

Excellent care to the end

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Message from the chief executive

Hello

I hope you've done your staff survey, had your flu jab and have come up with some super ideas for making savings?!

Working for the NHS is not just a job. You're part of a team whose sole aim – whatever you do – is geared towards providing **the best care for every patient, every day.**

That's why it matters how effective you feel you can be at work and whether you have the support of your team, your manager and the trust as a whole. Please tell us how working here feels for you and if there is more we could and should do to improve your productivity, health and wellbeing.

And talking of health...with ward vaccinators and drop-in clinics, there's really no excuse for not getting yourself vaccinated. I think of it as a perk of the job – flu is the last thing I want and so as well as protecting our patients, the job is a great way to protect your health and that of your family.

There is concern about the current strain of flu being particularly nasty, so please urge your nearest and dearest to have their jabs too.

And finally, just when everyone is thinking about Christmas presents, I am asking you to make an alternative gift list! The best present for this organisation would be a better bottom line so please can I ask you to think about the products and services you are spending money on here at work. Could you cut back, switch supplier or think of a leaner, cheaper way to run your service?

We made great savings last year – £14.5m at the end of March 2017. We had pledged to save a similar sum in this financial year but we are falling behind our plan. Managing our finances well is good for our credibility. We have to report monthly to our regulator, NHS Improvement (NHSI), and good progress against our CIPs (cost improvement plans) is more likely to help us persuade NHSI to lend us the money we need to make important investments in our sites and services.

Please do consider what you can do to help us get back on track.

*Best wishes
and thank you!*

Katie



Katie Fisher,
Chief Executive

The best present for the trust would be a better bottom line.

Could you cut back, switch supplier or think of a leaner, cheaper way to run your service?

Protect yourselves from flu!

You might have seen media coverage recently that "the NHS is braced for the worst flu season in its history, amid fears that overcrowded hospitals will be unable to cope."

We're encouraging you all to have the flu jab and protect yourselves, your family, colleagues and your patients, particularly vulnerable patients, from flu.

The vaccine is still the best protection we have against an unpredictable virus that can cause serious illness and death so if you haven't had your flu jab as yet, please do as soon as possible.

Tracey Carter, chief nurse, says: "It is our professional duty to treat patients, to keep them from harm and ensure that those in our care are safe and protected. The flu jab will also help us to stop the spread of illness at work and at home."

Flu vaccinations are available across all three of our hospital sites – details are available on our intranet.

Be like your colleagues (pictured) and get your flu jab today!



Breathe easy – we're smokefree

For the health and wellbeing of our staff, patients and visitors, we became a smokefree trust on 1 October, and we hope you're seeing the benefits of this with far less cigarette smog around the site! The additional signage, lack of smoking shelters and wealth of available information is helping to reinforce this message.

Much work and preparation has gone in to ensuring we are smokefree so if you do see someone smoking, then please politely ask them to stop. But if you don't feel comfortable approaching a smoker, please don't feel you have to as we appreciate it can be difficult. Thank you to all of you who have been having this conversation with smokers – it's really making a difference!

Thanks to everyone who has been involved in the smokefree campaign. You've done a great job!



Chief Executive **Katie Fisher** and Chairman **Professor Steve Barnett** unveiling the smokefree sign

If you're thinking about giving up smoking, don't forget help is available. We are running an extra smoking cessation clinic **every Thursday** from **2-5pm** in **Shrodells** as well as continuing the clinic that runs every **Monday** on **Level 4, PMOK** at Watford General Hospital from **1.30-4pm**.



New lung function lab speeds up tests

We are delighted to announce that a new lung function lab opened in Watford in September, helping patients get treated closer to home and speeding up decisions on discharge or transfer to other centres.

Previously, patients with respiratory problems had to travel to our existing lab in Hemel, which was difficult as many suffer from breathlessness and limited mobility. The new Watford lab is also helping us to save on transport costs and staff time accompanying inpatients.

The state-of-the-art equipment in Watford means we can see patients with more advanced respiratory disease and it has allowed us to introduce cardio pulmonary exercise testing. This is a useful diagnostic tool which we cannot currently use at Hemel without the support of a crash team.

Our respiratory services have expanded over recent years and we now see a wider range of patients.

Alex Newland-Smith, chief respiratory physiologist, said: "The lab is making a big difference to the quality and ease of care for our patients. We now offer expert care and full testing on both sites which means we provide rapid diagnoses near to people's homes."



Alex Newland-Smith demonstrates the new equipment with **Katie Wheelan**, one of the apprentices in respiratory administration

Transforming our end of life care

Staff on two of our care of the elderly wards at Watford General Hospital have been commended by NHS Improvement (NHSI) for innovation in delivering end of life care and successfully completing a rapid improvement programme.

By the close of the project, staff on Sarratt and Croxley wards (pictured) had developed their own tailored training programme, boosted their confidence and improved the care environment to create a better experience for patients and carers. Ward sisters were 'trained as trainers' so knowledge is shared as new staff members join.

Emily Purvis, senior sister on Sarratt ward, says: "We are able to offer lots of home comforts as we know our patients and their families feel better with a bit of normality."

Thanks to generous donations and staff suggestions, patients can now enjoy aromatherapy reeds, beauty products, magazines and puzzles and can listen to music

on a CD player. China cups and saucers are used to serve hot drinks, there are table lamps beside beds and a drinks trolley, known as Arthur's Bar, is stocked with alcohol and mixers for patients and relatives to use.

Both wards now have side rooms dedicated to patients who are nearing the last moments of their life to ensure dignity and privacy. Sarratt ward has redecorated its relatives' room which provides valuable space for people to think and relax.

/// We can't cure the dying but we can take extra care to make that last bit of life comfortable and dignified, ///
says Emily.

The teams on Sarratt and Croxley wards have made a film to show what end of life care looks like at Watford General Hospital. You can view it here: <https://vimeo.com/234745942>



Linda Harvey works on the Estates Helpdesk at Watford.

What kind of calls does the estates helpdesk receive?

We handle a wide range of calls about the trust estates and buildings. We also now manage the equipment library (a range of specialist medical items to support patients). We receive many other calls which we refer on to other departments.

What are the most important things the helpdesk does?

We prioritise calls affecting security, locks and alarms, and water leaks. We have to react to these problems quickly and sudden variations in weather can be challenging.

Which football team do you support?

Chelsea.

Favourite music?

I like all sorts of music including, Motown and Elvis. André Rieu, who created the waltz-playing Johann Strauss Orchestra, is one of my current favourites.

What's the best thing about your job?

The satisfaction of getting the job done and receiving a thank you is very rewarding. The best thing is working with a lovely team.

Improving urgent care services

Urgent care services for patients in west Hertfordshire are being improved under plans led by Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG).

The aim is to make it easier and quicker for patients to get urgent medical attention for common ailments. This will free up A&E to treat the most seriously ill patients.

Central to the new system is an improved NHS111 service staffed 24/7 by trained advisors linked to clinical staff who will assess patients' needs and make sure they get the right care. This might be advising on self-care, booking appointments in walk-in centres, arranging for people to see a GP or calling an ambulance.

The developments link with NHS England plans to create new Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) providing a more uniform service for patients. The Urgent Care Centre (UCC) at Hemel Hempstead Hospital will become a UTC from 1 December 2017 as part a national roll-out.

In addition to the current UCC services, the UTC will gradually introduce tests for things like respiratory infections, anaemia and deep vein thrombosis that are currently only available at Watford General Hospital. The current team of GPs and nurses is expected to grow to include other professionals such as pharmacists, emergency care practitioners, access to mental health services and community nursing staff.

The UTC in Hemel Hempstead will be open from 8am-10pm every day, the same hours that the UCC is currently open. The CCG will run a consultation from January 2018 to get feedback on the UTC and take a longer term view on opening hours.

The CCG also plans to introduce this approach in St Albans, Watford and Borehamwood during 2018.



Have you had your say?

Congratulations to **Mariama Clark** (pictured, middle above) and **Andrew Murray** (pictured, right below) who won John Lewis vouchers for completing the staff survey!

Have you completed the staff survey yet? If not, don't miss out on this important opportunity to help shape your trust – there's not long left as the survey closes on 1 December.



Paul da Gama, Director of HR presenting Andrew Murray with his prize

We want to make West Herts a great place to work and learn, so each year we ask you to tell us what it's like to work here. For example, how satisfying is your job? Do you feel supported by your team and your manager? Are any problems at work tackled effectively? How good are we at communication? Can you do the training you need? Do you have enough opportunities to develop your career?

The results are used to plan improvements and your voice can make a real difference to the way we do things. For example, last year, you said there weren't enough opportunities for flexible working. We listened, and have

introduced a flexible nursing pool over winter. You also said that work-related stress was a concern. Again, we listened and we've introduced a range of health and wellbeing initiatives such as a monthly relaxation day and more exercise classes including boxercise. This shows that we use the results to make improvements.

You also said that the appraisal process was difficult to use – we listened to your feedback and condensed the paperwork and introduced better reporting mechanisms to help you plan for appraisals.

If you're concerned about confidentiality, don't be! The survey is completely anonymous – the external company who runs this for us use barcode technology so that they understand who has responded, but not what they've said. It's like voting in an election, the government knows who has voted so that it can guard against electoral fraud, but not how a person has voted.

We want to hear about your experiences and your views so do take 10-15 minutes to fill in the survey. Your manager will make sure you have time to do this during the working day.

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Fundraising

round-up



Christians across Watford

Christians across Watford kindly donated £1,500 to the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust Charity in September. They raised the money through concerted prayer for the staff, patients and future of the trust. They specifically wanted to help fund activities that encourage and aid staff's health and wellbeing. A big thank you for thinking of us!



League of Friends donate wheelchairs!

The League of Friends has kindly donated 15 wheelchairs to the trust. Thank you to the League of Friends for your continued support!



Michael Green Diabetes Foundation charity golf day

The Michael Green Diabetes Foundation held its first charity golf day at Hartsbourne Country Club, Bushey. Former Ryder Cup captain **Bernard Gallacher** OBE attended as guest of honour. The golf day raised an impressive £30,000. Thank you to all that attended, including our very own chairman, **Professor Steve Barnett!**



Sarratt ward receives care bears

We received an amazing gift of 50 care bears, thanks to the efforts of one family. The family donated care bears to Sarratt ward because they were so appreciative of the exceptional care their relative received and they were also impressed by our end of life care.

In the space of 48 hours the family raised over £1,200 which they put towards buying the cuddly toys. Each bear has a name tag signed with love from a donor which will be given to our end of life patients, those with dementia or to the lonely. The family also donated artwork which they created.

Heartfelt thanks from everyone on Sarratt ward to the family!



Fun day is a bouncing success

Starfish ward held a fun day at Watford Fields and raised a fantastic £1,700! The fun-filled day included a bouncy castle and coconut shy. Funds will go towards a new echo machine, which costs £38,000 – well done Starfish ward!



Cerys runs for Starfish ward!

Cerys (pictured in middle) ran an amazing 3.5 miles to raise money for Starfish ward! She managed to raise a fantastic £250 for the ward. Cerys said she wanted to raise money for the ward because she was born at Watford General Hospital. Great work Cerys!



Young patients get involved in staff interview process

Our patients are important to us so it's only right that they're at the heart of decisions about the services they access, including the recruitment of staff that will be caring for them.

So we're pleased to announce that our children's services department now include their patients in the recruitment process and recently held their first ever young patient interview panel. Isn't that great?

The panel involved a six year old and an 11 year old (pictured) who are regulars on the ward, and know the best kind of person to make things right for them when they come in. The young panellists asked:

"Why do you think it's important to keep me informed and how will you do that?",

"How will you keep me entertained on the ward?", and "I don't like having the needle in my portacath, how can you make that better?"

Becky Platt, matron for children's services, said: "I'd had some niggles about whether the kids would find it too nerve-wracking or boring, or that the candidates would find it awkward. I needn't have worried. **The ability of these two children to cut to the chase was truly phenomenal.**

"They gave great insight into how each candidate's answers had made them feel. This added a new dimension to our post-interview discussions and helped with the decision-making. This was a remarkable experience for me and we will definitely be including patients in future interview panels."

Your ideas for savings

West Herts is in a challenging financial situation, which will surprise no one. We have agreed a revised year end deficit target of £35m and need to save about £14m in order to reach it, having identified £9.7m to date. We have equally challenging savings to achieve in future years.

We are often asked "I'm not a finance person. What can I do when faced with such huge amounts?" Well, the answer is, "A lot!"

We employ about 4,700 people. If each of those people were able to save £100 per week, the combined total saved would be more than £20 million – that would truly transform your trust!

What does £100 mean to you?

- Turning off your computer / lights / radiators when you leave your office
- Agreeing to a different brand of surgical sutures or gloves or consumables or not wasting these
- Unnecessary printing. Did you know that each side of paper printed in colour costs the trust 8p and each black and white side costs 3p? If every employee printed 20 sides of paper in colour instead of black and white, each day, it would cost the trust a staggering £1.2m!
- The process which you always thought you could do better but never actually tried
- Reduce or eliminate things that vary unnecessarily, wherever you are
- Patient feedback and listening to their experiences – improvements needn't be costly
- Maybe even spending a little to achieve a greater benefit
- If you're a budget manager do you thoroughly review all your statements with a view to making savings each month?

Worried that your suggestion won't work or won't be enough? Take heart from the great inventor Thomas Edison – "Negative results are just what I want.

They're just as valuable to me as positive results. I can never find the thing that does the job best until I find the ones that don't."

Thank you for playing your part in sustaining your trust. If you've got a suggestion or query about making savings, please email **Ray Paice**, PMO (Project Management Office) finance business partner at ray.paice@whht.nhs.uk



Hooray for our consultant anaesthetist on receiving a national award



Every edition of *Herts & minds* we congratulate at least one member of staff or team on winning an award, and this edition is no different. We would like to say a huge congratulations to **Michelle Soskin** (pictured), consultant anaesthetist, on being awarded the Evelyn Baker medal by the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain & Ireland for outstanding clinical competence. This is definitely proof that our staff are the brightest and best!

The prestigious Evelyn Baker medal recognises the 'unsung heroes' of clinical anaesthesia and related practice.

Mike van der Watt, medical director, said: "Michelle was nominated for her technical proficiency, consistently reliable clinical judgement and wisdom and skill in communicating with patients, relatives and colleagues. She is a great member of the team and truly a 'go to' person for clinical or other advice."

Have you or your team won an award recently? If so, please let us know at communications@whht.nhs.uk



Life as an apprentice

Hello, my name is **Ronnie Forbes** (pictured) and I am a finance apprentice. I want to share my experience of what it's like to be an apprentice at West Herts Hospitals.

I am based at the Watford site and my experience has been good so far. Everyone has been welcoming and is happy to help. I've been eased in and taught what to do, and if I have any problems I can just ask.

There has not been too much pressure put on me, which I think is important. And if I make a mistake someone will tell me what I've done wrong and how to make sure it doesn't keep happening. I have become more familiar with the jobs that I am doing as the weeks go by and my knowledge of what I am doing has improved.

This apprenticeship is good for me because it is getting me ready for life in the working world and I am learning and earning some money at the same time.

I would like to say thanks to everyone who has welcomed me and have been patient with me. It has helped me to settle into the position.



Raymond calling into the Gloucester Wing reception at St Albans City Hospital to collect a patient

Volunteering matters

Volunteers are vital to any organisation because they bring skills, ideas and experiences. They also help to improve the quality of service.

Here at West Herts our volunteers help make a difference for our patients. From being a 'meet and greet' guide to getting involved on our wards and during meal time. Our trained volunteers complement the work of our paid staff across our hospitals in Watford, St Albans and Hemel Hempstead.

The volunteers team provide various services, and one of those services is the car scheme. The trust has been running a transport service for patients who need help with getting to and from their outpatient appointments for many years.

Raymond Swan has been part of the team of drivers bringing patients to and from our hospitals for over eight years. Raymond says: "I really enjoy meeting new people and have built up a good knowledge of the streets and lanes around St Albans where I normally work. I can make up to six or seven trips a week and I often help out for special occasions."

Do you know anyone who would like to join the volunteers team? Please give **Teresa O'Shea** a call on 01442 287642 or email Teresa.O'Shea@whht.nhs.uk for more information.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our 400 volunteers for all the hard work you do.

"I really enjoy meeting new people."

Learning about allergies

We held our first allergy study day for primary care colleagues in September.

The day was supported by funding from the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and attracted nearly 60 attendees which included local, trainee and health visitors GPs, children's nurses, dietitians and nurses.

bsaci
improving allergy care
through education, training and research

The morning session included interactive lectures on the latest milk and nut allergy guidelines as well as busting some common allergy myths.

In the afternoon session a paediatric dietitian, outpatient clinic nurses, an eczema nurse specialist and a specialist children's physiotherapist ran workshops on infant formulae, adrenaline pens, eczema creams and inhaler and spacer technique – a truly multidisciplinary team effort!

Dr Deepan Vyas, consultant paediatrician, said: "This was true multidisciplinary teaching and we had very positive feedback from the delegates. We were delighted with the support from our primary care colleagues."

Dr Ashley Reece, consultant paediatrician, added: "It was fantastic to have our multi-professional team doing training workshops on adrenaline pens, allergy milks, eczema creams and inhaler technique throughout the afternoon session."

The attendees all said they would recommend the course to colleagues, so look out for the next one and well done to the team for organising a successful event!

EBUS training a success

The department of respiratory medicine successfully hosted an Endobronchial Ultrasound (EBUS) training course for lung cancer staging and diagnosis in the new endoscopy unit in September. This is the first national training course that the department has provided and due to its success, the team has been asked to run it again next year.

The department was approached by two industry partners with international insight in this field. It's a great credit to our department as there are only six hospitals that provide this kind of course and most are specialised teaching hospitals.

Congratulations to the endoscopy unit and the education centre for all their hard work.



Faculty and delegates supporting the EBUS training

A huge thank you to the course directors, **Dr Andy Barlow** and **Dr Rahul Mogal** and their faculty including **Dr Anthony Maddox**, **Winnie Tang** (BMS), **Dr Kay Roy** and their visiting guest lecturer and expert in esophageal ultrasound from the Royal Bournemouth Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, **Dr Ray McCrudden**, for making the event such a success.

Supporting people to change their lives



Trudy Sealy handing over a naloxone kit, used to fight opiate overdoses

Spectrum is a free and confidential drug and alcohol service for adults in Hertfordshire. We interviewed **Chris Wallis**, nurse clinical lead, and **Trudy Sealy**, deputy services manager, about how Spectrum works and how it is different from other substance misuse services.

What is Spectrum?

Spectrum is the first of its kind in the county and it is an integrated substance misuse service, which means that we provide psychosocial interventions (counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy) alongside clinical interventions (substitute prescribing, detox).

We take referrals from anyone over the age of 18 who feels they may have a problem with any type of substance, from those who may be concerned about a loved one as well as referrals from professionals. Spectrum also supports people who are admitted to hospital and are medically fit to continue their detoxification at home.

How is Spectrum different from other services?

We love that Spectrum will always see anyone that's referred. We have open access sessions so people can just walk in and get an assessment that same day as well as an appointment system, so we're very responsive. Spectrum work very well with other agencies involved in a person's care.

How does detoxifying in the community rather than hospital make a difference?

Our service users are really choosing to complete a detox rather than having it done to them. They are in their home environment and with loved ones, which makes a big difference, and that really aids recovery. Community detoxes can be provided for those service users who do not have complex physical or mental health needs.

The comfort for the clients and the familiarity of being in home surroundings is the main benefit of detoxifying in the community and it means they feel more comfortable in familiar surroundings.

What's the greatest thing about working here?

We are very ambitious when it comes to our service users. We talk to them about what they want to do with their lives, what they want to achieve and we support them in their life goals. Also, supporting people to make the changes they have potentially wanted for years – that's amazing. What makes the job interesting, exciting and fulfilling is when the client comes out the other side with a renewed focus on positive, life-affirming things.

Getting involved in research



Our research and development department had 36 open research studies last year, involving over 1,250 participants, with many more studies completed and awaiting publication. Some projects are developed here; others involve participating in larger commercial studies, often sponsored by pharmaceutical companies.

There are different types of studies. Some may involve patients and trialling medications or treatments. Others may only give questionnaires to patients, or review data held on systems and not involve any individual patients.

Many are consultant led, but with research firmly embedded in the undergraduate

curriculum, nurses also have the skills to develop their own studies.

We have a number of studies that are currently open and looking for participants – to get involved see the research and development web page which also has guidance on designing your own study.

All NHS studies are now governed by the Health Research Authority which brings together the assessment of governance and ethical and legal compliance.

For further information please contact:

Elaine Walker, senior research nurse, on 01923 217854.



Did you know the trust has historical records of committee meetings dating back over a hundred years? Here are a few entries that stand out – do any of the themes sound familiar?

In 1916, a deputation of "medical men" attended the General Committee to raise the issue of "the great increase in surgical work... at a time when surgery was advancing by long strides." They noted that "what was once termed major operations were looked upon as ordinary work by the younger medical men."

In 1917, there was a discussion about the need for a new, larger hospital. The chairman

reported that "although the present hospital was inadequate, a suitable new one would be a very expensive business, and as there were no funds or promise of same, the calling of a public meeting would lead to no successful issue." The committee decided to send a letter on the matter to the Watford Press.

During 1946, it was noted that about 20% of total deliveries in the maternity ward were "complicated" and needed a doctor to help the midwives. It was agreed that each patient should pay three guineas for their care.

In 1948, the House Committee debated how much to pay an assistant in the psychiatric department who was a qualified doctor. It was agreed that he should be paid £3.3s for a three hour session.

In 1949, the minutes record a serious increase in the number of "chronic sick" patients sent to hospital due to the new Emergency Bed Service.

If you have any historical artefacts or know any interesting details about the trust's history, do share them – contact us at communications@whht.nhs.uk

Taking a healthy interest

In October we marked World Mental Health Day with a 'Tea and Talk' event (pictured right) to raise awareness of how mental health issues can affect any of us at one time or another. We were visited by Confidential Care, the Samaritans (pictured right below), Herts Wellbeing Service and Cruse among others and many of you visited to gather information and join us for a cup of tea. At the beginning of November we marked National Stress Awareness Day with drop-in sessions looking at different ways to help when feeling stressed.



Life can often be stressful and it's important to know where to get help when things get on top of us. If you need someone to talk to at any time, call our Employee Assistance helpline, which is available 24/7 to you and your immediate families and is completely confidential, on 0800 085 1376, or email assist@cic-eap.co.uk.



You are all invited to take advantage of our forthcoming health and wellbeing activities which include:

Mental Health First Aid Lite Monday 4 December Hemel Hempstead

A course to help with recognising when all may not be well and looking at how best to support those around you whilst taking care of yourself.

Understanding Stress and Building Resilience course Thursday 18 January 2018, Watford

National Heart Month

Health awareness events held on each hospital site to include health MOTs and much more on:

- Monday 12 February – St Albans
- Wednesday 14 February – Watford
- Monday 19 February – Hemel Hempstead

Email wellbeing@whht.nhs.uk for further information or to book.

Story to share?

If you've got a story to tell – then we would love to hear 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: communications@whht.nhs.uk or 01923 436280.

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Produced by the Communications Team, communications@whht.nhs.uk

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