

Chairman's bulletin

December 2015

Dear member,

I am pleased to update you after our latest board of directors' meeting.

I hope you find this bulletin informative. If you have any comments about the format or content please contact the private office.

Governor election results

I am pleased to announce the results of the recent governor election:

Stockton (5 to elect)

Janet Atkins (re-elected) 3 years

James Newton (re-elected) 3 years

Mark White 3 years

Kate Wilson (re-elected) 3 years

Val Scollen 1 year

Hartlepool (3 to elect)

George Lee 3 years

Alan Smith 3 years

Roger Campbell 2 years

Easington (1 to elect)

No Candidates

Staff (3 to elect)

Manuf Kassem (re-elected) 3 years

Steven Yull 3 years

Gary Wright 2 years

I would like to welcome our newly elected governors, congratulate those who have been re-elected and thank those governors who are no longer serving on the council of governors for their contribution to the trust.

Investment in the University Hospital of North Tees

You may have seen in the media recently that the trust has successfully secured £25m from the government, to enable vital infrastructure work to begin at the University Hospital of North Tees.

The work will see a rewire, new boiler and maintenance of the water supply. When the hospital was built in the late 50s and early 60s, there was far less demand for electricity and far fewer pieces of electrical equipment such as scanners.

We really welcome this much needed investment and work is expected to start in April 2016 which will help to secure the longer term future of the hospital.

Trakcare (electronic patient records)

In October we brought in the first phase of our new patient record system. This has been a massive undertaking and there would never have been a good time to do it. As you can imagine it has been a huge piece of work, and I would like to thank everyone who has been working hard on implementing the system and training and supporting staff. The new system will bring us many functions and benefits we simply didn't have with the old system and will provide the trust with the opportunity of having much better, integrated IT.

Money

At the end of September we were £7.2m in deficit. In her report to the board, director of finance, ICT and support services Lynne Hodgson reported that we were £7.6m in deficit at the end of October which is £4.4m behind where we planned to be. It is pleasing to see that the increase in our deficit appears to be slowing down a little but there is still a long way to go to get ourselves back under control. Our overspending is the direct result of us not delivering on our efficiency plan, which aimed to save over £10m this year.

We have been in difficult financial situations before and got ourselves out of them and we must do this again.

MRSA and Clostridium Difficile (CDiff)

Unfortunately a contaminated sample has meant we have now had one MRSA case. This is really unfortunate after more than 300 days of being MRSA free and with the previous breach also being a contaminated sample. However our clinical and non-clinical staff have taken corrective action and lessons have been learnt.

We have exceeded our tolerance for the year on CDiff, with 20 cases at the end of October, against a target of 13 for the whole year.

We continue to emphasise the importance of hand hygiene with staff and visitors in our bid to prevent infection. As members of the trust you can support us with this work by remembering to make sure you clean your hands if you are visiting any clinical areas in the hospital.

We have been incredibly successful at tackling the spread of infection in the past. Let's get back to where we want to be by working together.

Flu vaccination

The latest flu vaccination figures show that, across the trust, 39% of staff have had their vaccination

Congratulations to our nursing staff who have achieved 55%, the In hospital care directorate which has achieved 50%, and our doctors who have achieved 45%.

Last year the vaccine was about 30% effective as a protection but it must be remembered that, in most years, the vaccine is around 90%, and there is every indication that the vaccine this year will be effective. Whatever the level of protection, the vaccine is all we have to protect ourselves against an illness which can be fatal.

It's especially important for pregnant women to have the vaccine; it is thought that the strains of flu circulating this year will have a disproportionate effect on pregnant women. The nasal vaccine is being extended to reach more young children to ensure they are protected.

Please take the opportunity to have the flu vaccine if you are in an at risk group.

Our performance

Despite being early into the winter we have had additional pressure on our services for many weeks. Disappointingly we have not achieved the target of 95 % of patients being seen, treated, admitted or discharged from accident and emergency within four hours. We are not seeing many more patients attending A and E, however, we are seeing a higher proportion of those patients being admitted into the hospital which shows the levels of frailty and illness across the population. As we've said on many occasions the four hour target does not only belong to A and E. The whole trust and health system needs to be working effectively for this target to be achieved.

At the end of September we had achieved all but two of our cancer targets. We were just short of the two week wait cancer target at 91.8% (the target is 93% of patients being referred into our services by their GP to receive an appointment within two weeks), and in the 62 day cancer target we achieved 83.5% against a target of 85% of patients starting their cancer treatment within 62 days. These targets are always challenging to achieve because many are shared between us and specialist centres at other trusts.

Christmas celebration in the spiritual centre, UHNT

The annual Christmas celebration will be held in the spiritual centre (the chapel), UHNT, at 1.30pm on Thursday 17 December. You are all welcome to attend.

Neil Atkinson

Transformation change director Neil Atkinson is to take up a post as operational director of finance at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Neil leaves the trust in mid-January. I would like to place on record my thanks to Neil in his finance roles including as acting director of finance and in his role as transformation change director. He has set up an excellent framework for the transformation programme and he will certainly be missed. We wish him and his family well.

Happy Christmas and a happy and healthy 2016

As we approach the festive season it's always a time to reflect on the year and look forward to the new one. Anyone who has been in the NHS for long enough will appreciate that it has highs and lows. After the disappointment of having to put the new hospital on hold we end the year with £25m to do the essential infrastructure work to give the University Hospital of North Tees a longer life. We know there is more to do to ensure the hospital remains fit for purpose.

We're working with Hartlepool Borough Council on the development of a health plan for Hartlepool, which will provide improved health services for all, and we are also working with Stockton Borough Council to further develop the University Hospital of North Tees and provide better integrated services in the community.

We saw changes to our haematology service, which demonstrates the value of collaborative working and participation in clinical networks to give long term sustainability to such services for the benefit of

our patients.

From the work we shared around our 10 year strategy we know that, the population of over 60s will increase by 18% by 2020 and the working age population will not rise to match it, meaning there will be fewer people to meet the increased demand on the health service. This means we need a different solution going forward.

We had the CQC inspection in July. I for one was very proud of our response to the visit. We gave a good account of ourselves and whatever the outcome it was a positive experience. We were expecting the report to be published before Christmas but this is now likely to be in the New Year.

We are still in a very challenging financial position but can and we will get ourselves out of it.

All of the above can take our eye off the things that are important, which is to play our part in providing the kind of care for our patients that we would want for ourselves and our loved ones. If we keep this at the forefront of our minds we will always be doing the right thing. Putting Patients First after all is our core aim.

May I take this opportunity to wish you the very best for the festive season and thank you for your support throughout the year.

With my very best wishes

Paul Garvin

Chairman