



It would be entirely remiss of me not to focus this week's blog with an update following the well-publicised development in a long-running Police investigation focused on the stroke unit at Blackpool Victoria.

Lancashire Police this week announced the investigating team had made an arrest and, if you have not seen it, you can read their full statement [here](#). This represents a significant moment and milestone for the Trust.

Whilst it's important to me to always be open and transparent about patient safety and the quality of care, it would be inappropriate of me to say much more at this stage. We have co-operated fully with these enquiries and continue to do so but it is an ongoing, live and complex enquiry and I would not wish to jeopardise its progress in any way.

I think I speak for colleagues at the Trust as a whole, however, when I say we are universally committed to supporting the Police. For this reason, I will add that I want to explicitly encourage anyone who knows anything that might help the investigation to come forward, whether that's patients, families, staff or the wider community. Do not underestimate how any small snippet of information might prove material.

There are families that have been and continue to be significantly impacted by this investigation. It has hit all the staff hard too and we are supporting them.

I have said it many times before and particularly over the past 12 months during our response to the Covid pandemic – the staff here at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals are amazing and I am so proud to be part of the team.

That's the NHS I know and love and have passionately served for more than 35 years.

I am aware that this development might dent public confidence in our services and I want to end by providing some assurance to people that we recognise this.

I spoke just a couple of weeks ago about a range of improvements that have been made and are being recognised by regulators and peers across the health and social care system in Lancashire and South Cumbria and the North West as a whole.

Everyone continues to focus a great deal of time and effort on 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.

This is important. There are great people doing great things in the Trust and we should always remember that.

Just yesterday, at the Trust Board's bi-monthly meeting, we heard from a colleague about his experience of working within the medical team for some years. It was inspiring to hear

how he felt we had empowered colleagues in recent years to embrace education and research to become 'pioneers' in many ways, piloting new procedures to great success.

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.

This year has been hard for us – possibly the hardest we will ever live through – but good to know we haven't lost our spirit, our ambition and our determination to make a difference. Our energy levels will return and, when they do, there will be no stopping us I am sure.

Take care,

**Kevin McGee**

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

#### **IN THIS WEEK'S STAKEHOLDER BULLETIN**

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#### **Positive**

#### **COVID CASES CONTINUE TO FALL**

In his popular weekly video Dr Jim Gardner this week reported that the number of Covid positive inpatients at the Trust has continued to fall. On Friday we had 26 patients which is a drop of 22 since this time last week.

The vaccination programme is progressing well across the Fylde coast including at our hospital hubs and mass vaccination centres - with more than 17,000 people having now received their first dose and the team starting to roll out second doses.

On another positive note, the reduction in community infection figures across Lancashire, has continued with Blackpool and Wyre now down to double figures and below the national average. Despite the good news Dr Gardner once again stressed 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.

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



#### **BTH TO 'TAKE A MOMENT'**

Later this month the Trust will be marking a year since our first Covid-positive patient.

We are marking the occasion by holding a series of events to remember everything we have done and everyone we have lost in a week of reflection and remembrance between March 15 and 21.

This will include visits by the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and other senior managers from across the Trust to all teams and sites both in hospital and in our community settings.

There will also be some events and initiatives designed to support the health and wellbeing of our staff as we will be encouraging them to 'Take a Moment' and just think about all we have been through and achieved.

We will keep you updated about the events in future bulletins.

### **LONG COVID-19 SERVICE LAUNCHES ON THE FYLDE COAST**

A service supporting patients who have been diagnosed with a post-COVID-19 syndrome known as 'long Covid' has launched this week. Although most people recover, some may experience longer term effects including a range of symptoms such as fatigue, breathlessness, a cough, 'brain fog', anxiety, low mood and poor sleep. Long Covid is when symptoms last 12 weeks or more. Long Covid can affect a wide range of people from the young fit and active to the older person.

The Long Covid Team is made up of different healthcare professionals including a Doctor, Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist, Psychological Wellbeing Worker and a Rehabilitation Support Worker. The Team will complete a holistic assessment, talking through the care and support available, setting goals and helping patients to manage and recover from Long Covid symptoms.

To be referred to the Long Covid Service, patients are asked to contact their GP who can refer them into the service.

Patients may be able to self-manage some of their symptoms and there are lots of useful resources and guidance to support their recovery at [www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk](http://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk)

### **EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ADVICE**

Whilst our numbers of Covid-positive patients continues to reduce, the Emergency Department (ED) at Blackpool Victoria continues to see high numbers through the doors looking for treatment and support.

This pressure on services and the number of people requiring admission remains challenging, particularly as the Trust continues to follow and enforce enhanced safety and infection prevent control measures as part of our response to Covid, such as social distancing between both patients and staff wherever possible and increased cleaning and decontamination times.

If you need to come into ED please ring NHS 111 in advance if possible and they can arrange for you to be seen safely with an advanced appointment.

Same Day Health Centres, GP out of hours service or their local pharmacy are also available, in cases which are not urgent.

People Centred

### **BLUE SKIES CHARITY SUPPORTS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

The Trust's Blue Skies has funded an Amazon Fire tablet for Blenheim Child Development and Family Support Centre.

The tablet will help early years children be put at ease and settle when they enter an unknown environment.

It can be used as a distraction technique if they become unsettled when being handled by a therapist and initiate positive interaction through play.

It can also help with eye-hand co-ordination and encourage index finger isolation and be used as a positive reward when engaging in therapy.



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING CHAMPIONS



The Trust is strengthening its support for staff health and wellbeing by recruiting volunteer Wellbeing & Engagement Champions to help make a difference to colleagues within every team across the organisation.

Volunteers, SUCH AS Angela Ferguson and Ann Bassett, pictured left, will support others to engage and partake in leading a healthier lifestyle with part of the role being to create a 'Well Space' in the area they work.

Excellent

## WARDS AIM FOR GOLD STANDARD THROUGH COAST

The Trust's COAST ward recognition scheme is well underway with many wards having received a visit from the assessment team.

Launched in January 2021, the Collaborative Organisational Accreditation System for Teams (COAST) aims to raise standards and celebrate best practice of teams across the hospital.

The framework is designed around the Chief Inspector of Hospitals', 5 Key lines of enquiry (KLOE) which are: SAFE, EFFECTIVE, CARING, RESPONSIVE and WELL LED.

"Accreditation is a supportive assessment, we are the wards critical friend; the passenger on your drive to work, pointing out things you may not see," said Emily Carter, COAST Lead at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust.

"We are highlighting areas of good practice and encouraging staff to celebrate these and also identifying areas which may require improvement and supporting teams on their improvement journey."

The assessment team includes colleagues from all divisions and all grades. Initially, the COAST team are assessing adult inpatient areas with plans to assess all of Blackpool Teaching Hospital services including ED, Theatres, community services and maternity services.

## NURSING TEAM GOES THE EXTRA MILE

A team responsible for rolling out new staffing software to the Trust's nursing wards has been presented with a Going the Extra Mile Award.



Jed Walton-Pollard, the Trust's Deputy Director of Nursing, was nominated with his team by colleague Natalie Hill for their work on implementing and rolling out the Safecare software

Safecare is used to help determine safe staffing levels for the organisation, and the health roster team has been rolling it out since January 2020 with training taking place over the last 12 months.

The new software will ensure safer staffing levels across the organisation and support patient safety.

## POSITIVE COMMENTS

**New mum Emma sent us this message about her experience:**



*'Hi, I would just like to thank those on delivery suite who helped bring our baby Ariana into the world safely on Friday the 19th.*

*"She made a very fast appearance upon arrival to the hospital everyone acted so quickly but calmly.*

*"Forgive me for not remembering names of the midwives and students who made our visit a great experience, we couldn't have done it without you."*

**Jessie contacted us to thank our Early Pregnancy Unit:**

*'Please can you pass on such a massive thank you to the Early Pregnancy Unit. I can not put into words how thankful I am that at such a sad and difficult time I had the most compassionate, professional and friendly care. The whole team were so lovely and understanding and at such a difficult time alone due to Covid, I felt I had a loved one supporting me.*

*"The care I received from them was outstanding and I hope they know how appreciated they are.*

*"The consultant, surgical team and wards were amazing and took into consideration my losses and having to have a tube removed, I'm just grateful to be alive due to them.*

*"I've still not got my head around everything that's happened but I just want the EPU to know what an impact they've had on me and I'm sure other women in similar situations at this difficult time made harder with Covid, thank you from the bottom of my heart."*

**Thank you for reading this bulletin. If you have any comments or questions, or would like to know more about any of our services, please get in touch via telephone on 01253 300000, through our [online contact form](#), or via post at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Trust Headquarters, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool, FY3 8NR**