

Connect

Members newsletter

Summer 2025

Welcome

Natalie Titcombe, Lead Governor



Since our last newsletter in the Spring, we have continued to actively engage with the transition to the BSW Hospitals Group model, which has seen our Trust working much more closely with colleagues in Bath and Salisbury. We have supported much of the work to help develop the future governance structure.

As the Council of Governors, we are currently supporting the Trust in recruiting two Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) and two Associate NEDs (ANEDs). Chris Callow, Deputy Governor and I are directly involved in the process, with interviews scheduled for July 2025.

With the new community care provider having been in place since April 2025, we are keen to receive regular updates on the progress of the transition. The full transition is expected to be completed within two years.

This Autumn, we have a significant election, with all seven Swindon seats up for re-election, together with the three staff seats; Nursing & Therapy, Doctors & Dentists, and Administrative staff. We also still have a vacancy to cover the Wiltshire Northern, Wiltshire Central, Gloucestershire, and Bath & North East Somerset constituency. I hope that many of our current Governors will consider standing again, and I look forward to welcoming new volunteers and newly elected staff Governors to the Council.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement with the Trust. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your family and friends' as we always welcome new members to join us. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out. You can contact me through our Corporate Governance Assistant, Sharon Scott, sharon.scott27@nhs.net.

Wishing you all good health,
Natalie

Meet our Governors

Stephen Baldwin, Public Governor, Swindon

Residing in Shrivenham, Stephen has been a passive member of the Trust for several years and has been a patient and visitor at Great Western Hospital.

He was elected as a public governor in November 2024 when he decided to take a more active role in the governance of the Trust.

After serving in the Army for 40 years in the Royal Signals, retiring as a Lt Col, his role in the military included communications, information management, security, IT systems and networks.

Stephen has experience and understanding of how people interact with IT services and feels his skills and experience are best placed to help make that aspect of patient care an area of excellence for the local area.



Sharon Scott, Corporate Governance Assistant

Sharon Scott is our Corporate Governance Assistant who supports our members.

If you have any questions, ideas or suggestions, email sharon.scott27@nhs.net.



Sulis Orthopaedic Centre to cut surgical waiting times for NHS patients

On Tuesday 27 May, a state-of-the-art specialist surgical centre located just outside Bath opened its doors to NHS patients from Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW).

The Sulis Orthopaedic Centre (SOC) will perform an additional 3,000 planned orthopaedic operations on NHS patients in BSW every year. This will help to significantly reduce waiting times for many patients awaiting operations, including life-changing hip and knee replacements.

Based at Sulis Hospital in Peasedown St John, the SOC is a collaboration between Sulis and three NHS trusts, which are known collectively as BSW Hospitals Group: Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in Swindon, the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Salisbury Foundation Trust.

One way in which the hospitals will work closely together is in the surgical teams. Patients' NHS consultant specialists will oversee care throughout and perform the operations, working alongside Sulis' own surgical and recovery teams.

Patients will be cared for at Sulis immediately before and after their operations, but additional pre and post-operative appointments will continue to take place at their local NHS hospital. This means they will only need to travel for the operation itself.

The SOC builds on an existing, successful working relationship between the RUH and Sulis. The two hospitals formed an official partnership in June 2021 and have been working together for the benefit of NHS patients ever since.

New Pharmacy Aseptic Unit marks major step forward for patient care

Recently, construction was completed on the Trust's state-of-the-art Pharmacy Aseptic Unit and clean room facility, marking a major milestone that will transform how injectable medicines are prepared and delivered to patients.

Located at the Great Western Hospital, the new facility enables the pharmacy team to prepare complex injectable treatments, such as chemotherapy, directly on-site. This advancement will reduce reliance on external suppliers, improve cost-efficiency for the Trust and commissioners, and enhance the overall speed and responsiveness of patient care.



By producing these medicines locally, the Trust will significantly cut transport times to hospital wards, allowing a faster response for patients, particularly those undergoing cancer treatment or stem cell transplants. The new setup will also support more timely treatment following new cancer diagnoses.

In 2024, the pharmacy team secured additional capital funding through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). This funding allowed the Trust to invest in essential equipment sooner than planned, accelerating efforts to expand access to clinical trials.

The facility has been designed with future patient needs in mind. It includes capacity to support a growing number of cancer patients and improve overall patient flow, with potential opportunities in the future for patients to receive some treatments at home.

The facility is now entering a phase of rigorous testing and validation to meet all regulatory standards. The first dose of medicine prepared in the unit is expected to be produced and dispatched in August 2025.

Great Western Hospitals chosen for major transformation of care for patients presenting with mental health

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has been selected by NHS Confederation as one of just 12 new partnerships across the country to improve the care for patients presenting to the Emergency Department in mental health crisis.

Around 15 per cent of people who attend the Emergency Department in Swindon have an existing mental health condition, or experience mental health crisis.

Hospital admissions for mental health conditions in under 18s across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, and admissions for those who intentionally self-harm, are also consistently and significantly higher than the national average.

Many of these patients have complex physical, mental health and social care needs, which require a multi-disciplinary approach to care, to ensure their needs are met.

The new partnership, alongside Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and NHS Confederation, will address how the Trust can better support patients with their mental health, ensuring they have an improved hospital experience, don't wait as long for assessments or referrals and are able to access the resources they need in the community.

Practitioners from NHS Confederation will now work with urgent and emergency care, operational and mental health teams from both Trusts to take forward the transformation of care programme.

Patient Experience and Engagement

At The Great Western Hospital, we provide multiple opportunities and methods to listen to patients, families, and carers experience. We know that the people best placed to comment on our services are those who have recent experience, along with their families, and carers.

We are working to increase the involvement of people who have live experience and to include them in our improvement work. This involvement might be as simple as completing a specific survey, being involved in an improvement group, joining a patient experience forum or inviting us to a community meeting or forum.

If you would like to be more involved in our improvement work, please contact gwh.corporategovernance@nhs.net providing detail of the sort of participation you would be interested in.

Governor Elections 2025

We have exciting opportunities coming up for 2025 with governor elections coming up in some of our constituencies. We will be looking to fill seven vacancies in the Swindon Constituency. We have a vacancy in Wiltshire Northern and Wiltshire Central and Gloucester, Bath & North East Somerset.

There are also three staff vacancies in Nursing & Therapy, Doctors & Dentists and Administrators, Maintenance & Voluntary Services.

Currently some of our existing governors are keen to run again for another term but we have room for new faces and would love to welcome new governors into the fold.

If any of you are interested and would like more information, we will be holding some drop-in sessions with our current governors, or you can corner them at the members coffee morning taking place on 17 July.

An update from our Trust charity and Voluntary Services

[Brighter Futures](#) is the Trust's registered charity, raising money to support Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Children's Ward Appeal

Every year 4,000 children are admitted to the Children's Ward at Great Western Hospital. We want to transform the ward with equipment that will enhance the service and make life that little bit easier for our staff. The Children's Ward is currently looking for donations of:

- Breast Pumps
- Children's underwear (all age groups up to aged 17)
- Items to make up individual play packs

All items must be brand new and donated via the Brighter Futures Fundraising Team.

Phone: 01793 605631

Email: gwh.fundraising@nhs.net

Voluntary Services

Volunteers make a real difference to the experience of our patients and visitors by helping in some of the following ways:

- Supporting patients with practical tasks, such as making mealtimes more sociable, helping patients to keep moving, listening to experiences, helping people to speak up or by providing social interaction.
- Helping visitors by providing a warm welcome, giving directions and assistance with finding their way around the hospital and by providing or signposting to further information.
- Supporting our staff by helping with occasional administrative tasks or making sure information for patients is readily available.

Get involved

Member Coffee Morning

Following the success of our members coffee afternoon in January, we are delighted to be able offer another session on the morning of Monday 14 July 2025.

This will take place between 10am and 12 noon in Lecture Hall 1 in the Academy, at Great Western Hospital. For those of you who drive in, a free parking pass is available.

The event will be attended by some of our governors who will be chatting about the up-and-coming elections. Our Falls Team will also be attending to provide information on how we are working with patients to educate them on preventative measures they can take and how to protect yourselves and those you care about regards falls in the future.

Hospital Radio

Hospital Radio Swindon is a charity providing entertainment and information to patients at GWH and the wider community.

www.hospitalradioswindon.org

Get involved

Public health talks

These informative talks provide an update on various health topics and offer the opportunity to ask any questions.

The talks take place on Microsoft teams and notifications are sent out via email. Members can request the link to join the meeting.

Our most recent talk about Adolescent Mental Health took place on 21 May 2025.

- [Watch the talk online](#)

Stay connected

You can keep up to date with our news and any new vacancies by following us on our [Volunteers Facebook page](#).

Follow all our social media channels so that you can always stay up to date with the latest information:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [X](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [YouTube](#)