



Everyone at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals continues to focus a great deal of time and effort on making improvements to services and ensuring that the quality of everything we do makes a tangible, positive difference to the lives of local people.

This has continued even alongside the huge and undeniable draw on our energy and resources from a virus that has dominated our lives over the past 12 months.



In particular, we have been working on the issues raised as part of the feedback from our latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection in 2019. The regime, often likened to the way Ofsted works within educational settings, categorised the Trust as 'requires improvement' overall, although there were some areas recognised as providing 'good' services and our community health services for adults were 'outstanding'.

This is important. There are great people doing great things in the Trust and while we need to improve, we should always remember that too.

Over the past 18 months or so and in direct response to some of the issues raised in the CQC report, the Trust has implemented some significant changes and improvements, even as we have been truly stretched and utterly exhausted in our monumental response to Covid.

I'm really proud that we have been able to do this and I'd like to thank teams across the Trust for their determination, resilience and hard work. Everyone has been amazing.

I wanted to share some of the results, which I presented in an update to the health and social care system in Lancashire and South Cumbria last week, supported by colleagues from the Trust and the wider team across health and social care in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. The depth and breadth of improvements really is incredible and whilst we've still some way to go, I wanted to share some of the headlines with you too. They included:

- A focus on staffing and ensuring we have the right people in the right ratios on our wards to ensure safe and effective care is in place – this has been difficult during Covid as the number of people needing hospital care escalated beyond any previous precedents

- The pressure on staffing meant a quick and determined focus on recruiting more trained professionals and this has included an overseas search with almost 200 much needed registered international nurses welcomed into the team
- The introduction of a 'ward accreditation process' aimed at raising standards and celebrating best practice across the organisation using unannounced visits has been developed and introduced – we are already celebrating some 'silver' wards with a real 'race for gold standards' underway
- Investment in Quality Improvement techniques across our divisions and clinical teams is making improvement everyone's day to day focus
- Prioritising the health and wellbeing of staff, including encouraging them to complete their staff survey to identify the most important improvements, bolstering our Freedom to Speak Up approach and ensuring everyone has been vaccinated against both seasonal 'flu and Covid

In addition, the Trust has worked across the wider health and social care system to ensure the annual winter pressure found in our hospitals has been managed effectively, particularly alongside Covid this year. We have focused on improving patient flow even when faced with huge demand for inpatient treatment, drastically reducing the number of people who wait more than 12 hours for a bed and also working with colleagues at North West Ambulance Service on efficient handovers between paramedics and the A&E team.

The national '111 first' programme which introduced the ability to book urgent care appointments in advance instead of 'dropping in' was piloted at The Vic and successful in reducing both the number of people in A&E and Covid infection spread too.

We have also revised our governance structures and processes to ensure our work plans are effective and we can provide assurance to the Trust Board and regulators about effective progress and improvements being delivered.

Whilst we have not been fully reinspected by the CQC, the team did conduct an unannounced visit to A&E and some of our medical wards on one of the busiest Mondays in January at The Vic.

I was delighted they found no issues for immediate action and moreover that they were complimentary in their feedback, specifically in relation to:

- A busy but well controlled and calm environment at A&E
- Staff who were helpful and supportive despite the moment being pressured with huge demand for services
- The general cleanliness of the hospital
- The way we were managing staffing under huge pressure in a positive and measured way

We have not yet received the final report but that we will respond positively to any actions required of us in the report.

We have also recently been visited by colleagues from the North West team at NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) focused primarily on infection prevention control measures in place and also by Health Education England's North West Team (HEENW) checking in on our support for junior doctors and medical education. Both provided positive feedback and will help us to continue to identify how we can be more effective.

The Trust will implement a new structure on April 1 designed to provide more capacity, more capability and better outcomes for both staff and local people. The review of our current structures began last summer and has explored, in significant detail, whether a different approach to the way services are grouped and managed would deliver improvements.

The new structure includes the creation of a tertiary division as part of the Trust and four reconfigured, complimentary divisions to deliver services. I am confident that it will deliver the best possible, integrated care for local people and the most effective support for staff to develop and be supported to achieving the very best quality of care.

The new structure aims to ensure services are in the right place being delivered by the right team, avoiding duplication, inconsistency and inequity of roles. It will also help us develop services such as our cardiothoracic, haematology, the National Eye Service and cystic fibrosis. It also provides a real opportunity to look at the way our current divisional structures work together to support integration and collaboration with partners locally, regionally and nationally across the NHS, wider health and social care, local government and voluntary, community and faith sectors.

I talked last week in the blog about 'cautious optimism', in the context of the welcome reductions in community prevalence of the virus and hospital admissions connected to Covid.

This week I would like to be bolder in the wider context that we are making improvements, we are making a difference and we will continue to do so. On this front I am feeling very optimistic indeed.

**Kevin McGee**

**Chief Executive, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Positive

## HOME FIRST PROGRAMME SUPPORTS PATIENTS



Patients are getting home from hospital in a safer and more effective manner after a ground-breaking discharge initiative was extended to seven days a week recently.

The Home First scheme sees medically stable patients discharged to their own homes for assessment and social care support, before a team of therapists and social workers then review how a patient can manage with every day activities such as cooking, personal hygiene and going up and down stairs.

First launched as a pilot in January 2019, the Home First team has now expanded its capacity and deals with 30 discharges a week by providing the service seven days a week.

Charlotte Hamer, Service Manager for Home First, said: "This is a national initiative which is backed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the Government, providing a culture where we try and encourage the belief that patients show significant improvements in their own environment.

"There is lots of research which demonstrates that patients perform differently when they are at home. Home First is all about getting the patient in their own surroundings, doing an assessment at home and deciding if there are any measures we can take, such as equipment or care packages we can commission to make things easier for the patient."

As well as providing a more effective discharge from the hospital, the Home First scheme will also drive a more bespoke tailored care package for each patient, delivering a more efficient system for the Trust.

Charlotte added: “The essence of the assessment is to check that the patient is safe at home and to put in anything that will keep the patient at home.

“We are saving care hours, which means obviously they can support more patients at home, which again is increasing turnover and increasing flow. You are getting that full picture of what the patient is able to do, or not do at home and we are hoping that it prevents any readmissions.”

## People Centred

### DR GARDNER'S WEEKLY VIDEO UPDATE

You can view the latest episode of Dr Jim Gardner's popular COVID updates [HERE](#)

Dr Gardner, Medical Director at the Trust, reflects on the current situation where the number of inpatients has increased slightly over the past few days although there has been a reduction in inpatients aged over 70 which is a promising sign in terms of the vaccination programme.



On another positive note the reduction in community infection figures across Lancashire has continued.

Although decreasing, the figures remain higher than they were in the summer months when the average rate of infections were below 100 per 100,000 people, so Dr Gardner once again stresses the importance of remaining vigilant and following the hands, face and space safety messages and seeking a Covid test should anyone have any flu-like symptoms.

### NEW NURSE CONSULTANT TO FOCUS ON PATIENT EXPERIENCES



Patients and staff at Blackpool Victoria Hospital will benefit after the appointment to the Haematology department of an experienced Nurse Consultant with a background advising on cutting-edge international health programmes.

Mylene Freires steps up from a role where she spent three years as the department's first Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP).

Her new role is both a leadership and clinical role.

Currently her priority is to develop the chemotherapy service for haematology, looking for innovative ways to deliver care and patient experiences.

She also oversees the clinical practice of haematology ANPs and trainees in Blackpool and Preston.

Prior to her role at the Trust, Mylene was the first ever Advanced Clinical Practitioner for Haematology in Qatar, where she worked for more than three years during the implementation phase of Qatar's Cancer Transformation Programme.

Her career has also seen her work closely with several international health organisations in the US, Canada and UK to raise nursing standards and on several quality improvement projects.

She said: “I want share the knowledge and skills I have built up not only to help patients but also nurses through role-modelling, informal and formal teaching and clinical supervision.”

## Compassionate

### COVID PATIENT PRAISES “WORLD CLASS” CARE HE RECEIVED

A BLACKPOOL man who spent 84 days in hospital with Covid has praised the “world class” NHS teams who helped him return home.

For Mr Tushar Das, the opportunity to continue his rehabilitation at home after falling ill with Covid-19 was a welcome return.

Tushar had spent almost three months in Blackpool Victoria Hospital, including three weeks in an induced coma before being recommended for the Home First pathway and being discharged to his home.

Mr Das admits that though he was initially a little anxious at the prospect of finally going home after such a long time, he was delighted with the care he received across the board, from every element of the hospital.

“I was very happy, the care was absolutely world class,” Tushar says. “Everyone from the admin team to the cleaning staff and of course the clinical staff, you couldn’t fault it. It was everything I wanted, absolutely amazing care.

“It is a worrying time being discharged, especially after 84 days in hospital. The Home First team met me on discharge at home and were here for about two hours on the day, they made sure that everything was okay and that I understood all the factors of being at home and being discharged.

“They were very thorough and they did mention that Home First was available if I needed help with washing and things like that. So I said I would take up their offer. It was very useful because they came twice a day for two weeks and it really helped having them there.

“Everyone that attended to me was very professional, very caring and empathetic, so it was really good to have that security twice a day. It is good to have them here to make sure that everything was okay for me.”

He added: “The care I received was absolutely amazing, they really were good staff. The level of care and commitment was unbelievable.

“It makes me really angry when you get these false news stories that Covid doesn’t exist and it is just a scam. They can come and see me. I was there for 84 days, on a ventilator, I was put in an induced coma for three weeks, and I was attached to a kidney dialysis machine.

“What more proof do they need that this is an absolute threat to everybody? It doesn’t matter how healthy you think you are, if it wants to bring you to your knees it will do, it doesn’t discriminate at all.”





## TRUST PRAISED FOR SUPPORTING APPRENTICES



The quality of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's apprenticeship programme has been praised.

The Trust won four awards at Blackpool & Fylde College's Apprenticeship Awards ceremony this week including one for the best large employer of the year with two members of staff Lauren Thornborough, who works in the Trust's Research and Development team, won two categories as she won the Higher

Apprentice of the Year and Rising Star awards while Anthony Jacobs, who works in the Trust's Outpatient Clinic, collected the Best Innovation/Impact Award.

At the online awards ceremony Bev Robinson, OBE, Principal and Chief Executive of Blackpool and Fylde College, said: "The ceremony is our chance to recognise the exceptional achievements of our apprentices and their employers. Everyone nominated has made remarkable progress despite the tough year that 2020 proved to be.

"The Trust clearly sees apprenticeships as a sustainable way of recruiting and retaining local talent while developing their future workforce and is clearly committed to delivering an enhanced experience for its apprentices."

Mark Hayes, Widening Participation and Apprenticeship Manager at the Trust, said: "We are pleased to say that we employ many apprentices across many different sectors. The apprentices are key to us building a sustainable workforce and allow for growth within the different sector areas at the Trust.

"Our apprentices are fully integrated into our workforce and bring a fresh approach, ideas and new ways of working to our existing teams. They diversify the teams that they work with and for those already employed, higher and degree apprenticeships offer the opportunity for the further development of skills, knowledge and behaviours in their chosen field. This positively impacts the individual, the Trust and its service users."

## NEIL GOES THE EXTRA MILE TO SUPPORT STAFF

Neil Berrigan, Clinical Skills Facilitator at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, has been chosen for a Going The Extra Mile Award after being nominated by his colleagues.

Neil, based in the Skills and Simulation team at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, helps facilitate the rolling programme of training for clinical staff.

Staff from across the Trust access the training sessions, such as on how to take blood from a patient, and Neil is instrumental in making sure the programme runs as it should.

He was nominated by his colleague Melissa who works in the same team, and Alison from the practice development team which also helps to facilitate the training.



Neil, who has been with the Trust since 2004, explained: “It has been so busy over the last 12 months. There was a lot of upskilling going on in the early days of the pandemic, and people who were changing job roles slightly.

“It’s lovely to be nominated – everyone has been doing incredible work and it’s been great to have supported so many staff.”

In the nomination, Neil’s colleagues said: “Neil has been a massive support to both of us since coming into post. His advice, support and mentoring has been invaluable and we just want him to know how much he is appreciated.”

Going The Extra Mile is an initiative designed to help staff highlight the incredible work that goes on in the Trust every day.

## POSITIVE COMMENTS

### New mum Ruby wrote in to praise the staff:

*“I would just like to say thank you so much to the amazing midwife in the delivery suite who helped bring our baby girl into the world.*

*“Even though I am petrified of needles and a first time mum not knowing what to expect, she helped me and reassured me every step of the way even when I doubted myself at times. Unfortunately her shift ended before our baby girl was born and we know she really wanted to meet her, Nellie was born at 7:36am on January 28.*



*“Thank you for being so amazing and helping me through my first birthing experience!*

### Vanessa sent us this message about her daughter’s vaccination experience:

*“Can I just say how amazing the staff were with my daughter at the vaccine clinic at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.*

*“She has a major fear of needles and if I honest I honestly didn't think I would even get her in the hospital let alone get the injection.*

*“The staff could see how upset and nervous she was feeling. My daughter has learning difficulties she doesn't understand things straight away. The staff seated her in the waiting area and then put screens around her and chatted with her really putting her at ease, talking with her in a calm manner.*

*“The lady who gave the actual jab went above and beyond to make sure she was comfortable. She even told her what nickname she has in her normal role which made my daughter chuckle and the jab was done without much fuss. I can't thank the staff enough for their compassion to her problem”.*

**Thank you for reading this bulletin. If you have any comments or questions, or would like to know more about any of the work the Trust is currently undertaking, then please get in touch by emailing [bfwh.trustcommunications@nhs.net](mailto:bfwh.trustcommunications@nhs.net)**