

Spring 2022

Graham's welcome

Welcome to 2022's first edition of Pulse. Well, we seem to roll from crisis to crisis, much out of our control and none of us can know what's in store this year. What I do know is that every member of the team here at the Royal Berkshire has gone way beyond their roles throughout the pandemic and in their characteristic calm, professional and friendly way. I am humbled by them!

The immediate period ahead is to transition out of Covid dominance to reduce waiting times. We are already one of the best in England and hence we are putting all the resources we can to achieve that.

Finally, last year really was busy and we have focused so much on the effects of the pandemic that sometimes we forget to celebrate our successes... for example below, are just a few of the successes and achievements from 2021. We:

- delivered over 4,700 babies
- dealt with over 125,000 emergency department attendances
- conducted 515,000 face-to-face outpatient appointments
- were one of the first hospitals in the country to establish a Long Covid clinic
- pioneered new radiotherapy technology with the introduction of SABR-Stereotactic Ablative Body Radiotherapy to pinpoint and treat cancers far more precisely
- received a special Pride of Reading Award in recognition for our outstanding care and service; and clinical staff have been recognised by national awards
- set up one of the first Covid vaccination centres in January 2021, and to date have given over 15,000 Covid vaccines
- have, throughout the pandemic, consistently been one of the highest achieving hospitals in terms of vaccination uptake
- were in the lowest 6 per cent nationally for the rate of patients with hospital-acquired Covid
- have become, the first hospital trialling augmented reality (AR) hologens technology to target prostate cancer led by the same team who a couple of years ago carried out the first European study in new treatment for chronic osteoarthritis pain

In addition our:

- Critical Care Outreach service was the first to be introduced into the NHS, and it has just celebrated its 20th anniversary.
- What Matters 2021 programme heard from over 3000 staff members giving key insights into how to refresh our strategy, working patterns, leadership, health inequalities and more.

- Research and Development (R&D) team has played a key role in a range of national projects over the last 12 months including clinical trials on drugs to improve Covid recovery.

AND

- On top of all the above we will have invested over £100 million in the Trust over 2020-2022.

An exciting and good year past, with lots of opportunity going forward... Until the next edition.

All my best,

Graham Sims

Chair, Royal Berkshire

Have You Experienced Excellent Care At Royal Berkshire?

The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust has announced the return of its annual staff excellence awards - the Royal Berkshire CARE Awards – which are our opportunity to celebrate and showcase our staff members' excellence all across the Trust.

For the first time ever, we are opening nominations to the public. The Compassion in Care Award celebrates staff who have demonstrated empathy, respect, integrity and dignity in their care of patients. Nothing is more important than the care we provide to our patients, and each day our staff accomplish outstanding work in how they treat our patients and their families.

If you've experienced excellent care in the past year from a member of staff here at the Trust, and would like to nominate them for the Compassion in Care Award, please complete [our online form](#). Please provide as much detail as possible to help the judging process. Nominations close on **11 March 2022**.

Team Effort Shrinks Ophthalmology Waiting List

Trusts across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West have been working together to treat patients who have been waiting the longest for cataract, squint and ocular plastics surgery.

Earlier this year, the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust completed 315 additional cataract, corneal transplants and squint operations in just two weeks. These procedures were carried out across three 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 has 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, and 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 has capacity.

Building Berkshire Together – Hospital Redevelopment Update

In 2019 the Royal Berkshire Hospital was announced as one of 48 sites across the UK that was selected for the Government's New Hospital Programme. So far we have submitted the

first phase, the Strategic Outline Case and we are awaiting feedback to progress to the next formal stage.

While we await feedback, we have been progressing with a number of projects to ensure that we are in the best position to progress. We have devised a range of options to redevelop or relocate the current main site of the Royal Berkshire Hospital and we will develop these further, to reach a preferred option.

We have established a small team, led by Programme Director, Alison Foster to work on developing the options with patients, carers, staff and the local community.

We would love you to join our network and be part of the team to design the hospital with us. We will be looking for people from across the community to be involved as much or as little as you wish, either with a general interest in the hospital or those with specific skills. Please email buildingberkshiretogether@royalberkshire.nhs.uk or call Lynn Bushell, Communications and Engagement Lead on 0118 322 5360 for further details.

Our Green Plan To Reach Net Zero

The NHS has pledged to reach net zero direct carbon emissions by 2040 and net zero indirect emissions by 2045. We are proud to support this NHS goal, and will soon be launching our Green Plan which sets out our own journey to net zero carbon. Example projects include developing sustainable models of care, promoting alternative travel options to staff and patients and increasing recycling.

We have already achieved a lot. We removed two miles of leaking, inefficient underground pipework on the main hospital site and at the same time we installed a new eco-friendly boiler. We've introduced five electric staff pool cars, and we've embedded our Wastewatchers initiative to ensure no waste goes to landfill, and recycling options are more readily available.

We are engaging with staff, patients and the wider community to help us reach our net zero goal and welcome any ideas, comments and suggestions. We would also welcome anybody who would like to join our Net Zero team to help us shape activities. If you would like to be involved however much or little, please email us on green@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Veteran Aware Status

In the UK there are nearly 3 million veterans who have additional healthcare needs. In Berkshire, we have a particularly large veteran community - right across the spectrum of the services.

The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust has recently been awarded 'Veteran Aware' accreditation. We have a strong record of supporting patients who are veterans, along with the wider veteran community, and of championing improvements in veterans' health care. A significant portion of our staff and patients are either veterans, in active service, or a family member of the aforementioned, and it's important to us that we provide ideal working environments to care for all of them.

Being a fully Veteran Aware accredited Trust is part of our commitment to ensuring members of the armed forces community do not face disadvantages compared to other citizens when accessing NHS services.

Did You Notice Our Winter Campaign?

Over the past three months, we have been running a campaign to help reduce the pressures on local NHS services over the busy winter period.

Our campaign is coming to its close and we'd like to find out more about its impact. We're running a short anonymous survey about the campaign which we will use to help improve our public health campaigns.

We'd be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete our [online survey](#).

MyPorter Awards

We are pleased to share the news that our Portering team was shortlisted for the recent MyPorter 'Portering Team of the Year Award'. To add to the good news, Kenneth McIntyre, who's recently joined the team, was shortlisted for the event's 'Newcomer of the Year Award'. Kenneth was nominated by his colleagues for making the whole team stronger, as a team member who pushes others to even better work, and whose manner brings a smile to the faces of colleagues and patients.

Although they didn't win on the night, we are immensely proud of all our porters. Like every area across healthcare, the pandemic has created huge challenges for porters, and the shortlisted teams have excelled in adapting to and overcoming those challenges. Our porters are often the first contact for patients - answering questions, providing transport and generally helping in any situation.

Our porters play a vital role in keeping the Trust running smoothly and are integral to the safety of patients, emergency response times and the quality of patient care. Well done to the whole Porters team for being one of the top four portering teams in the country.

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

Did you know that patients and carers on low incomes can reclaim their travel costs for attending hospital appointments?

If you're a patient or carer who receives benefits or is on a low income, you may be eligible to claim back the cost of travelling to hospital appointments by public transport or car. If you need to travel to an appointment by taxi, you must have a valid reason for doing so, and will need to pre-arrange this with your clinical team.

You can submit your claim up to three months after the appointment date. Further information is available on our [patient leaflet](#) or on the [NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme](#) website. Alternatively contact: Royal Berkshire Hospital Cashier's Office on 0118 322 7054 or email: income@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

Health on the Move Van

The Health on the Move van is back on the road! After a brief hiatus, while it was redirected to the School Vaccination Campaign, temporary walk-in vaccination centres are opening up again around Berkshire.

The van is a joint venture between members of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System, and the local authorities of each region.

Part of the campaign to increase the uptake of first, second and booster vaccinations, the Health on the Move van is focusing on areas of deprivation, underserved communities, and groups with low uptake of the vaccine for other reasons. Over the coming weeks, the van will visit community centres, places of worship and libraries to provide walk-in vaccinations to anyone aged 16 or above.

Development of the Buckinghamshire, Oxon & Berkshire West Integrated Care System

As part of their ongoing commitment to engage with key stakeholders throughout the period of Integrated Care System (ICS) transition, the ICS has developed a [public engagement website](#).

The site is an opportunity for the public to submit ideas and comment on key draft documents, such as their developing constitution and engagement strategy. It also contains a range of information relating to the evolving ICS, including key papers and submissions in a single, easy-access digital library.

The BOB ICS website is currently being updated with a target completion date of the end of March 2022.