



Forget the footy – these are the real champions!

Introducing... the CQC champions – these staff are working with the rest of the trust to ensure that we have the best inspection possible when the Care Quality Commission return in September. [See page 13.](#)

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Well done and best wishes



Jac Kelly

Thank you for the good wishes and kind messages following the announcement that my tenure at West Herts has come to an end.

It was a challenging 18 months at times, with a bruising CQC inspection and being

placed in special measures. Since then we have had to adjust to a level of external scrutiny, performance management and bureaucracy quite unlike anything I have experienced in my 40 year career in the NHS.

Yes – some of our systems and processes were weak. Yes – our buildings and equipment for patients and staff remain woefully inadequate. Yes – vacancy rates 18 months ago were unacceptably high. Yes – there were inconsistent practices in relation to some basic standards of care.

But what progress you've made and are still making to put this right!

The trust is coming through it now with morale (pretty much) intact. I want to commend you for your amazing energy and resilience throughout. Changes and improvements are still taking place and will take a little more time to fully embed.

I am proud of the progress in tackling key NHS waiting time standards, including diagnostics; outpatient appointments; day case and elective inpatient procedures and the six cancer targets. All down to you.

Whilst I cannot predict the results of September's re-inspection, the CQC cannot fail to see the improvements.

I am truly sad to be leaving so close to the re-inspection but whatever the CQC quality regime says about our three hospitals, this trust has steadily reduced its mortality rates over the last three years (more on page 14). That's patient safety!

So well done for all you've done on such a wide range of improvements.

Goodbye and I pass on my best wishes to you all and to your new CEO, Katie Fisher.

Welcome to your newsletter

Hello, my name is **Louise Halfpenny**. I'm the director of communications and I'm thrilled to have joined West Herts at such an exciting time. It really feels like an organisation heading in the right direction.

With so many improvements underway it seemed like a good idea to bring '**Herts & minds**' back. It is a staff newsletter written for staff, by staff. The title was chosen by staff before its first edition over a year ago.

It's been a pleasure to present a fraction of the many good news stories from around the trust. Your dedication and commitment jumps off the page.

I hope that sponsorship or advertising will subsidise the printing costs in future.

Subsequent editions will be shorter – this one is 20 pages because there was so many amazing articles to catch up with!

The back page tells you how to get in touch with a story and comments you have about this edition.

Please get involved. Could you share the secrets of your success against a tough target? Has your clinical service won an award or found itself near the top of a national league table? Or have you transformed the way your team works?

Maybe you just want to say what you'd like to see in future editions of YOUR newsletter.

With thanks for a warm West Herts welcome, Louise





Introducing... Katie Fisher, our new chief executive

Hello!

I hope I soon get the opportunity to meet you in person rather than chat to you through the pages of this newsletter. I have a busy induction programme visiting all three sites so please do come along and introduce yourself (see dates for your diary, page 20).

You only need to flick through **Herts & minds** to see how much great work is going on here. I have been very much looking forward to joining the team and becoming a part of that incredible effort. However, I also know that you have been through some really challenging times and there is still much work to be done.

I intend to continue the focus on sustained and sustainable improvements. Above all,

I will be passionate about our patients and the community we have a duty of care for. We need to be brave; designing and delivering pathways of care firmly around patients, rather than institutions. Creating a local health and social care system without walls where our patients move seamlessly along their care and treatment journey. We can only do this if we become clinically led in everything we do.

Improvements in operational performance will mean that patients are not waiting unnecessarily and are receiving the right care in the right place at the right time, every time. You can expect me to work tirelessly alongside you in overcoming obstacles so that we can provide the very best care for our patients every day.

I couldn't finish this brief introduction without paying tribute to Jac for leading the trust so commendably. I am very much looking forward to continuing the improvement journey that she has inspired you on.

Best wishes, Katie.

Mock casualties help real learning

An imaginary explosion and students acting as casualties were part of a large scale training exercise at St Albans City Hospital in June.

This mock emergency was staged to provide a realistic opportunity for hospital staff, local authority colleagues, the emergency services and the NHS to test their responses and ability to work together under pressure.

These exercises are an essential part of our planning and preparation for serious and major incidents.

The live event used simulated smoke and volunteers from West Herts College who played the role of some of the 200 casualties caught up in the incident. There were 'virtual' casualties too which staff had to imagine they had to treat, transport and admit.



Throughout the event – which ran from 10am to 3pm – there were 'injects' (new scenarios and developments) to keep the participants on their toes.

The exercise involved setting up command and control centres and was an excellent chance to test the major incident plan and see if any changes are required.

Kevin Hornett, head of emergency planning and resilience, said: "Thank you to everyone involved in the exercise. It was a great opportunity for emergency services from across Hertfordshire to come together and test our preparations for a major incident. There was some great teamwork on show."

Social about our services



We now have more than 5,000 @WestHertsNHS Twitter followers. Twitter is also used by patients to let us know what they think about our services. Here's a few recent tweets:

“@WestHertsNHS Watford General Ridge ward care truly exceptional 3 week stay so kind & I was so ill #thanks”

“Fantastic service from @WestHertsNHS Watford. Dr Shariff and his team performed a fantastic EUS. I feel very looked after”

“Amazing lady on reception in X-Ray HHosp, heard her #patience #knowledge #compassion with different customers @WestHertsNHS”

“@WestHertsNHS Top service today at Watford General. Swift and on time. Love the self check-in :-)”

“Top work from @WestHertsNHS who have sent me a text reminder about my hospital apt next week & telling me that a missed apt costs £150 – big tick!”

“@WestHertsNHS thank you Hemel urgent care this morning, free parking, seen within 5 mins. Excellent service #loveournhs”

In our next edition, we'll share some of the great feedback from NHS Choices and Patient Opinion and from letters of thanks.



Gail Fell is a receptionist in the outpatients department at St Albans.

- 1 First single ever bought?
'I'm a Believer' by the Monkees.
- 2 Favourite film of all time?
Pretty Woman.
- 3 What luxury item would you want if cast away on a desert island?
Large supply of gin & tonic!
- 4 Favourite sports team?
British Gymnastics Team.
- 5 What did you want to be when you were 10?
An air hostess.
- 6 What one piece of advice would you give to a new starter at West Herts?
Patience.
- 7 What was your best experience at West Herts since you started?
Working with my colleagues, it wouldn't be the same without them.
- 8 What gets you out of bed and into work in the morning?
My friend Gracie and doughnuts!
- 9 What one thing would make a positive difference to your working day?
*Windows!
(and no, Gail doesn't mean the Microsoft product...!)*
- 10 Finally, tell us something people may not know about you.
I am a keen gardener and love my garden.

60 second interview



The colour purple

The 'Purple Star' award is given by Hertfordshire County Council to recognise services that go the extra mile for people with learning disabilities.

So please give a round of applause to the winners – our very own abdominal aortic aneurysm team!

Diagnostic services can be harder to explain to patients with learning disabilities who don't always understand why they need to be in hospital as they may not feel unwell or have an obvious health problem.

Lesley Marks, the trust's screening co-ordinator, said: "I'm so pleased we've been recognised for the steps that we've taken to ensure that people with learning difficulties are able to access our services.

The AAA screening team receiving their Purple Star award

"We've invested time in reshaping our literature, making adjustments to our physical environment and running staff training sessions to improve our practices for people with learning difficulties. We also provide longer clinic appointment sessions when required.

"This award really does acknowledge some of the great work we've been doing to improve services for our patients".

Does your service cater for people with learning disabilities? If so, are you doing enough to make it accessible? The trust has experts on hand to help and advise.

Contact: Lesley Marks, AAA screening coordinator, lesley.marks@whht.nhs.uk, or call 01727 897719.

Mandatory training take-up triples

Mandatory training is now accessible online

A new training interface called e-Learning Zone is proving to be a great hit, with numbers of staff trained online increasing by 36%.

The new interface makes it easy to select a course and a test based on user roles: clinical, non-clinical and consultant. The content is available via the internet which means that you can complete your training from home.
www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/training

Well done to the respiratory medicine team!



Left to right: Dr Julius Cairn, Dr Matthew Knight, Dr Andrew Barlow, Dr Rahul Mogal

Huge progress being made in respiratory medicine

Congratulations to colleagues whose hard work and bright ideas have led to a complete overhaul of the respiratory medicine service. We asked the clinical lead for respiratory medicine, **Dr Andrew Barlow**, how this has been done:

“It’s not an overstatement to say that respiratory medicine was heading for a crisis 14 months ago. Requests for outpatient appointments exceeded our capacity and the inpatient demands were equally challenging. The need to improve the support to patients with respiratory failure was acknowledged in an internal review and in the subsequent public report by the Care Quality Commission. At the same time the trust’s team and colleagues at the Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust were faced with the challenge of forming a clinical partnership whilst introducing new outpatient services. The solution seemed obvious: expand, innovate and adapt to the new demands.

Supported by my consultant colleagues **Dr David Evans**, **Dr Matthew Knight**, **Dr Julius Cairn** and **Dr Abi Jackson** we drove through a major reconfiguration to improve the delivery of specialist care to all our patients in A&E, the acute admissions unit and in the community. One of the measures – establishing the acute respiratory response team – means that a consultant led team is a bleep-call away Monday to

Friday to assess patients with respiratory failure, and where appropriate, begin non-invasive ventilation (NIV). We also provide telephone support to the NIV programme out-of-hours resulting in genuine, 24/7 cover. The increase in consultant numbers to nine means we can now run two separate ward-based rotas; one for the specialist respiratory ward at Watford and one for all the respiratory referrals across the hospital, including AAU and A&E.

New outpatient services include our ambulatory pleural service for patients with fluid collections around their lungs. Now, in one outpatient visit – which replaces an inpatient stay in many cases – we provide a detailed clinical assessment, followed by diagnostic procedures and in some cases definitive treatments. In doing this, we have stripped out 800-1,000 acute bed days a year so it’s good news all round, with patients and the healthcare economy benefitting.

Transforming the respiratory service for our patients is about so much more than recruiting extra staff. We have rewritten protocols, overhauled booking systems and established new clinical competency programmes for nurses and doctors.

The results show that our efforts have paid off – 14 months ago there were 276 new patients waiting over 13 weeks for a new appointment but now we only have six patients waiting over 13 weeks. The follow-ups without an appointment are also impressive, falling from 1,324 from early last year to currently just 28.

Due recognition must also extend to the excellent management team lead by **Elaine Odlum**, the divisional manager for medicine and **Kirsty Green** our service improvement lead.

We are now ready to face all the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead; there will be many more years of innovation and clinical excellence to come.”

On the road to improved hospital access

A £20m project to improve access to Watford General Hospital reaches a significant milestone in October when the new access road linking Waterfields Way in Watford and the bottom of the hospital car park is set to open.

The new road (which forms part of the wider 'Watford Health Campus') is expected to be used by 60% of traffic coming to and from the hospital including staff and patients. It will also enable quicker access for ambulances coming from the east side of Watford and from the M1.

Tim Duggleby, our head of strategic development, said: "We're entering an exciting phase in the development works around the hospital and staff will notice a great deal of activity at the bottom of the site over the next few months. As part of this project there will also be a new Metropolitan Line tube station close to the

hospital that will open in 2020. It will provide a direct link to Watford town centre, Watford Junction mainline station and central London."

He added: "The good news for staff is that we will also start work to improve car parking facilities although it will be several years before we get the permanent car park solution we all want.

"We also plan to increase the number of disabled spaces from 60 to 100. We apologise for the inconvenience caused by the temporary car parking arrangements which were essential to facilitate the works on the new road. We will be working hard over the next two months to make significant improvements to both the condition and layout of all our car parks, roads and footpaths".

The Watford Health Campus is focussed on helping to regenerate west Watford and is being overseen by Watford Borough Council. As part of the wider plans there will also be new housing, shops and potentially a new school.

Record-breaking recruitment

Last September our band five nurse vacancy rate stood at 32.4%, one of the highest in the UK. Since this time we've recruited more than 300 new nurses and midwives to help us deliver the best quality care to our patients. Our vacancy rate for band 5 nurses today stands at 8.7%.

Around half of our new starters are from overseas and so will have all been through an extended induction process. They are now settling into their jobs across our three hospitals.

Clinical skills facilitator **Sarah Griffin** has been busy welcoming them: "I'm really happy to have these new recruits on board. "They are dedicated to helping us give the best possible care to every patient who walks through our doors. I am looking forward to watching them develop their careers at our hospitals."

New starter **Lucian Miron**, is from Romania's capital city Bucharest. He's working with acutely ill patients on Croxley Ward at Watford and says he loves his job. He said: "All the staff are friendly and co-operative. They are good people and I want to continue my career here at the hospital."



Lucian – one of our new nurses

Calling all nurses and midwives...

Tailored support is on offer to all our nurses and midwives facing the new revalidation process.

Nurses and midwives will know by now that 'revalidation' has replaced the 'post registration education and practice (PREP) standards' and the three yearly notification of practice.

We want to help you through this new process so lead nurse for education, **Karen Bowler**, is contacting staff across our three sites whose applications are imminent. Her message is that you don't have to do this alone and it really is nothing to worry about.

"I can talk you through it step by step and tell you exactly what to do. It's straightforward, achievable and clear and easy to complete.

"The nurses I have guided through it so far have actually found it valuable and empowering. It's an excellent way of showing how professional we are."

Christie Cobbedick, (picture above) junior sister at Watford, was one of the first nurses to complete the process.

"I've been supported every step of the way and it really isn't anything to worry about. Start early, don't be frightened, because you



do most of these things on a daily basis. Keep it simple, don't over-think it."

Chief nurse, **Tracey Carter** added: "All nurses and midwives now have to demonstrate to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) that they remain fit to practice, and are living the values of the revised NMC code, by reflecting on their practice and engaging in discussions with colleagues.

"I encourage you to sign up to NMC online and make sure you are aware of your revalidation renewal date."

Tracey added: "NMC Online is a great resource to help you. New material and updates are added regularly so please update yourself with the changes to the renewal process, particularly the timelines, which have come into effect already."

The website address is <http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/download-resources>

Mayor shows he cares about carers

Councillor Robert McLean, Mayor of Dacorum, visited Hemel Hempstead Hospital to celebrate the vital role carers play in ensuring the health and wellbeing of those they care for.

Staff and carers were delighted that the Mayor was able to attend, chat to them about their commitment and acknowledge all their hard work. His visit in June was part of Carers' Week. There are currently around 115,000 carers in Hertfordshire.



Mayor makes a visit to Hemel Hempstead Hospital

Hip hip hooray for our award-winning staff!

Congratulations to the hip fracture team for winning the Health Enterprise East Innovation Awards.

The team won the award for their project 'Living in comfort, cherishing life', which judges praised for its "dramatically improved outcomes" for elderly patients following hip fracture surgery.

The team has a track record of success. Last year they won the Health Service Journal's prestigious annual award for Patient Safety. On that occasion, the judging panel cited their "value driven" and "patient-centred" approach and said West Herts was "a clear winner in this category".

Following a mortality alert four years ago the team had to look beyond the best practice guidelines to improve patient care. A rigorous and transparent review of the care pathway saw mortality fall to the national average of 8.5% in the first year; 6% in the second year; and just 3% in 2016. Impressive progress!



Dr Latha Thangaraj (right) and team with their Health Enterprise East Innovation Awards prize

The team had mainly focussed on interventions to reduce mortality. However, they were also pleasantly surprised by the reduction in post-operative delirium which resulted in a decrease in the need for one to one nursing, lower use of antipsychotic agents and improved patient, carer and staff satisfaction.

The awards demonstrate how rigorously the team has worked to improve the service.

With nearly 500 hip fracture patients coming through our doors each year, it's good to know that they are in such safe and caring hands.

The team's success shows that they really do embody our values: commitment, care, quality.

Curtain up on theatre improvements at St Albans

Hard work, dedication and team spirit has meant St Albans has all six operating theatres open again for orthopaedics, ear, nose and throat, ophthalmology, gynaecology, breast oncology, urological and general surgery.

In April last year the hospital carried out a ventilation assessment survey and closed theatres one and four immediately.

Theatre one opened again ten days later once issues relating to the ventilation system were fixed. And, following an eleven-month closure, theatre four is now up and running.

Theatre four had previously held up to 40 operations a week, the majority of which were hips and knees so in the meantime there was a great deal of extra Saturday work, juggling of lists between other theatres and the extensive use of a mobile theatre.



Operational theatre manager **Matt Sykes** (above) said: "Staff here have pulled together to reduce the impact on patients as much as possible. Impressively, the hospital lost just 25% of its planned procedures during that period and the numbers of complaints during that time did not rise."

Work was also carried out to changing rooms which now have new sinks, toilets, showers, flooring and lockers.

"It's surprising what a lick of paint and a new floor can do – the nicer environment has had a positive effect on staff morale."

Who's Who Meet the Board of Directors



Professor Steve Barnett
Chairman



Jonathan Rennison
Non Executive Director
Senior Independent
Director



Ginny Edwards
Non Executive Director



Katie Fisher
Chief Executive



Don Richards
Chief Financial Officer



Helen Brown
Director of Strategy &
Corporate Services

The September and October edition of **Herts & minds** will feature our divisional management structure and associate medical directors.



Kevin Howell
Director of
Environment



Jane Shentall
Director of Operational
Development & Elective
Care Performance



John Brougham
Non Executive Director



Phil Townsend
Non Executive Director
Vice Chair



Paul Cartwright
Non Executive Director



Sally Tucker
Chief Operating
Officer



Tracey Carter
Chief Nurse & Director
of Infection Prevention
and Control



Michael Van der Watt
Medical Director



Lisa Emery
Chief Information
Officer



Louise Halfpenny
Director of
Communications



Paul da Gama
Director of Human
Resources & Organisational
Development

Make a date with Datix

In August the risk and Datix team is running a 'Datix roadshow' to provide training on how to report an incident and raise a risk using Datix.

Jackie Smith, head of risk, assurance and compliance, said: "This training is in place so all staff know how to report an incident and raise a risk. The sessions can be tailored to individual teams and departments and the Datix team can attend your meetings to deliver the training so please do contact them to arrange this. The roadshow will start on 15 August.

She added: "The Datix team is working on improving the incident reporting form by making it easier and quicker to use. Work is also underway to provide reporters with automated feedback to keep them informed of the actions taken as a result of their incident form."

There are three levels of training available. If you would like to book training please contact Datixweb@whht.nhs.uk

Level 1: (All staff should complete)

How to report an incident and raise a risk – this gives staff an understanding of what should be reported on Datix and

how to report it correctly. It also covers the difference between an incident and a risk.

Level 2: (Band 6 and above)

How to investigate an incident on Datix – this training is for staff who need to review incident forms and provides staff with an understanding of which fields need to be completed and how to document an investigation on Datix.

For staff who require access to the risk register they will also be shown how to update and add risks.

Level 3: (quality governance facilitators and divisional management teams)

Analysis and reports from Datix – this will provide staff with training on how to run reports and pull data out of Datix, this will allow staff to carry out trend analysis or provide data for reports and committees.



An image from the trust's new risk video – available via the intranet

The Eliminators!

'New Harm' describes harm that is acquired during a patient's hospital stay.

It includes falls, pressure ulcers, urinary tract infections with a catheter and new venous thromboembolisms (VTE).

A crack team of dedicated staff have plotted and planned to take on harm and eliminate it, wherever and whenever it threatens to appear!

Thanks to their efforts, the risk of new harm to our patients has been assessed and is now at 0.06%.

Put another way, this means that 99.04% of our patients have not been subject to new harm. This is above the national average

of 97.9% so well done to the specialist nurse team and all staff who have helped to make this happen.

Part of the success has come about as a result of our specialist nurses (who between them manage falls, continence, nutrition, pressure ulcers and VTE) moving to a shared office which enabled them to work collaboratively with the sole aim of eliminating new harms to our patients.

They have worked tirelessly with ward staff to raise the awareness of potential harm to patients and have also produced a quarterly newsletter (The Harm-Free Care Newsletter).

The trust's quality lead nurse **Sarah Lafbery** said: "Congratulations to all staff who have enabled us to achieve these great results for the patients they care for. These efforts truly reflect our mission statement: the very best care for every patient, every day."

See...Start...Support...Sustain

Sue Whiterod from the trust's organisational development team explains what See...Start...Support...Sustain means for our staff...

|| Our aim is for everyone to feel valued, pleased and proud to be part of West Herts.

For many staff, their families and friends, the trust is also their local hospital. This creates a very strong sense of belonging and is one of the reasons why so many staff (me included!) stay so long.

We are also proud of the increasing number of staff joining us from overseas. This has two benefits: adding to our already rich diversity and increasing our younger workforce.

Our hope is that everyone will tell a positive story about 'this is why I want to commit to working and doing my very best for West Herts.'

Our success in recruiting staff locally, nationally and internationally must be matched by retaining them as well as our existing staff who have acquired a wealth of organisational knowledge.

Our **See, Start, Support, Sustain** programme is all about **seeing** opportunities to recruit, **starting** new staff off with a positive welcome and induction, **supporting** them as they settle into their roles and **sustaining** them throughout their careers.

We want to build a working partnership with our employees that recognises that our lifestyles and needs change as we grow, have children, get older, face health problems, look after elderly parents and maybe a change in career direction. The needs of our service change too. That is why we are striving to make our hospitals great places to work, train and retrain.

By offering flexibility and opportunities we hope to create jobs that develop with and for our staff and services.

When I became a mum quite late in life, the trust helped me flex my role and working hours which I greatly valued. It is always worth talking to your manager if your situation changes and you need to alter your hours or role.

In addition, you might want to explore buying additional annual leave and taking advantage of a wide range of health and wellbeing offers – as outlined on page 18.

I hope this article demonstrates that we value our staff and why **See...Start...Support...Sustain** is here to stay!

With best wishes, Sue. **||**

Sue is the trust's associate director for organisational development, engagement and equality.

Eyes on the prize



The CQC Champions aren't hoping for sporting glory, a trophy or to win a tournament. The prize they're after is the best CQC inspection possible!

Nearly 100 staff including medical, nursing, management and admin make up this force for good.

Their aim is to make sure that we are ready to receive our inspectors in September and that we all know what to expect.

The group – which meets fortnightly – has helped shape the presentation that Katie Fisher (our new chief executive) will give to the CQC in September. They have also contributed to a staff handbook that tells staff about the forthcoming inspection and will be working with the communications team on the key messages that sum up our improvement journey.

The champions are also rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck into the self-assessment process as well as working through some of the likely questions the inspectors might ask.

The group will also be meeting in Hemel Hempstead and St Albans.

*For more information, please contact **Erin Yau**, programme manager for quality improvement, via email or on 07788 818788.*

Lower mortality rates than expected for the second year running

Latest statistics prove that patient safety is our top priority.

Statistics from the healthcare intelligence specialist Dr Foster show that we have far fewer deaths than expected. Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio (HSMR) figures compare the number of patients who die in a hospital with the number expected to.

Put simply, ratios under 100 mean there are fewer in hospital deaths than expected.

Our HSMR is 85.25 and places us favourably against other trusts – we have the 15th lowest HSMR out of 136 non-specialist trusts nationally. This statistic – based on figures from March 2015 to February 2016 – puts us in the top 11% when compared across England and within the East of England region we have the fourth lowest HSMR.

Our rate has dropped from ‘statistically higher than expected’ to ‘statistically lower than expected’ over the last four years, and for the last two we have seen ‘lower than expected’ rates.



Mike Van der Watt,
Medical Director

Medical director

Dr Mike Van der Watt said:

“This is extremely pleasing news.

Reducing death rates is the result of multiple streams

of work to improve patient safety, all coming together. We have also invested in more consultants, nurses and midwives, strengthened governance processes and have established a ‘hospital at night’ team, in partnership with an ITU outreach team. Monthly reviews of all deaths have allowed for learning to be disseminated quickly.

“We have moved from being in the worst 10% of hospitals to be in the company of some of the best hospitals in this country, with a statistically ‘lower than expected’ mortality on both weekdays and weekends. We know we have more to do and will continue to work with our partners to improve things even more.”

Question time!

As you read your way through **Herts & minds** you will be awash with good news and brimful of fascinating facts and figures. Here’s a quick quiz to test what you can remember. The answers are upside down at the bottom of the page.

1. How many metres are our charitable stompers climbing to raise money for the **neonatal unit**?
2. **ITU nurse Anne Hunt** invites you to join her on a bike ride – when is the first one?
3. What colour was the special award given to our **abdominal aortic aneurysm team**?
4. Lucian Miron is a nurse on **Croxley ward** who joined us recently from Romania – what is Romania’s capital city?

Schwartz Rounds have "exceeded all expectations"

Schwartz Rounds have been hailed a success with 87% of attendees rating them as 'excellent' or 'exceptional'.

The 'rounds' are meetings where staff from all disciplines can reflect on the emotional aspects of their work. The sessions are led by a group of panellists and everything that's said is confidential. Evidence from research into the effectiveness of Schwartz Rounds shows the positive impact they have on individuals, teams, patient outcomes and organisational culture.

Louise Hultquist, acute admissions unit senior sister, attended February's session: "The session showed me that the trust believes in caring for its staff as well as its patients. It made me feel valued and part of a bigger team."

Five rounds have been held so far and there are plans for another seven by the end of the year. Some 91% who attended said they would recommend the session to their colleagues and 93% said they planned to attend again.

Here's some feedback about the rounds: "A well organised session which will help to improve my clinical practice in future especially in understanding how my

colleagues work and deal with pressure while doing their job."

"An excellent forum to discuss 'undiscussed' issues."

"Brilliant open discussion, well led with excellent panellists."

Tracey Carter, chief nurse and the executive director who has driven this project forward said: "The rounds have exceeded expectations and we've had some fantastic feedback.



Our colleagues have found it really powerful to hear others speaking openly and honestly about their experiences. "

She added: "Research shows that the sessions can help staff be more empathetic and confident in handling sensitive issues; as well as being more open to expressing thoughts, questions and feelings. All of which is better for our patients."

Would you like to go to a Schwartz Round?

The next ones are on 9 September, 7 October, 9 November & 8 December. Venues to be announced nearer the time.

5. **A team from the trust** is taking part in a 10k run through London on July 10 – for which charity?
6. The **CQC inspection** is...when?
7. Our mortality rates are impressive – out of 136 **non-specialist trusts** nationally, what number are we?
8. Who is the person ready to lend our **nurses** a hand with revalidation?
9. **The respiratory service** has implemented many improvements lately – how many consultants are now part of the team?
10. Who is the trust's new **head of fundraising**?

1. 3,353 metres 2. July 25 at 9:30am 3. Purple 4. Bucharest 5. The Michael Green Diabetes Foundation 6. September 6 - 9 7. 15 8. Karen Bowler 9. Nine 10. Bridget Orchard

Estates update

Our estates team has been busy making a range of improvements across our sites as well as moving staff and services and preparing for exciting new facilities.

Here is a selection of key projects:

- upgraded the theatre changing rooms at St Albans as well as a phased programme to replace theatre doors
- 24/7 security at all three sites, additional patrols, upgraded door access system and additional CCTV at Watford
- created additional triage areas and the Windsor Unit which is specifically for frail, elderly patients
- upgraded ventilation systems in the mortuary and at theatres in St Albans and Watford
- refurbishment of theatre changing rooms at Watford

- working on an expansion and refurbishment of endoscopy (due to be completed by December)
- move of the HR team from H block to Shrodells
- pre-operative Assessment has moved into the bottom levels of Shrodells.

More moves are planned as part of the enabling work for a new cardiac CT and MRI scanner at Watford. There will also be moves to allow for cardiology to relocate to the building previously used for sexual health.

In addition, work is underway to create a simulation suite in the medical education centre. **Kevin Howell**, director of environment, said: "I would like to thank our staff for their patience. I know the sites – particularly Watford – are far from perfect, but we're making the best of them and are finding ways to support many service developments, despite the limitations."

Staff fundraisers rise to the challenge

Bridget Orchard, our new head of fundraising, presents two very special sponsorship opportunities...

It's the time of year when thoughts turn to having a barbecue or a relaxing picnic. Well, not for all of us...

By the time you read this, 15 nurses and doctors from the neonatal unit will have experienced the ups and downs of the 'Peaks for Premies' challenge.

Our hardy and big-hearted colleagues were joined by Jonathan Rennison, one of our non-executive board directors.

Not only does the challenge involve scaling the three biggest peaks in Scotland, Wales and England – it has to be done in 24 hours!

The 10 hour drive between mountains leaves just 14 hours to climb up (and down) 11,000 feet (3,353 metres). And this is all for the neonatal unit. Even though they have now finished this

feat – you can still show your support at www.justgiving.com/peaks4premies

Hopefully, the course faced by nine staff running for charity will be a little less hilly!



On July 10th, the runners – mainly from the information team and led by **Lisa Emery**, chief information officer – will be seeing the sights of London speed past on the Vitality British 10k London Run. They are raising money for the work of the Michael Green Diabetes Foundation. The Foundation was established by Joanne Green after her husband Michael died, aged 53, following complications related to Type 2 diabetes.

Lisa said: "People forget that diabetes can be fatal. That's why it's so important to understand that this condition can be reversible and preventable if people are aware of the symptoms."

"The Foundation does a great job in helping to change unhealthy lifestyles and it also supports the work our staff do to care for patients with diabetes."

To support, go to:
<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/TeamWestHerts>

Safety stories

Come along to the next 'Stories around Safety' forum

Reducing risk to patients is at the heart of a new forum which has been launched across the trust.

In a bid to share learning from and prevent a recurrence of 'never events' and serious incidents, the nursing team are running monthly workshops called 'Stories around Safety' – SAS. These are for all staff, clinical and non-clinical, and are designed to encourage open conversation about safety issues and concerns. Along with the discussion, the meeting facilitators will pick key issues and take action accordingly.

The sessions are an opportunity to listen to a presentation, share views and learn together in a confidential environment.

Sarah Lafbery, quality lead nurse, said: "If you understand why and how something went wrong in clinical practice then you are more likely to make sure that you get it right.

"At the meetings, what is said in the room stays in the room. It is an opportunity for staff to anonymously highlight any areas of concern on their wards without any apportioning of blame. SAS is about staff having the confidence to speak out and for us to follow up and make sure things are as safe as they can be for our patients."

Look out for posters on the wards advertising the month's theme. Topics covered so far they have been on oxygen/air, patient observations and naso-gastric tubes.

The sessions run for 45 minutes and there is tea, coffee and biscuits on offer!



(left to right) Monica Menniti, Maxine McVey, Jill Wallis, Sarah Lafbery and Mita Muscalu

Topic	Date	Venue	Time
Missed Medicines	Thursday 11th August	Parentcraft Room, Maternity Block	1.30 - 2.30pm
VTE	Thursday 8th September		
HA Pressure Ulcers	Thursday 13th October		
TBC	Thursday 10th November		
TBC	Thursday 8th December		

Taking a healthy interest...

Barbara Leon-Hunt, the trust's wellbeing and benefits manager, reminds us all to take good care of ourselves. "Keeping yourself as well as possible is an important part of being able to do your job and enjoy being at work. Did you know that there is a wide range of activities and help on hand to support you in staying healthy?"

Confidential care for all staff

All staff, as well as their immediate families, have access to the trust's Employee Assistance Programme, Confidential Care. The line is staffed by trained counsellors 24 hours a day and can be reached on 0800 085 1376 or via email at assist@cic-eap.co.uk. They offer independent, free and confidential advice whether you need practical advice or emotional support with either work or personal issues. They can also help with debt and financial management, legal and tax advice, family care and everyday matters. Visit their website at www.well-online.co.uk for information on a range of topics or for live chat.

Relaxation days

These started in April and have been running at Watford on the day after payday each month. We have a therapist onsite who offers a variety of treatments ranging from deep tissue massage to Thai foot and Indian head massage throughout the day that costs just £5. We also have some free 20 minute drop-in relaxation sessions in the middle of the day that staff are able to drop into covering breathing techniques and visualisation exercises that can be taken away and used when needed.

Due to the success of these days, we will be rolling them out to Hemel and St Albans in the Autumn. Further detail will be available on these shortly.

Onsite counselling for staff on the medical wards

Heather Law is our onsite counsellor, available on the medical wards on the first Friday of every month between 10am and 2pm to talk to staff as and when they would welcome some support. If you would like to

arrange to talk to Heather in advance of her visit, you can email her at heatherlaw@freeuk.com or if you'd like to contact her on the day of her visit, you can bleep her on 1620. This service is completely confidential and free of charge.

Schwartz Rounds

Schwartz Rounds are held across the NHS and our organisation has been running them since the end of last year. Please see the article on page 15 for more detail.

Onsite classes

There are pilates and yoga classes – suitable for all levels and subsidised – on Wednesdays at Watford (5.15pm) and Thursdays at St Albans (5pm) – all during term time. If you have ideas for a different class or time, please email barbara.leonhunt@whht.nhs.uk

NEW! Saddle up – bike rides for staff

Anne Hunt, ITU sister, is setting up a series of bike rides for staff and their families. The first will be on Monday 25th July at 9.30am. All staff are welcome, with or without children. The rides start at Watford Hospital, follow the Ebury Way and towpath to the Aquadrome and back again – approximately seven miles. Most of the route is off road but there is a short section of road riding which can be walked along the pavement. Contact anne.hunt@whht.nhs.uk for further information.

September sessions

Please keep your eyes peeled for these sessions coming up in September:

- Emotional resilience
- Practical tips for managing stress
- Mindfulness
- Mental health first aid for managers
- Weight management programme

"With all of this choice on offer, I hope you find something you enjoy. I am open to ideas you may have on other classes or exercise sessions so please get in touch!"

Best wishes, Barbara

Please email

barbara.leonhunt@whht.nhs.uk

if you have any queries or suggestions.

West Herts is taking its 'BEST SHOT' at reducing pressure ulcers

Let's celebrate getting the basics right by congratulating our staff whose commitment and care has helped us reduce the number of hospital acquired grade three pressure ulcers by an impressive 80%.

The reduction is due to vigilance, good nursing, overhauling the care plan, the appointment of skin champions and the pooling of knowledge by the quality nursing team who have come together to share experience and ideas.

In April 2014 it was reported that 13 patients were suffering from a grade three pressure ulcer. Clinical leaders met with the tissue viability team for a thematic review, formed a focus group and developed an action plan.

Nutrition, continence and pressure ulcers are all linked which is why it was decided that skin champions would be nominated on every ward as a useful way of ensuring that the three linked aspects of care were monitored.

There was also an overhaul of paperwork which included of the BEST SHOT campaign – buttocks, elbows/ears, sacrum, trochanter, spine/shoulders, heels, occiput and toes. Well done to ward sister **Deborah Sumner** for that snappy but vital way to remember



the areas to monitor. There has also been an extensive equipment review.

In 2014/15 some 66 grade three ulcers were reported. Following the actions above, this dropped to 13 in 2015/16.

Cath Peak (above), tissue viability specialist nurse, said: "It all starts with appropriate risk assessments and care planning. All ulcers are now reported on the ward scorecard and into Datix so the data is now visible and owned by the wards. Grade two ulcers have also dropped from 166 in 2014/15 to 98 in 2015/16 which is a 41% reduction.

"We must now all work to ensure that these figures remain low. If pressure ulcers aren't detected or managed it can lead to a patient becoming seriously unwell or even contributing to their death so let's keep up the good work and get the basics right for the patients we all care for."

Staff app on the way!

A new staff app which will feature our latest news, video clips, events information and much more – will soon be coming your way!

We are currently testing the app with some staff across the trust and hope to launch it by the end of the year. The app will allow people to 'like' and 'comment' on stories and will help to connect staff across the organisation – especially those without computer access at work.

It's also not too late if you would like to help with testing the app. Please get in touch with the communications team at info@whht.nhs.uk or call Watford ext: 8280.



Dates for your diary

Meet our new chief executive

Katie will be visiting staff across the sites on the following dates:

15 July 2016 (from 12.30 to 2.30pm) St Albans

19 July 2016 (from 12.30 to 2.30pm) Hemel

Please look in e-update for details of the venues and format of these sessions.

AGM meeting

Our AGM will be held on 8 September 2016, more details to follow in e-update.

Trust board meetings:

From 9.30am to 12 noon, 1 September 2016, Lecture room, Post graduate centre, St Albans City Hospital.

Datix Roadshow

On 15 August, details to follow in e-update.

Schwartz Rounds

These are being held on Wednesday 17 August 2016, at Watford and Friday 9 September 2016, St Albans City Hospital, Postgrad centre. These should be really great sessions so don't miss out.

Training sessions

Blood gas training – on AAU, Starfish, ITU and Aldenham wards

For all those who would like to learn how to test a blood gas and change the cartridge.

Please select the session most convenient for you:

4 July 2016, AAU, from 10.30am to 1.30pm (AAU Sluice)

4 July 2016, Starfish ward, from 2.30pm to 4pm (gas analyser area)

5 July 2016, AAU, from 10.30am to 1.30pm

5 July 2016, Starfish ward, from 2.30pm to 4pm

18 July 2016, ITU, from 10.30am to 1.30pm (gas analyser room)

18 July 2016, Aldenham ward, 2.30pm to 4pm (drug prep room)

19 July 2016, ITU, 10.30am to 1.30pm

19 July 2016, Aldenham ward, 2.30pm to 4pm

Report writing

This session is being held on Friday 30 September 2016 (9am – 11am) and is aimed at all staff who are new to report writing and those who wish to improve their skills and knowledge.

Aims and objectives: to consider your audience and the purpose of the report, to understand the five major stages of report preparation, to consider the language and structure used and to be aware of the Gunning Fox Index.

Project Management

The aims and objectives of the session are; to consider how to start, manage and close a project, to understand the importance of plans and planning, to be aware of quality and project risk management, to consider reports and communications around project management.

Target Audience: All staff who are new to project management or who would like to improve their skills.

Date of Workshop/Session: 5 August 2016 and 30 September 2016, (from 1.30pm to 4pm).

Contact Name: Training Department
trainingdepartment@whht.nhs.uk
WGH ext 7247 or 7964.

Story to share?

If you've got a story to tell – then we would love to hear it! Our next staff newsletter comes out in September and your team could be featured in it. You might have a good news story or some events coming up that you want to share with other staff. Don't miss the opportunity to be featured in our next edition – contact the communications team at: info@whht.nhs.uk or 01923 436280.