming soon.

Retirement

Farewell to Jenny Wood who retires from the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre this month. Jenny has worked at Mount Vernon hospitals for over 20 years as a therapy radiographer and her experience in this field, together with her training as a counsellor, made her the ideal choice of person to form part of the team that set up the centre in 1993. Known for her attention to detail, Jenny’s work has earned her the respect of all her colleagues throughout the oncology world. The Trust would like to wish Jenny all the best in her retirement.

Childcare

If you need information on any aspect of childcare, come along to one of the Trust’s childcare coffee mornings where representatives from various organisations will be on hand to answer all queries. The dates are as follows:

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<td>Monday June 14</td>
<td>10.30-12.30</td>
<td>Postgrad Centre, SACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday July 9</td>
<td>10.15-12.15</td>
<td>Postgrad Centre, HHGH</td>
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</tbody>
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Call Barbara Leon-Hunt, Childcare Co-ordinator for further details on x7356.

Support for staff

Staff can access counselling through SELF-REFERRAL at either the Skidmore Way Clinic, Rickmansworth by calling 01923 775065 or the St Albans Counselling Service, St Albans by calling 01727 856693. You will be offered one initial assessment followed by up to six further sessions, if appropriate. The services are confidential and free.

Rented accommodation available in the heart of St Albans

London Strategic Housing is working in partnership with the Trust on a development of brand new homes available to rent in the heart of St Albans. These homes will exclusively be let to keyworkers.

This quality development has been designed for single professional people. Tenants will have their own well-furnished bedroom, phone connection and private shower and WC. A modern fully fitted kitchen with integrated appliances will be shared. The monthly rent is only £243 which includes electricity, gas and water charges. The only extra cost will be Council Tax. If you are employed by the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and would like to be considered for one of these new homes or would like to find out more please contact: Yvonne Beaumont, Site Services Manager, Facilities, on HH x2130 or email Yvonne.Beaumont@whht.nhs.uk. London Strategic Housing will be reserving tenancies from May and will have a show home available. This development will be ready for letting in early July.

Chief Executive TLC Barbara Baker, Kerry Pollard, Chairman TLC Rosie Sanderson Chairman WHHT and Deputy Mayor of St Albans, Councillor Alison Steer
Everyone welcome to join

The Watford Arabic School was founded in 1983 by Dr Abdel-Ghany Saleh, and has been given full recognition, with honours, by the Mayor of Watford, Dorothy Thornhill who termed it “a little jewel in Watford’s crown . . . a beacon of cross-community learning and culture”. The school has established very strong links with the local community and has supported diverse groups of people.

People of all ages, and of all religions, or none, are welcome to join. Students at the school are able to learn the Arabic language for business or pleasure, and to understand the language and meaning of the Holy Qur’an. The classes are taught by well-qualified and experienced teachers for whom Arabic is their mother tongue.

The school meets on Sundays at Watford Girls Grammar School, Ladies Close, Watford (just off Vicarage Road). Classes run from 10.30am to 2.00pm with a break for midday prayer.

If you would like to know more about the Watford Arabic School, please contact Dr Saleh on 01923 245670 or email : agsaleh38@hotmail.com or write to him at 492 Whippendell Road, Watford WD18 7QJ.

Fellowship programme is a great success

The West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust recently participated in a national NHS International Fellowship Programme and has been successful in recruiting Dr Ashish Bhagat, an experienced Consultant Radiologist from India, to work in the Radiology Department at Hemel Hempstead Hospital.

Sue Daniels, Radiology Services Manager said: “Since joining the department Dr Bhagat has proved to be a real asset. He has settled in really quickly and is now a valuable member of our team.”

Dr Bhagat said: “The relocation process was very smooth and efficient. I have settled in the department really quickly, thanks to the friendly and helpful staff and I am enjoying my work.”

Celebrating our success

Gary Etheridge, Director of Nursing, Midwifery, Quality and Risk, is hosting an all-day event in the Club Lounge at Watford Football Club, entitled “Celebrating our Success”, on 2 August 2004. Its aim is to focus on nursing and midwifery initiatives/achievements from the 2003-6 Nursing and Midwifery Strategy.

Trust nurses and midwives will be selected to produce either an oral presentation, or a poster display of local projects that have had a positive impact on the patients’ experience of care. A call for abstracts has been circulated around the Trust, and further copies can be obtained from the Practice Development Nursing Team, based in the Corporate Nursing Offices at Watford and Hemel Hempstead General Hospitals.

As well as a number of high-profile Trust speakers, guest speakers will include Sarah Mullally, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, Dame Karlene Davis, General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives and John Badham, Director for Essence of Care, Clinical Governance Support Team, Modernisation Agency.

It is hoped that this will become a regular event, acknowledging and sharing excellence in nursing and midwifery at West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Leavers and Retirements

Goodbye and thank you to Barbara Ford who retires after 16 years service within the medical records department at WGH. Barbara’s last day with the Trust will be 27th May 2004. Barbara will be deeply missed by all her friends and colleagues within Watford General.

Sister Joy Smith retired recently after 39 years of loyal service with the Trust. A party was held in the Tudor restaurant and Joy was joined by friends and colleagues past and present. She had many gifts including a Tiffany lamp, camera, flowers and also £400 gift vouchers from the Trust in recognition of her many years service. Joy enjoyed her send-off and we wish her a long and happy retirement.
MEET THE TEAM

The PCT has just recruited a new Discharge Planning Team. Based at Watford General Hospital and working closely with colleagues from the hospital, primary and social care, the team aims to ensure that patients are cared for in the best possible setting for their medical condition. This could mean a stay in hospital, in one of the PCT’s intermediate care homes (Langley or Windmill House) or being cared for by the Hospital at Home Team. Any improvements identified and implemented by the team will be monitored to ensure their effectiveness. The Discharge Planning Team plans to produce a regular newsletter to keep colleagues up to date with progress.

Discharge Planning Coordinators, Sue Cooper and Sarah Brown, can be contacted on 01923 244366 ext 3932. Integrated Care Pathways Coordinator, Suzanne Colbert, can be contacted on 01923 217507 and Project Manager Discharge Planning, Chris Cardwell, can be contacted on 01923 7130572.

GOING DIGITAL

The Audiology Departments within the WHHT are excited to announce that we have been accepted on the fourth wave of the NHS Modernising Hearing Aid Services programme. West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust will be fitting digital hearing aids by March 2005. We are now in the process of updating our infrastructure and equipment including a patient management system for audiological use and recruiting and training staff.

As we progress through the project one of our aims is to keep other staff and patients updated – so more information to follow!
HOME VISITING SERVICE LAUNCHED

Michael Sobell House, the Hospice and Palliative Care Unit at Mount Vernon Hospital, launched a Home Visiting Service in January 2003. Two intakes of 17 volunteers have successfully completed the seven-session training programme and are providing regular practical help and emotional support for cancer patients and their carers within the patient’s own home.

If you are interested in becoming a Home Visiting volunteer at Michael Sobell House or know of someone who may benefit from a volunteer visiting them at home, please contact Jo-Anne Edwards at Michael Sobell House on 01923-844569 or by email on joanne@mshouse.org

Recruitment

From Tuesday June 1 2004, Linda Knowles and Dee Davis (at present the Chief Dietitian III job share at Hemel Hempstead Hospital) will take on the Chief Dietitian II post based at Watford General Hospital.

They will work with a new Chief Dietitian III managing the acute dietetic service across the Trust covering Watford General Hospital, Mount Vernon Hospital, Hemel Hempstead Hospital and the acute services at St Albans City Hospital.

Breast Screening Information Pack for Primary Health Care Teams


- Is your practice reaching the National Standard of breast screening uptake?
- Are you aware of the work being carried out to extend the programme to women up to and including the age of 70?
- Are you aware that once women reach the age limit of 70, they are encouraged to make their own appointment?

If your answer is ‘no’, the NLBSS has devised a comprehensive and informative pack for practice staff, covering all aspects of the Breast Screening programme.

The pack will be emailed to all Practice Managers within the next couple of weeks.

If you have any queries please call Jane Haughton, Programme Manager on 0208 951 4045.

CHANGES IN THE DERMATOLOGY TEAM IN NW HERTFORDSHIRE

Dr Paul Maurice (Consultant Dermatologist) left the Trust at the end of March 2004 having worked in the organisation for 15 years. During this time he developed a well regarded dermatology service for patients with skin disease in NW Hertfordshire. He is emigrating to New Zealand to take up a post in Christchurch.

The dermatology department has been fortunate to appoint a locum consultant from the end of March, Dr Sanjiv Agarwal, who has previously worked at Milton Keynes. Dr Agarwal will see new patients and also Dr Maurice’s follow-up caseload.

He will also be doing two additional new clinics per week to try to improve outpatient waiting times.

We were all very sorry to see Dr Maurice go but assure you that we are doing our very best to provide a good dermatology service for our patients. We will be in touch again when we have appointed definitively.