

**NHS**

**West Hertfordshire  
Hospitals**  
NHS Trust

**herts  
minds+**

winter 2019/2020



**Celebrating  
#TeamWestHerts!**

## Message from Christine and Phil

We would like to thank you for everything you have done to make **2019 an amazing year**. It began with the **Care Quality Commission** inspection ratings, where we **doubled the number of good ratings** on our 2015 results. And then along came **award after award**, really putting us on the map for all the right reasons.

Congratulations to those of you who scooped a top prize at a national level, either individually or as a team. And well done too to our nurses who have been recognised with a Cavell Star award or Chief Nursing Officer awards.

2019 was another good year for **staff survey results**; engagement and motivation levels are up (again), as are our levels of satisfaction. As we edged into autumn, there was the **announcement of £400m** funding for our estate redevelopment. Thank you to the many people who have worked so long on this project.

We are weathering winter reasonably well; **flu vaccination rates have now exceeded a very impressive 80%** and hard work from our clinicians means that we are reducing the percentage of emergency patients requiring admission.

And in addition to your demanding roles some of you have found time to form a choir and make a prime time BBC programme!! **Gareth Malone's Christmas Concert aired on BBC2 on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas Day**. Although it appears to be a programme about a choir, it actually showed us at our most impressive; providing the very best care for every patient, every day.



The many successes of 2019 are a great stepping stone for 2020, which will bring more challenges for us to overcome. Thank you for all your hard work and compassion and wishing you all the very best for the year ahead.

With best wishes  
Christine and Phil



## Our trophy cabinet is full to bursting!

**#TeamWestHerts enjoyed an incredible year of award wins and nominations in 2019. It was also the year we scooped not just one but TWO prestigious Nursing Times awards.**

We won the coveted **Nursing Times 'Best UK Employer of the Year'** award in September. Judges praised us for our sustained progress in improving working life for staff and acknowledged the varied initiatives we have put in place to make the trust a great place to work. These include running a successful nurse recruitment campaign; introducing a range of career development opportunities; reducing use of agency staff and lots of initiatives to raise morale and engagement, including the Stars of Herts awards!

**Bonnie Sparkes was named Nurse of the Year at the 2019 Nursing Times Awards.** What a win! Bonnie, who is a safeguarding nurse specialist, scooped this outstanding accolade for her work in partnership with Hertfordshire police supporting victims of trafficking and modern slavery. She protects vulnerable women by joining police operations to reach those who need vital healthcare



support. Bonnie said: "I became a nurse because I wanted to help people and the work I've been leading with the support of the safeguarding team helps me to make a difference and deliver something really positive."

This award was the icing on the cake for the safeguarding team who were also winners of a **2019 NHS Parliamentary Award** in the Health Equalities category for their partnership work helping potential victims of trafficking access healthcare, protection and support.

# Our achievements

When we weren't busy attending award ceremonies we were focused on smashing targets and expanding our workforce!

We were thrilled to announce in September 2019 that we had successfully recruited enough nurses to fill our long-standing band 5 nurse vacancies on adult inpatient wards. As a result our vacancy rate plummeted from 28% in 2016 to 0% in this area.

Chief executive Christine Allen said: "This is such a significant and critical milestone for us to reach as a trust. Having fully established nursing teams is integral to providing safe and effective care. It demonstrates that when we come together as one team, a team that recruits innovatively, a team that's truly committed to developing staff and a team that engages and inspires staff to do their

best and treat patients with open hearts and open minds, we can achieve anything!"

We fought the battle against flu and won by hitting our target of vaccinating **80% of patient-facing staff!** We're doing a great job keeping ourselves, loved ones and vulnerable patients protected this winter. **Big thanks to our peer vaccinators** who have done a brilliant job protecting colleagues on their wards and departments. We've smashed last year's impressive total of 75% and we're not done yet. How many more can we get vaccinated before the end of the flu season?!

In the summer we celebrated the first group of **trainee nursing associates qualifying at West Herts**. This 11-strong group have followed a rigorous two year training programme to advance their nursing careers. Look out for them across wards in their green and white pinstripe uniforms!



# Celebrating you

We found lots of different ways to show how much we value you and everything you do to provide the very best care for our patients



We created a new way to celebrate your achievements with the first Stars of Herts staff awards night in 2019 and you showed us that #TeamWestHerts knows how to party!

Nearly 300 staff attended our special awards evening in September at Shendish Manor. We heard many stories of how our AMAZING staff have made a difference and touched the lives of so many patients. Massive congratulations to all our fabulous winners. Look out for another fantastic staff awards party taking place in 2020!

In July we drank (non-alcoholic) fizz and enjoyed a cream tea at the **summer tea parties** hosted by our board across the trust to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication.

We also introduced **birthday breakfasts** every month so that anyone celebrating a birthday could enjoy some early morning coffee and pastries with fellow birthday babies.

Just before Christmas eight members of staff were invited to No 10 by the prime minister who hosted a tea party to thank NHS staff.

And every month we continued to reward a member of staff or team who has truly lived our values in our **Celebrating Excellence** awards.



# Celebrating staff who shine bright



We are absolutely delighted to see so many of our hard working teams and individuals receiving public recognition and being celebrated for their tireless dedication to providing the very best care for every patient, every day.

The celebrations kicked off in June when chief nurse Tracey Carter received a prestigious Chief Nursing Officer award for her sterling work over many years in the NHS. Dr Ruth May, CNO for England,

presented the award and praised Tracey for being an 'exceptional nurse leader' and for the 'quality of care' being delivered at West Herts. In September safeguarding nurse specialist Bonnie Sparkes received a Chief Nursing Officer award from deputy CNO Hilary Garratt.

At the Healthcare People Management Association's annual Excellence Awards we were finalists in a whopping five different categories! The HR team were

thrilled to take home the Excellence in Employee Engagement Award for their work on 'The Big 5'. This trust-wide programme based on results of the staff survey has helped to improve culture and patient care.

Congratulations to Michele Cui, Amanda Budd, Paula King, Heather Grant Davey and Iuliana Neacsu for winning Cavell Star Awards. These awards honour staff who have shined bright and shown exceptional

care to their colleagues, their patients or patients' families.

**Dr Sankara Narayanan**, consultant neonatologist, rounds off our exceptional year in the spotlight. He was named **Clinical Practitioner of the Year in the Audit Heroes Awards**.

Congratulations everybody! More #TeamWestHerts winners can be found on the news pages of our website.

## Special visitors to #TeamWestHerts

We welcomed a number of special visitors during 2019 including Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, Hilary Garratt, deputy CNO, health and social care secretary Matt Hancock and prime minister Boris Johnson. The PM's visit in October confirmed that we would receive £400m from the government's capital funding to help redevelop our buildings and facilities.

We rounded off the year with a visit from our lovely neighbours at Watford Football Club who brought a buzz to Starfish ward handing out Christmas presents to our young patients. Heurelho Gomes, Adrian Mariappa, Adam Masina, Helen Ward and Alysha Stojko-Down toured the ward donating gifts and raising smiles!



## The future looks good

We heard the great news about the funding for our estate redevelopment at the end of September which seems like a long time ago, so here's a quick recap.

We are one of six NHS trusts sharing £2.7bn pledged in the 'health infrastructure programme'. Our share of that is expected to be around £400m, as announced by the prime minister Boris Johnson when he visited us in October.

### How we plan to spend the money

The chosen option in our Strategic Outline Case was to maintain our three sites; substantially transforming Watford General (with more than 30% of all buildings being new and the rest refurbished or demolished) and updating and streamlining the buildings at Hemel Hempstead and St Albans.

### When can we expect to see some changes

We will need to start developing a detailed business case which will set out where services will be located and exactly how we will spend the capital to improve our clinical facilities. This stage could take up to two



years. Once we have a spade in the ground (hopefully in 2022) the work should take around five years to complete.

### Changes and improvements to our current buildings

We are creating new orthopaedic outpatient facilities in Runcie Wing at St Albans City Hospital while plans are in place for a new trailer mounted MRI unit at Hemel Hempstead Hospital. At Watford General Hospital there will be a new CT scanner in the emergency department and a new medical assessment unit in Shrodells by spring 2020. And finally, the land next to the football club is being prepared in advance of the main construction work for the new multi-storey car park which is due to open in 2021.

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# We ended the year on a high note!



What a way to wrap up the year...the **Gareth Malone Christmas Concert** filmed at Watford General Hospital and featuring our staff and patients aired on prime time TV on BBC Two Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Over 1.4m people watched the show on Christmas Eve which has really put #TeamWestHerts on the map! This number will grow with iPlayer views.

Our incredibly talented choir were put through their paces by renowned choirmaster Gareth Malone to deliver a performance of a lifetime.

Whether you appeared on camera or not, you're all stars for opening the doors on

your wards or clinical areas to the crew from Swan Films. They spent six weeks with us capturing the very best of our staff and some lovely patient stories for the documentary.

We are very grateful for your cooperation and flexibility with the film crew and couldn't have done this without your support. The film shows your care, commitment and kindness to patients and is a great testament to the trust and the NHS as a whole.