

Pulse

February 2021

Chair's Welcome

Hello everyone, this is a new monthly 'Pulse' bulletin to keep you more up to date in these strange times. Your Governor will be able to brief you further so please give her/him a call. The Second wave is far worse than the first here in the Royal Berkshire, we are however now seeing things start to ease just a little bit, but we must all keep the faith with the rules. Compared to the first wave we are, I am pleased to say, much better prepared. We have full PPE with no shortages of anything, including Oxygen, and we have all the medical items we need. Of course, the most exciting moment is the introduction of the vaccine and we have administered over 6000 to our staff and community teams. For now we must all follow the rules and let us look forward optimistically to a better summer.

Graham Sims.

Covid Update

The second wave of Covid cases at the Royal Berkshire Hospital is starting to level out although the hospital and its staff are still under great pressure and this intense period of Covid related activity looks set to continue for many weeks to come.

The welfare of staff, as well as patients, is a priority for the Trust leadership team, and the staff wellbeing offers are being stepped up to provide immediate as well as longer term support. This includes 'in the moment' psychological support sessions, externally-led Bitesize Coaching courses and the Help at Hand service run by Trust healthcare professionals.

A concerted focus on the safe and timely discharge of patients has played a major role in easing flow around the hospital and alleviating pressure on teams, particularly the Emergency Department (A&E). This work, coupled with a plateau of Covid numbers, means managers can start finalising plans to resume work that had to be paused during the second wave. There will be more details about this in the next edition of Pulse Bulletin.

Acting Chief Executive Nicky Lloyd (pictured), has released [a short video](#) to reassure the public that everything is being well managed and is under control and there are a raft of measures in place to keep patients, staff and visitors safe.

"A concern we do have is the number of patients not attending their scheduled appointments which has the potential for serious consequences if diagnosis or ongoing treatment is delayed. I want to encourage you to come if you have been asked to attend an appointment or you urgently need care, it's vital that we see you in a timely way and ensure your condition is treated or monitored. We are a National Health Service and open for multiple diseases and conditions. You will not be a burden and we want you to be seen," she said.

"We've learned a lot from the first wave of Covid and this has helped us to carry on treating other very seriously ill people and keep services going in a very safe way" she added.

Update on Hospital development plans

Reading planners this month gave the green light to proceed with plans for a major extension of the RBH Emergency Department, which includes large separate entrances for adults and children, a new staff lounge and additional testing areas. Take a look at the plans below:

3D view - Proposed



Perspective - Proposed



The ED extension is just one part of a £65 million capital investment programme and this [link to a new short film](#) gives you a snapshot of work being done.

The capital works programme feeds into the wider scale plans for the RBH and councillors in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire were updated on the proposals earlier this month.

How you can help

Throughout the first and second waves of the pandemic, local people, schools, businesses and community groups have rallied round to show their support for the amazing work being done by their local NHS teams. A “wish-list” page for staff at the RBH has been set up so anyone keen to make a small donation can do so knowing their money will be spent on something that’s going to be really appreciated by staff. The link is [available here](#).

Another way people want to help is by volunteering and whilst the Trust has had to pause the work of volunteers around the hospital to limit footfall and prevent the risk of spreading the virus, it is still looking for applications from people keen to volunteer in the longer term. You can find out more here - www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-involved/volunteers.htm

Covid vaccination update

It started just a few short weeks ago but it’s great to say that now more than 5,800 staff at the Royal Berkshire Hospital have had a vaccine. In addition, 12 vaccination sites are now live in Berkshire West and thousands of local people aged 80 and over have been given the ground breaking vaccine, along with nearly all care home residents and staff.

If you are in the priority groups* and haven't yet had an appointment booked, please don't worry. Anyone who is registered with a local GP will be contacted and offered an appointment. Most people will receive a letter either from their GP or the national booking system, this will include all the information you need, including your NHS number. Some surgeries are also phoning and texting patients to book appointments.



Please be assured that people in the priority groups who haven't yet been booked into an appointment have not been forgotten. Some vaccination sites were up and running before others and the roll out of the programme depends on the deliveries of the vaccines. But everyone who is entitled to a vaccination will be offered one very shortly.

Patient Marina, 86, from Tilehurst, was one of the first to be vaccinated at the Newbury racecourse site. She said: "it has been fantastic. Perfect in every way. Everything ran smoothly and everyone was very relaxed and friendly and it was all so clean and tidy and efficient. If there's anything that's going to get us through this terrible pandemic and save lives, then this is it and I hope everyone takes the opportunity to protect themselves and each other. "

Health officials are reminding people that they are still at risk of catching the virus for up to 10 days after their jab so they still need to follow the hands face space rules – as does everyone else.

There's a [link here](#) to a video featuring famous names providing reassurance to members of the BAME community about the vaccine and how vitally important it is to have it.

*** The full list of groups to be prioritised for the vaccination is:**

- Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
- All those 75 years of age and over
- All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
- All those 65 years of age and over. All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- All those 60 years of age and over
- All those 55 years of age and over
- All those 50 years of age and over

Covid vaccination – mass vaccination sites

The NHS has sent out a letter inviting some people to book a Covid vaccination appointment at one of the new mass vaccination sites. These letters have come from the national NHS computerised system so you may have been offered an appointment that is some distance from where you live.

You have the choice of accepting this appointment if you wish to go ahead with your vaccination at the slot and site you've been allocated.

Alternatively, you can wait to be contacted by your own GP practice to be allocated a slot at a local vaccination site closer to home. There's a lot more information on the FAQs section of the Berkshire West CCG website which is regularly updated www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccine/faqs

MBE honour

Tricia Pease, the Trust's Associate Chief Nurse Safeguarding, Mental Health & Learning Disabilities and Designated Professional for Child Death, Berkshire West has been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List. Trish has a 41 year career in the NHS, 24 years at the Trust. The honour is in recognition of her services to nursing, children and young people and safeguarding, including during the Covid 19 response.

Winter mental health support

Seven local voluntary and community organisations are to share a £20,000 NHS England grant aimed at supporting the mental health of people from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic and Refugee communities (BAMER) over the winter.

Berkshire West CCG secured the funding and has worked closely with key partners to devise the best ways of allocating the cash. Reading Voluntary Action, Involve (Wokingham) and Volunteer Centre West Berkshire have administered and will host the grant which is being shared with these organisations. Find out [more here](#).

There is a range of other support for people with mental health problems. This includes:

NHS talking therapies are a confidential service run by fully trained experts offering help with problems like stress, anxiety and depression. People can access the service by visiting their GP or referring themselves online or ringing 0300 365 2000.

Young people aged between 11 and 18 can visit KOOOTH.com a free, anonymous and confidential online counselling and emotional wellbeing support. And for those over 18 and in urgent need of help, they should ring NHS 111 who will direct them to the right support.

There is also online support on the NHS mental health and wellbeing link www.nhs.uk and people can also seek help by going online at NHS 111

In emergency situations or if someone is in immediate danger, people must call 999 straight away

Little Blue Book of Sunshine relaunched

This book features advice and tips from young people for young people on how to deal with problems like anxiety, body image relationships and anger. It also lists a range of places offering help and it's now available online.

You can download a copy here on the [Berkshire West](#) CCG website. It is also now available in [Apple Books](#) and [Google Play Books](#).



Lead Governor message

As an elected governor of your Trust my two main responsibilities are a) to hold the non-executive directors to account for the performance of the board and b) to represent the views of members

and the public to the board. During the lockdown, this is even more difficult than it is usually as we don't see the non-executive directors very often or for very long and it's more difficult to circulate in the community in order to gather the views of the members and the public. We haven't, for example, had a members event for more than a year.

As the lead governor, what I try to do is to stay in touch with as many people as I can through my Zoom based activities with local patient participation groups, by meeting with governors at other Trusts, through my membership of five NHS governance groups covering a wide range of activities from maternity through to restorative dentistry, by trying to maintain a dialogue with Healthwatch etc.

We are quite fortunate in that our chair Graham Sims makes sure that we are kept in touch with what is happening at the Trust. This generally happens through Zoom meetings which are not perfect but are certainly better than nothing. In the current crisis, NHS England has ordained that all unnecessary meetings are to be stopped including all governor activities which, though understandable, isn't terribly helpful. However, we have just held governor elections for three vacant seats and the results have just been announced. May I congratulate the following newly appointed governors:-

- John Crossman – Reappointed as Staff Governor for Allied Health Professionals/Scientific
- Martyn Cooper – Public Governor West Berkshire
- Ross Carroll – Public Governor East Berkshire

Tony Lloyd