

AGM

Due to the period of mourning for HM Queen Elizabeth, we have postponed our [AGM](#) until 18 October 2022.

- [Chief Executive Seconded To ICB](#)
- [NHS's Final Push To Reduce Two Year Treatment Waits](#)
- [A new chapter for the NHS in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West](#)
- [How is the NHS in England changing?](#)
- [New Staff Health and Wellbeing Centre](#)
- [Building Berkshire Together](#)
- [Working Towards Baby Friendly Status](#)
- [RBFT's Net Zero Journey](#)
- [Sunflower Hidden Disabilities scheme](#)
- [Female Plasma Donors Expected To Increase](#)
- [Join the Royal Berks Charity at One of Their Events](#)
- [Healthwatch Wokingham Looking for Volunteers](#)
- [Public Governor Report – Martyn Cooper](#)

Graham's Welcome

Hello everyone,

I always find it amazing how the teams in the Trust maintain their enthusiasm and brightness, despite some really challenging and stressful periods. They have been wonderful throughout this year! I am pleased to say that we were able to make great strides through the summer and even able to give everyone some time off which will only help us as we enter the hectic winter months.

Covid is creeping back, we are also expecting more flu and respiratory illnesses this year. So, please have your flu jab and CV booster when you can.

Finally, once again let me remind you of our Charity, the Royal Berks Charity. It works tirelessly for the patients and staff of the Trust in improving services and quality of areas and experiences. If you can contribute in a small or large way, or as a way to say thank you to the staff and teams who have looked after the patients of West Berkshire so well, please do so as I know it will be appreciated.

Enjoy this edition of Pulse, and my best wishes

Graham Sims

Chief Executive Seconded To ICB

Our Chief Executive Steve McManus is moving into the role of interim Chief Executive for the new BOB ICB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board) for a secondment of up to six months.

Our Chief Medical Officer Dr Janet Lippett will take on the role of Acting Chief Executive of the Trust, and both of these roles will be effective from 24 October.

The Board has supported Steve's move and believe it is helpful to the RBFT. His extensive experience at the Trust, and his considerable achievements over recent years working with the ICB, will be invaluable to its evolution and this, in turn, will benefit RBFT since the ICB covers the work of healthcare systems across the BOB patch including ours.

Janet's considerable clinical, medical and leadership experience, together with her familiarity of the challenges and opportunities at the Trust, means there will be a seamless transition. She has played a pivotal role in the establishment and success of key partnerships, most notably the Health Innovation Programme with the University of Reading, which are driving forward major work programmes around research and education in improving healthcare.

We are sure that Janet and Steve will continue to make a material difference in the delivery of the best possible care to all our patients here at the Trust, across BOB and the wider NHS, and we wish them all the best.

NHS's Final Push To Reduce Two Year Treatment Waits

As part of the NHS's Elective Recovery Plan to address treatment backlogs, hospitals across the country have been using new and innovative ways to reduce waiting lists.

Within the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust, the Ophthalmology team completed 315 additional cataract, corneal transplant and squint operations in just two weeks.

These procedures were carried out across three Trust sites: the Prince Charles Eye Unit in Windsor, the West Berkshire Community Hospital in Thatcham and the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. As a result, the number of patients waiting longer than 18 weeks reduced to just 31 patients – largely due to lack of donor material.

The Trust set up 'one-stop cataract clinics' so that most patients were able to be diagnosed, and prepared ready for surgery in a single visit. They also arranged for patients to have their post-operative checks carried out with community optometry practices. All of this work was helped by switching patient records to a fully digital system, providing greater flexibility and allowing the Trust to treat patients at whichever site had capacity.

Across the country, NHS staff continue to make progress on Covid-19 backlogs, despite record A&E attendances.

A new chapter for the NHS in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West

Earlier this summer saw the establishment of the [NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board](#) (BOB ICB), which has replaced the now dissolved NHS clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

As one of 42 new Integrated Care Boards in England, the BOB ICB will bring together GP teams, hospitals, local authorities, the voluntary sector and other partners to plan and deliver

health and care services for more than 1.9 million people across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

These changes are part of the 2022 Health and Care Act which aims to make it easier for NHS and social care organisations to work better together in Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

There has already been lots of great collaboration between health and care organisations, CCGs, hospitals and community trusts, councils and others for several years, however previous laws have prevented services becoming properly joined-up.

Examples of previous collaborations and integration of services across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West include:

- the planning and establishment of the Covid-19 vaccination programme which included CCGs, NHS hospital and community Trusts, general practice, public health, local authorities, and the voluntary sector. Together the programme gave more than 4 million vaccinations by April 2021.
- the reduction in waiting times for elective treatments. Through collaborative working, the CCGs and hospital Trusts in BOB offered patients different treatment options. Patients have been offered treatment in different hospitals and tests such as CT, MRI, ultrasound, X-ray, and mammography, in new community diagnostic centres.

The creation of the integrated care system gives us the opportunity to build on that collaborative working for the benefit of the population we serve.

[How does the NHS in England work, and how's it changing?](#)

A new [animation from the Kings Fund](#) shows how the NHS in England works and how it is changing. The video may be useful for existing NHS patients and those new to the system.

The [Kings Fund website](#) contains a broad range of information on health and care in England

[Staff Health and Wellbeing Centre](#)

If you're a BBC Radio Berkshire listener, you may have heard their breakfast show last month celebrating our emergent Staff Wellbeing Garden. Part of the Oasis Staff Health and Wellbeing Centre, the garden will provide a tranquil, multi-purpose space where staff can relax and recharge.

Funded by the Royal Berks Charity, the garden is being transformed from an unloved and overgrown space with new landscaping, a vibrant pond, accessible paths and break out spaces for staff. Work is currently continuing at pace, with our friends at [Reading International Solidarity Centre \(RISC\)](#) working on therapeutic planting and clearing spaces for flower and vegetable beds.

In addition to the spacious garden, the Oasis Health and Wellbeing Centre is made up of spaces in which staff can rest, take a break, or try a healthy activity.

The centre is solely dedicated to looking after our employees' health and wellbeing, and has recently opened after having undergone a long restoration and refurbishment programme.

Building Berkshire Together

We've recently launched the new [website](#) for Building Berkshire Together our new hospital programme. Please do take time to have a look – answer the monthly poll, read the blogs and check out when our next events are.

Each month we hold an online event for staff, volunteers and members of the public to give a brief update on the programme and invite a discussion around a specialist subject such as digital hospital, access or patient experience.

If you would like to join the network to be the first to hear about these events please go to the website and fill in the contact form or email buildingberkshiretogether@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Working Towards Baby Friendly Status

We are currently working towards UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation. UNICEF's Baby Friendly Initiative is a structured programme for achieving high standards of practical breastfeeding support and early attachment between babies and their parents, whatever their feeding choices.

The NHS Long Term Plan includes the commitment for all maternity services achieving accreditation by 2023/24.

RBFT's Net Zero Journey

It has been six months since we launched the Green Plan which outlines the Trust's journey to Net Zero. We have renewed ambitions to do this by 2030 in line with our partner and peer organisations, University of Reading and Reading Council. We have engaged with staff and launched an app for staff to record their sustainable and wellbeing activities. They collect points and in return can win monthly vouchers. Over 300 staff have signed up in the first month of launching.

During last week's Reading Climate Festival we held a special online event to tell members of the public and staff about the Trust's Green Plan and hear from Dave from [Reading International Solidarity Centre \(RISC\)](#) who is managing the new garden at [Oasis, the Staff Health And Wellbeing Centre](#). The garden will be run by local volunteer community groups and is a great source of pride for the Trust. It has been designed to encourage wildlife and much needed green space for staff to enjoy and find solace in.

Sunflower Hidden Disabilities Scheme

During the summer we held a formal launch of our participation in the [Sunflower Hidden Disabilities scheme](#).

Some disabilities are not immediately noticeable, and people with hidden disabilities often face barriers in their daily lives.

To help overcome this, some people with hidden disabilities choose to wear a discreet sunflower lanyard, wristband or badge.

The sunflower logo is a globally recognised symbol for people with hidden disabilities. Our thanks to the Royal Berks Charity who've funded our participation in this scheme.

Female Plasma Donors Expected To Increase

Reading's [Plasma Donor Centre](#) has recently taken delivery of new 'female friendly' donor machines, meaning that more local women are now able to donate plasma.

The previous machines had height and weight restrictions that ruled out most women, with the result that only 7 per cent of plasma donors at the Reading Centre, were female. Previously, a 5ft 4in (163 cm) woman had to weigh 12 stone 8lbs (80 kg) to make a plasma donation. The new machines mean that a woman of the same height only needs to weigh 9 stone (57 kg) to make a donation.

Plasma is the part of your blood that carries platelets, red blood cells and white blood cells around the body. Medicines made from plasma save and transform the lives of over 17,000 people in England each year, including people with cancers, rare diseases, immune disorders and genetic conditions.

[How to donate plasma](#)

Join the Royal Berks Charity at One of Their Events

- [Christmas at the Minster](#) Reading Minster Church Thursday 1 December
- [Reading Santa Run](#) Sunday 11 December
- [Reading Half Marathon](#) Select Car Leasing Stadium Sunday 2 April 2023

Healthwatch Wokingham Looking for Volunteers

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough continues to champion the voices of residents who use health and social care under a new provider, The Advocacy People. Alice Kunjappy-Clifton, Senior Engagement Lead, and Gráinne Colgan, Digital and Engagement Officer, currently make up the new team.

The team are looking for voluntary Advisory Group members to join their Advisory Board. This is a varied role which includes overseeing and contributing to Healthwatch Wokingham Borough's work programme. As well as being extremely rewarding and impactful, being part of an Advisory Group is also a great personal and professional development opportunity. Previous Advisory Group/Board experience is not necessary.

The team are looking for members who are passionate about their communities and want to make a difference to health and social care locally, particularly from people across the borough with lived experiences, or/and people that can represent one of the following special interest groups:

- Children and young people
- Ethnic communities
- Health Services, including GP practices, dentistry, hospitals
- LGBTQ+ communities
- Maternity
- Mental health
- Older people

If you'd like to organise an introductory meeting with the team or want more information on our voluntary Advisory Group member roles, please email: enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk

To ensure you're kept up to date on Healthwatch news, latest activities, reports, and research, you can [sign up to their newsletter](#) online.

Public Governor Report – Martyn Cooper

The role of a Public Governor within the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust gives you a fascinating insight into the workings of the hospital and local healthcare services. Acting as a critical friend to the board, and as a mouthpiece for the people from the area you represent, you are also an ambassador for the Trust. All of these make me realise what a privilege it is to be elected onto the governing body.

In discussion with governor colleagues we realise we are very lucky to be in a Trust that is well managed, realistic in its outlook but also ambitious for the future of its patients and staff, seeking excellence in all it does.

As a retired nurse I've been very excited to see how staff wellbeing has become a big priority for The Trust, especially after a few really gruelling years coping with Covid. Having worked, and trained at The Royal Berkshire Hospital, a friend suggested standing as a Public Governor and I was delighted to be elected as representative for West Berkshire and enjoy hearing the views of people from my home area as well as the regular updates and discussions with my fellow Governors. Most of these meetings have been virtual for the last few years but hopefully we'll return to face-to-face meetings soon.

I'm also involved in various cancer initiatives within the Trust and as a survivor of both brain and prostate cancer, am able to offer insights both as a nurse and as a patient. I have also worked with the Samaritans for over 30 years and volunteer once a week with Sue Ryder locally, helping with day patients. All of this has been a wonderful way of keeping in touch and contributing to local healthcare. I was surprised, humbled and honoured recently to receive a Platinum Champion Award as part of the late Queen's 70th Jubilee celebrations in recognition of my voluntary work, although I recognise there are many volunteers out there, as governors or elsewhere within the Trust who are more deserving.

I would encourage everyone to get more involved in the Trust's activities. For me, being a governor has been both fascinating and rewarding.