



Pulse magazine

August
2024

• Townlands Hospital now offering carpal tunnel procedure, page 4

Welcome!

Hello and welcome to our latest edition of Pulse! As ever filled with news, information and staff stories to share with you all.

As I write we've just had the hottest day of the year so far, so perhaps summer is making a late appearance. There used to be a summer lull in general practice when I started out over 30 years ago but that seems a distant memory now, as everyone and certainly throughout the Trust is working as hard as ever.

This issue also covers Neuro Rehab's sports day, the new surgical unit update and a visit from our new Members of Parliament among many others.

I can't sign off without a plug to the Royal Berks Charity supporting you and patients alike. We have forthcoming events I'd like to ask for your support with:

- [Cryptic Corporate Challenge](#)
- [Walk for Wards](#)
- [Reading Buses Colouring Competition](#)

Thanks to all of you for your passion and commitment in caring for our local hospitals and community.

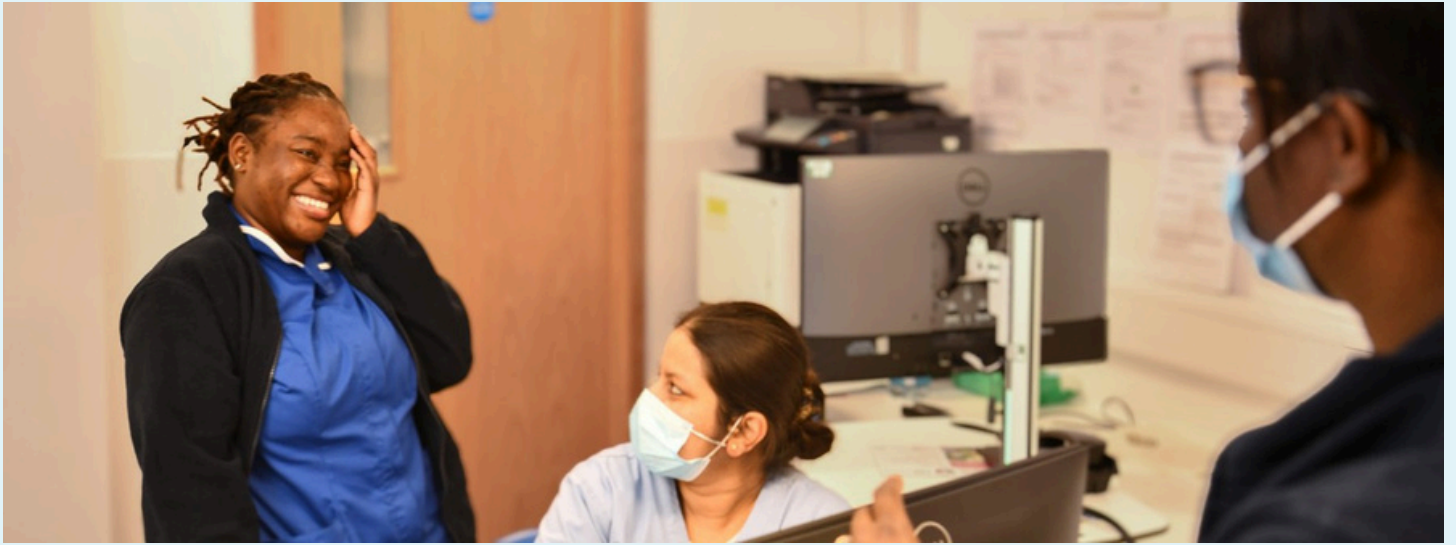
Enjoy reading this edition of Pulse!

Bal Bahia
Non-Executive Director

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CQC ranks Royal Berkshire a top five Trust in their inpatient survey



The CQC have just released their annual Inpatient Survey results, looking at how patients experience care while staying in hospital. Based on the responses returned by patients who stayed with us, we were ranked fourth out of the 131 NHS acute trusts in England. We were also ranked joint most improved Trust against last year's results.

The annual CQC Inpatient Survey asks people to give their opinions on the care they received, including quality of information and communication with staff, whether they were given enough privacy, the amount of support given to help them eat and drink, and on their discharge arrangements.

Thanks to the hard work of our staff and volunteers, out of 38 questions where a direct comparison could be drawn from last year's results, we improved in 31. Areas where we particularly improved include:

- being treated with respect and dignity.
- overall experience while in hospital.
- being offered food that met dietary requirements they had.
- overall rating of hospital food.
- feeling involved in decisions about their care and treatment.
- getting a member of staff to help when needed.
- discussing any equipment or changes needed at home upon discharge.
- being given enough notice before being discharged.

Katie Prichard-Thomas, Chief Nursing Officer, said, "I'm so proud of colleagues right across the Trust. Their care, compassion, and dedication to our patients, is reflected in these results. Patients' views matter, and I'm grateful to everyone who has taken the time to share their feedback. It helps us to understand what's going well, and where we can make further improvements."

GP action

At the beginning of August, some GPs started providing a reduced number of appointments due to [collective action](#).

Please continue to contact your GP as you would normally, and use NHS 111, your local pharmacy or [Reading's Urgent Care Centre](#) if you're unable to get an appointment.

To help reduce hospital pressures and ensure the most urgent patients are treated quickly, only use 999 or visit our Emergency Department for life-threatening emergencies such as a heart-attack or stroke.

Neuro-Rehabilitation Unit hosts patient sports day



As it was a summer of sports, staff in the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit at the West Berkshire Community Hospital were inspired to organise a sports day for patients with games such as tin-can alley, egg and spoon race, and bat and ball.

The Neuro Rehabilitation Unit has many patients who have complex neurological disabilities, like stroke or brain injury. Some of our patients can be in our care for up to 12 weeks, so keeping them active and making them feel they are part of a community is vital for their recovery.

Lois, a Physiotherapist at the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit explains the benefits of organising the sports day for their patients. "It allows them to be active, to have fun, have a sense of community and to sneak in a bit of exercise. We have seen patients laughing and smiling together and having a degree of creativity. It allows them to not just be patients, but people having fun for a bit".

Townlands Hospital now offering carpal tunnel procedure

To improve services closer to home for patients, we are now offering carpal tunnel surgery at Townlands Hospital, in Henley using the facilities that are on site.

Several patients have already benefited from having carpal tunnel surgery at Townlands, and the initiative is expected to increase the number of surgeries performed locally, helping to reduce waiting lists and minimise the need for patients to travel to Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Natasha Picardo, Consultant Hand Surgeon, said "We are really pleased to be able to offer this service at Townlands, as it makes a real difference to patients locally. By having the surgery under minor ops at a local hospital like Townlands it significantly streamlines the patient journey as they don't require preoperative assessments. On the day of surgery they can be admitted and discharged much faster, as well as having a session with our clinical staff on how to manage after the operation."

Patients have praised the convenience of receiving treatment closer to home



Patients who have had the procedure at Townlands recently have praised the convenience and comfort of receiving treatment closer to home.

Carpal tunnel is a minor operation, usually performed in one of the theatres at Royal Berkshire Hospital.

By moving minor operations where possible to local community hospitals such as Townlands, it not only reduces the demands on theatre space but also provides a

more accessible option for patients, enhancing their care experience.

Construction begins on New Surgical Unit at Royal Berkshire Hospital

Earlier this month, work began on a new surgical unit at Royal Berkshire Hospital, meaning more procedures can be carried out in a bid to cut waiting times for local people. The new unit, which will be based in the South Block area of the hospital in Addington/Craven Road, will be used by the Trust's Urology, Surgical and Outpatients teams and is due to be completed by Summer 2025.

Steve McManus, Chief Executive Officer of Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We're really excited to begin work on the development of this unit. Not only will it provide modern, state-of-the-art facilities for staff and patients, but it will enable us to perform more surgical procedures and support patients being seen more quickly.

"It's part of the on-going investment we are making into services at the Trust to ensure our local community can access high quality and safe care as quickly as possible".



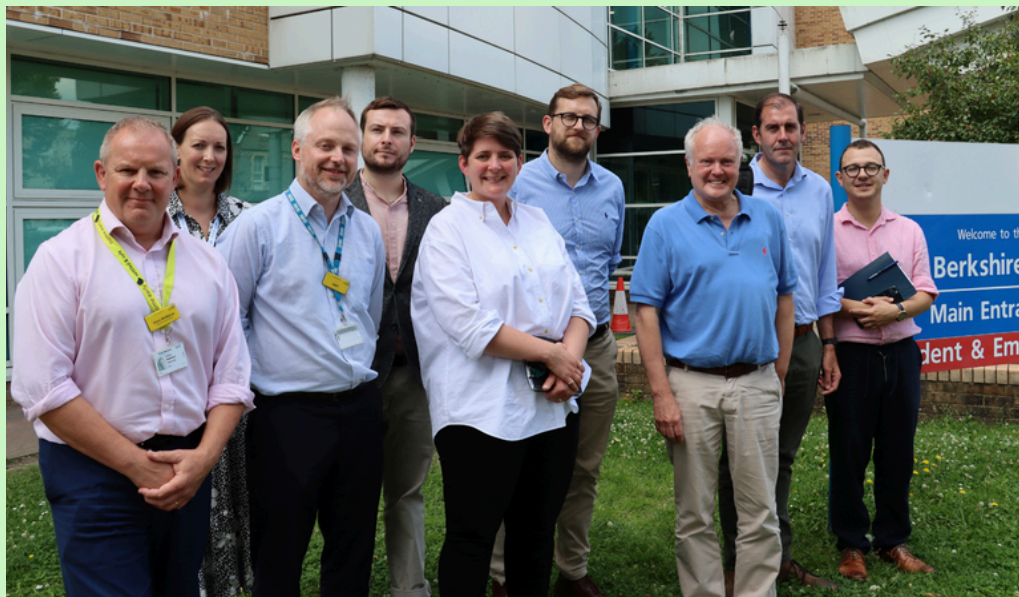
Impression of how the new unit will look

New MPs visit the Royal Berkshire Hospital

At the beginning of the month, members of our executive team hosted a meeting with the new MPs in our area.

In the meeting we highlighted why rebuilding Royal Berkshire Hospital would be so beneficial for our patients, staff, community, the environment and our local economy.

It was a positive meeting and it was great to hear that there was a cross party commitment from our MPs to work together to present our case to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chancellor.



Steve McManus CEO, Katie Prichard-Thomas Chief Nurse and Andrew Statham, Chief Strategy Officer left, meeting our area's new MPs

New Hospital Programme – have your say

As part of our work on the New Hospital Programme to redevelop or relocate Royal Berkshire Hospital we are asking staff, patients and the wider community what the impact would be if we moved the hospital to an alternative site. This will ensure we have considered all the options thoroughly before a wider consultation. We have identified two potential sites, which have so far met our extensive criteria.



Take a look at the [Royal Berkshire Hospital Location Impact Assessment Survey](#) - and please do give us your views. Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to do so too by 13 September 2024.

Accessing our website in 100 different languages

Did you know that you can read our website in 100 different languages?

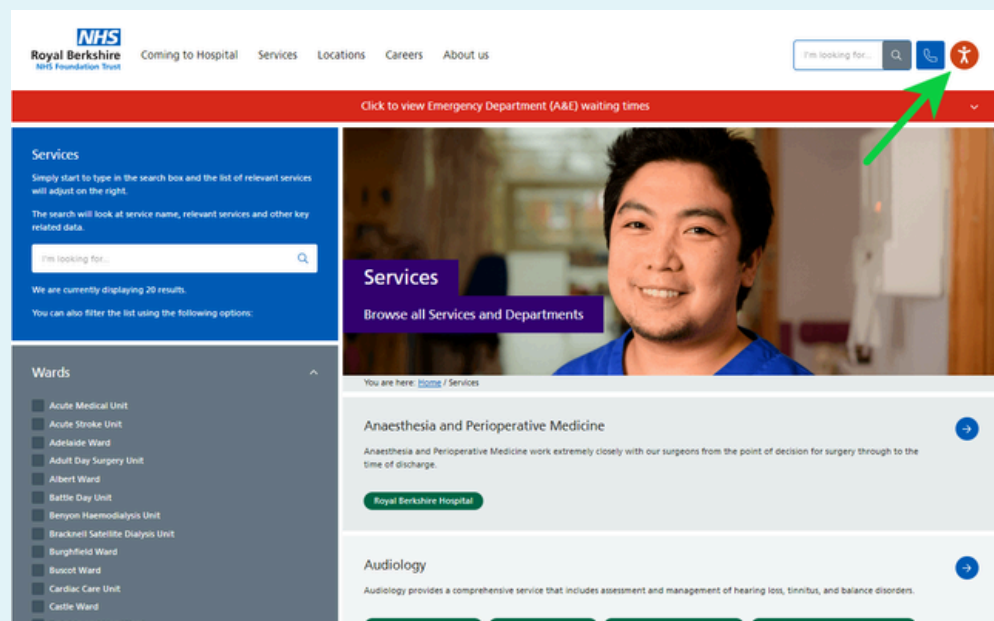
The Reachdeck tool translates our website and [patient leaflets](#) (while viewing them online) into 100 languages and adds accessibility support such as:

- text-to-speech functionality
- text magnification to enlarge text and read it aloud
- screen masking to allow neurodiverse audiences to reduce distractions, by reading one passage at a time
- a webpage simplifier to reduce sensory stimulation for people with Autism
- a picture dictionary to display word meaning through illustration

Reachdeck is available in the top right hand corner of the website.

Click on the red icon to open the Reachdeck toolbar.

For more information, watch [Reachdeck's short demonstration video](#)



Governor Article

Martyn Cooper, Staff Governor

Hi everyone, my name is Martyn Cooper and I am a Public Governor for the Trust representing the West Berkshire & border constituency. I enjoy being a Governor. I'm very fond of The Royal Berkshire Hospital, and being a Governor gives me the opportunity to remain involved in its continual striving to do the best it can in providing care. The role covers other sites as well as the Reading site, so Bracknell Healthspace, Townlands in Henley and the West Berkshire Community Hospital in Thatcham, Prince Charles Eye Unit and Windsor Dialysis Unit and they all come under the umbrella of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust. I was initially a public Governor for Reading for a few years before moving out into the country and now serve as a Public Governor for 'West Berks and Borders'.

I take a particular interest in activities at the West Berkshire Community Hospital as it's in 'my patch' and I've been able to experience first-hand some of the services as a patient. I'm on site at the Reading site fairly regularly helping with Rosetta Life's sessions on the Stroke Unit or attending governor meetings when a 'non-zoom' option is available. Online meetings can be useful but I still prefer face-to-face when able.

I was brought up in Caversham so the hospital was where family went when needed. My career was in nursing so after training in learning disability nursing I trained at the Royal Berks as a general nurse and then went on to work in the intensive care unit before travelling to Bristol for a few years. The Trust has been a constant feature in my life and it is a joy to act as a critical friend in the role of Governor working alongside my trustee colleagues. I also work with a number of charities and my interests with them are in well-being, safeguarding and advocacy; knowledge which I hope I also bring to the Trustee group.

Alongside my Governor role I'm also just beginning to start working within the hospital at the Berkshire Cancer Centre where I was treated as a patient initially for a brain tumour and subsequently for Prostate Cancer. On my visits to the centre, for Radiotherapy, I was struck by how some patients seemed quite isolated. Having previously worked as a 'clown doctor' at Frimley Park Hospital, it crossed my mind if that would be a suitable form of distraction within the unit. Several years later and I begin my PhD at Reading University, based in the Berkshire Cancer Centre looking at how humour can help in adult cancer clinical settings and also in palliative care. There's a lot of research showing the benefits to children, some with adults but less in these particular fields. There will not be a fully clown make up character being zany wandering around but hopefully there will be some laughter and giggles. Look out for the tall hairy man from the 'Honkology' department. Having a career in nursing, living with cancer and being a professional trained clown makes me think I'm off to a good start. If you see me – share your best joke – mine are terrible.

I hope you enjoy this month's magazine!

Martyn Cooper
Public Governor, West Berkshire & Borders

Discounts? Did you know?

As a member of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust you are eligible to amazing Health Service Discounts to save money on holidays, electrical goods, meals, days out and much more!

To register, please contact us for a letter of eligibility; follow this link [Register | NHS Discounts](#) and select Foundation Trust Member and upload your letter!

Don't forget to let us know what amazing discounts you get so we can share them! This month find some Back-to-School essentials with exclusive NHS Discounts!

- [Quality School Clothing from Trutex](#) -15% off
- [Health Service Cinema Tickets](#) – 40% off
- [Butlins](#) – up to £100 off all school summer holidays + extra £30
- [Tastecard Exclusive](#) – 12 month FREE membership
- [Virgin Holidays](#) - £140 NHS discount
- [Amazon Music Unlimited](#) – 5 months FREE for Prime Members
- [Crew Clothing](#) – 25% off
- [Google Pixel 8 Pro](#) - £29.00 upfront + £41 a month
- [Sports Fashion from Nike](#) – 10% off
- [Haven NHS Discount](#) – 15% off
- [TVs from Samsung](#) – 25% off
- [Gifts & Experience Days from Buyagift](#) – 22% off

healthservice**discounts**

Walk for wards, Sunday 29 September 2024



Join Royal Berks Charity at Mapledurham Estate on Sunday 29 September to take on 5, 10 or 15km around beautiful British countryside.

NEW for this year they have a children's scavenger hunt around the grounds of

Mapledurham House – perfect for little legs not ready to take on a 5km walk!

As well as supporting the ward of your choice, Royal Berks Charity has chosen to raise vital funds for Buscot Ward at the Royal Berks Hospital. Their aim is to raise enough funds to purchase an incubator for premature and critically ill babies. Sign up now: [Walk for Wards](#)

Meet your Council of Governors

Find a full list of your Council of Governors on the Trust website: [Meet the Governors](#)

Get involved and have your say

Open Meetings

Why not come along to one of our upcoming open meetings: find the details and agendas on our trust website page: [Open meetings | Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Board of Directors – 9am, Wednesday 25 September 2024
Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital

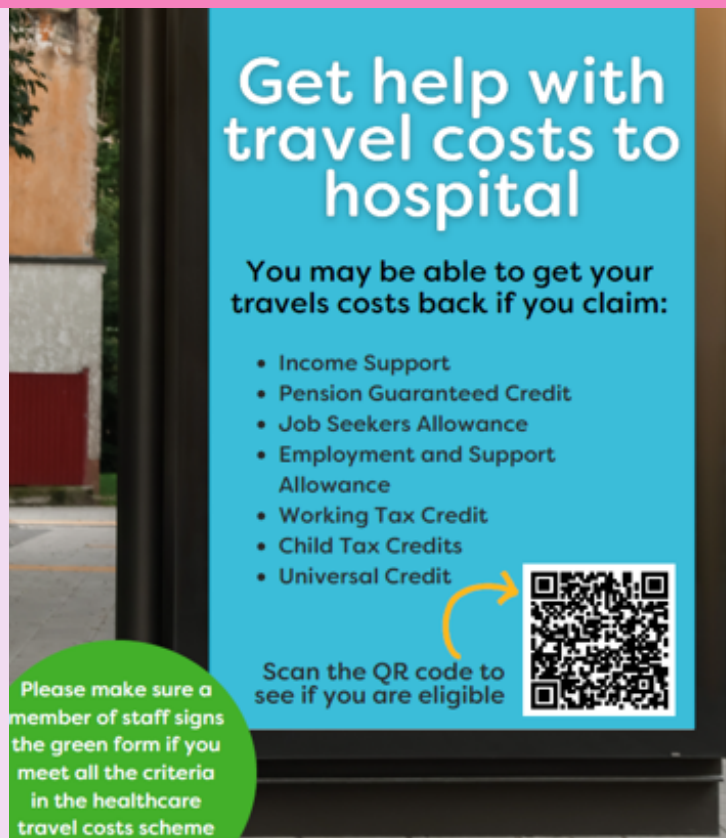
Council of Governors – 5pm, Wednesday 25 September 2024
Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital

Annual General Meeting – 5.30pm, Monday 7 October 2024
The Meadow Suite, University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 6AH

Become a member

Sign up family and friends to become a member via our [online membership form](#) to receive our latest updates, shape how hospital services are delivered and be eligible to receive our NHS discounts.

Get in touch with the team:
Foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk



Get help with travel costs to hospital

You may be able to get your travels costs back if you claim:

- Income Support
- Pension Guaranteed Credit
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credits
- Universal Credit

Scan the QR code to see if you are eligible

Please make sure a member of staff signs the green form if you meet all the criteria in the healthcare travel costs scheme

Pulse Magazine is written and produced by the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Communications Team. If you would like to have an article included or have any feedback just let us know at Communications@royalberkshire.nhs.uk