



This week I have joined colleagues from across Blackpool Teaching Hospitals to reflect and remember everything we have been through over the past year.

It is almost 12 months to the day since we admitted our first patient with Covid-19. A milestone in our history and receiving that news is a moment that I will never forget.

Just a few days later, we sadly lost our first patient to the virus and so began the most harrowing period any of us have experienced in recent NHS history.

Whilst I am immensely proud to have been part of the response to the pandemic, both here in the Trust, at East Lancashire Hospitals too and also as part of the wider health and social care system, it doesn't feel like a moment to celebrate.

So instead we have enacted a week to simply be together, to 'take a moment' to reflect and remember everything we have been through and to continue to check in and offer support to each other.

We began the week with a live event of remembrance held virtually on the Trust's video conferencing network, as has become the norm through the past 12 months.

This type of previously impersonable, online gathering would have been unthinkable before the onset of Covid but it turned out to be very moving and something that, I think, touched everyone who took part.

We were joined by Father Andrew Dawson from the Trust's spiritual team who helped us to reflect, led a minute's silence in memory of those we have lost and read the unauthorised poem 'Hope'.

The team has done so much to support both staff and patients and their families, there really was no one better to provide that insight.

We also thanked each other, shared our own reflections of the past year and played a short but poignant video which illustrated just some of what we have dealt with.

Many colleagues found it moving and emotional. It was sombre in nature but it was probably always going to be. If you would like to take a moment and reflect and remember, you would be welcome to watch the video [here](#) and I have added a transcript of the poem which I think really captures our spirit [here](#).

Following on from this, myself and other managers have been out to see as many teams across the Trust as possible – to check in on colleagues, say hello and 'how are you' and ensure everyone has access to any support they might need.

Of course we have said a huge and heartfelt thank you to everyone too – and I cannot tell you how emotional this has been for people. Just to know their experience has been

acknowledged, that we recognise their contribution and that they are valued and cared for has been so powerful for many.

It is testament to the natural way of most NHS staff, though, that they readily underplay what they have done. Words like 'only' and 'just' and 'we haven't had it as bad as colleagues in intensive or critical care' were abundant from people who appeared from behind ward curtains, from discreet doors in walls on our corridors or from one of our many, many wards.

They have been there – grafting, caring, doing – each and every day.

They have been in early, stayed late and worked through planned annual leave or breaks.

They have quietly 'got on with it' and then they have gone home to all of the challenges and fears and worries the same as everyone else.

Make no mistake their contribution has been huge and we owe them a debt we can never repay.

In the video you will see that we have lost over 750 patients since March 2020. It has been utterly devastating and the emotional burden has been incredibly high for everyone.

Colleagues who don't usually work on the front line told me how they were redeployed to places they had never been and saw things they can now never unsee. Still, the next day they did it again.

For this reason, if you watch on just a couple of seconds you will see that we have also cared for more than 2,000 people who have returned home to their loved ones and continued their lives, often against all odds or expectations.

Each and every person in this Trust has contributed to this immense and sustained effort. Each one of them amazing in their own way. Each one I encourage to feel proud of their part.

I've been glad to take a moment this week and see as many people as possible and just say thanks. It has been inspiring and uplifting in many ways.

If I can ask one thing from you in return, please continue to follow the restrictions and the roadmap for easing them. With the vaccine rollout and by working together we can continue to get back to normal. That would be something to really celebrate.

Take care

Kevin McGee

Chief Executive, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

IN THIS WEEK'S STAKEHOLDER BULLETIN

[COVID VIDEO UPDATE](#)

[TAKE A MOMENT](#)

[SPEEDING UP PATIENT FLOW](#)

[TEAM SPIRIT AT BLACKPOOL](#)

[GOING THE EXTRA MILE](#)

[POSITIVE COMMENTS](#)

VIDEO UPDATE

You can view the latest episode of the Trust's popular weekly Covid video episode, [here](#). This week, Dr Grahame Goode, Deputy Medical Director at the Trust, urges people to continue to remain vigilant and stick to the rules as the Government unveils its roadmap back to normal life.

He also praised the vaccination effort which has seen more than 19,000 people receive their jabs, and revealed the Trust is back to its normal 16 critical care beds, "a massive reduction on where we were some months ago."



He said: "I know personally it's very difficult for the whole community. We've had two lockdowns, and we're very grateful to the community for sticking to the rules. But we really have to be vigilant because as you can see there is still a significant number of Covid positive patients in the community."

The update is now also available as a weekly podcast, which can be listened to [here](#).

'TAKE A MOMENT'

It's 12 months since the Trust reported its first Covid-positive patient, and sadly its first death.

To mark this occasion, a series of events took place this week around the Trust to allow for the chance to 'Take a Moment' and reflect on the past 12 months and what it has meant for both staff and patients.



Among the activities were a tree planting ceremony which saw a cherry blossom planted outside the Women and Children's Unit, a range of virtual wellbeing sessions for staff, and visits by directors and senior managers to say thank you to staff for their hard work.

Lisa Richmond, Directorate Manager, Ophthalmology, ENT and Maxillofacial – Scheduled Care, visited the Ophthalmic Surgical Unit. She said: "We reflected on the lives that have been lost and how emotional this has been. I discussed how myself and the senior

management and Execs were extremely proud of each and every one of them for all their hard work over the last 12 months and how they should be really proud of their hard work and commitment."

SPOD SPEEDS UP PATIENT FLOW

The Single Point of Discharge (SPoD) programme was introduced at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in December 2019, and in just over a year has streamlined the Trust's approach to patient discharge.



Charlotte Hamer, Service Manager for Single Point of Discharge, has given an update on how SPoD was impacting patient flow and patient experience.

Introduced on a select number of wards in the winter of 2019, SPoD was extended to all wards in the Spring of 2020 and the team are now better facilitating pathways for discharge.

Charlotte said: “SPoD has been introduced to do exactly what it says on the tin, to be one single point of discharge, to try and make everything more streamlined and improve the discharge process for ward staff but ultimately our patients.

“While it was an ask from the Trust for Winter Pressures, we demonstrated the efficiencies in terms of reducing length of stay and utilising a variety of community pathways. We have an overview of all of the service capacity within community and we try and appropriately match that to the patients that have been referred.”

One of the biggest changes SPoD has implemented has been a switch to an online system, which has helped fast-track facilitating discharge plans from up to four days to just two hours in some cases.

Charlotte added: “It is a real positive, from both a patient flow perspective and a patient experience perspective. We did a business case and a service review to demonstrate these outcomes and became a permanent service because of the impact that we have been able to have.”

People Centred

TEAM SPIRIT AT BLACKPOOL IS GREAT SAYS FOOTBALL STAR NATASHA



There can't be too many members of the Blackpool Teaching Hospitals workforce who harbour realistic ambitions of playing in the top flight of English football, but for physiotherapist Natasha Fenton, that dream remains very much alive.

The 22-year-old joined the Trust in the summer of 2020 and has recently grabbed national headlines for her dedication in combining a career within the NHS and being a top-level footballer with Blackburn Rovers.

A former England Under-17 international, Natasha is working hard to get to the very top, be that in the health service or professional sport.

“It would be a once in a lifetime thing. I always said that if the opportunity would arise then it would be something that I would take with both hands.

“I have always put my studies first, and I love my job that I am in now. I started at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals in June and it has been a bit of whirlwind, but I have loved every minute.”

Natasha, who recently extended her contract with Blackburn Rovers, knows all too well the role that team spirit can play on the sports field, but it is the camaraderie and connection with her colleagues at Blackpool that has pulled her through the challenging times of the pandemic.

She said: “Working in the team here at Blackpool, I don’t think I would even consider moving from the team that is here, they are amazing and tight knit. It is like a big family and the experiences that I have had in such a short space of time, they’re not career defining, but it is really solidifying as to why I am pleased to have gone into this role and why I have chosen Blackpool Teaching Hospitals as the place where I wanted my career to take off.”

Excellent

GOING THE EXTRA MILE



Members of the Trust's Pharmacy Vaccination Team have received a Going The Extra Mile award for their commitment to the mass vaccination programmes.

The team consists of senior managers Rebecca Bond and Angela Nelson; Darren McCormack, Anne Magee and Lara Scowcroft of the Aseptics Unit; and Louise Sadler and Angela Nausino from the purchasing team.

Colleagues have praised the seven-strong team for their work in everything from operational aspects to ensuring the vaccine was diluted safely and running a strong supply chain.

Rebecca Bond and Angela Nelson were nominated for the award by Janet Barnsley, the Trust's Executive Director of Operations, and the rest of the team by Rebecca.

Rebecca said: “It was lovely to receive the award and we felt like our efforts were really appreciated at a Trust level. I nominated the other five staff as their commitment to the programme and efforts were second to none. It simply wouldn't have been such a success without everyone being involved.”

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

Cicola sent this message via Facebook: “Hi, I wanted to say a HUGE thank you to all the staff on Ward 5 for the amazing care I received from them.

“I was particularly taken aback by how well the nurses took care of the older ladies on the ward.

“Their patience never faltered, even towards the end of their long shifts. What amazing humans these people are and I am very grateful for their kindness during my stay.”

Deborah got in touch to say: 'I just wanted to say a big thank you to all the staff in the birth centre who helped me deliver my son Alexander Carl Gregson on March 6, particularly the midwife Lisa and the student midwife who's name - handily - was also Lisa.

“They made the whole experience so fabulous - limited intervention and yet so much support. Alex was born in the birth pool exactly as I wanted him to be.

“The birth centre is an amazing facility to have in Blackpool and it genuinely felt like a private hospital experience.

“Thank you again to everyone who looked after us. You're a credit to your profession.”

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

