



Great Western Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Connect

## Members newsletter

Spring 2025

## Foreword

### Natalie Titcombe, Lead Governor



Firstly, thank you for welcoming me as your new Lead Governor, it is an absolute honour. My predecessor, Chris Callow, brought a wealth of knowledge and experience, and I am grateful for his continued support.

Since transitioning to a new Group Model, the Council of Governors has worked hard to understand the proposal and how our responsibilities may evolve within this new framework. We continue to receive regular updates from our Chair and recently had a session with our new Group CEO to discuss the Trust's plans and strategy.

Additionally, with a new community care provider stepping in, it is our responsibility to ask informed questions and hold the Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) to account. As Governors, we must be aware of how changes in government policies may affect the NHS and our Trust. Staying informed allows us to better understand the evolving healthcare landscape.

In January, we held a Trust Member's Meeting, providing an opportunity to engage, answer questions, and discuss how we fulfil our responsibilities as elected representatives. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we plan to hold these sessions more regularly.

I'm looking forward to appearing on Hospital Radio Swindon soon, a charity dedicated to providing entertainment and updates to our patients and community, brought to you by the station's enthusiastic volunteers.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement with the Trust. Please share this newsletter with your family and friends to help continue to grow our members. You can contact me through our Corporate Governance Assistant, Sharon [sharon.scott27@nhs.net](mailto:sharon.scott27@nhs.net).

Wishing you all good health,  
Natalie

## Meet our Governors

### Caroline Borishade, Staff Governor Allied Health Professionals

Hello, my name is Caroline Borishade, and I am a Senior Pharmacy Technician with over 15 years of experience in healthcare management.

Currently, I work at Great Western Hospital, where I support patient care through homecare services and medication optimisation. I collaborate with clinical teams to enhance homecare services, manage high-cost medications, and ensure that patients receive timely and effective treatment.

My experience in both community and hospital pharmacy has given me a broad understanding of healthcare and the challenges we face in delivering high-quality care.

In addition to my technical role, I am proud to be an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Champion at the Trust. I am passionate about creating an inclusive and supportive environment for both staff and patients, ensuring that everyone feels heard and valued.

I am excited to be a Staff Governor and believe my background in pharmacy management, patient safety, and operational leadership will enable me to provide valuable insights for the Trust's development.

As a governor, my focus will be on promoting transparency, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that patient-centred care remains at the heart of everything we do. I am committed to collaborating with staff and leadership to support the continuous improvement of healthcare services for our community.



## A Royal visit to Great Western Hospital

Her Majesty The Queen officially opened our urgent and emergency care development on 21 January 2025.

Queen Camilla was given a tour of the Emergency Department, Medical Assessment Unit and Children's Emergency Unit, where Her Majesty met a number of patients including four-year-old Jackson James and his mother in the Children's Emergency Unit infant feeding room.

Queen Camilla then joined a reception, and met groups of staff from across the organisation, including our own Lead Governor, Natalie Titcombe who introduced Her Majesty to some of our significant donors, fundraisers and campaigners.

The £33.5 million urgent and emergency care expansion opened to the public in the autumn of 2024, and six months on, HM The Queen commemorated the occasion by unveiling a plaque alongside a pupil, Latoyah Vashi, nine, from the neighbouring Badbury Park Primary School.

The development is the biggest ever investment to the hospital site and follows the opening of the Urgent Treatment Centre and OUH Radiotherapy @ Swindon Centre in 2022, which already represent a huge investment in Swindon's healthcare infrastructure.



## New Down's Syndrome manikin helping with staff training for young patients with genetic conditions

The team on the Children's Emergency have successfully secured NHS England education funding to purchase a new Down's Syndrome manikin for the department.

The manikin, which the team have named Gwen, represents all children with genetic conditions and will give staff the chance to practice their clinical training; learning about specific issues often associated with Trisomy 21.

Down's Syndrome is also associated with other congenital conditions, and children with these conditions are at an increased risk of sepsis or other serious medical concerns including with their heart or digestive system.

Gwen will support training for staff at all levels, increasing the awareness of these medical issues and ultimately improving the care that these patients receive.

Dr Phil Peacock, Consultant in Paediatric Emergency Medicine, said: "Hundreds of young patients visit our Children's Emergency Unit every week, and some of these youngsters might have additional or complex needs alongside the injury or illness they are needing care for. This includes children with Down's syndrome and other genetic conditions.

"It's really important that our staff are equipped with the training and skills they need to provide exceptional care to every patient, and to recognise where they might need to adapt this care to meet the individual needs of a patient."

The team are also committed to equality and inclusion in the department, recognising that some patients, including those with a genetic condition, might find the hospital environment more distressing – particularly if they have difficulty with processing sensations such as noise or bright lights.

Gwen will also help to educate clinicians on any adjustments they might need to make to the way care is provided to those with additional or complex needs, whilst increasing the representation of patients with increased health challenges, which is at the core of the organisations equality, diversity and inclusion values.

“It’s also really important we remain aligned with the Trust’s wider equality, diversity and inclusion work, so that no patient is ever disadvantaged, and our staff provide the very best care to all,” Dr Peacock added.

Recently, a sensory room for under 17s has also been completed in the Children’s Emergency Unit, providing a safe and comfortable space where younger patients with additional needs, such as autism or a learning disability, can wait and be treated away from the bustle of the main department.

The sensory room has padded walls and seating, visual sensory toys and equipment and calming tones which depict nature.

The first training sessions with Gwen took place at the end of January, with the manikin set to form part of regular training for all staff in urgent and emergency care.

## Transition to new digital maternity record system

The Trust introduced a new digital maternity record system, BadgerNet, on 22 January 2025. BadgerNet is an electronic maternity healthcare record system designed for real-time recording of events, whether they occur in the hospital, community, or at home.

The system includes BadgerNotes, an online portal and app that allows women and birthing people to access their maternity records from a PC, tablet, or mobile device. The information displayed is updated in real-time, based on details entered by midwives or other healthcare professionals involved in their care.

This new system provides a single, easily accessible platform, enabling women and birthing people to view and manage information about their pregnancy and care.

BadgerNet is being introduced across the hospital group, with Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust planning to adopt the system later this year.

Clair Murphy, Digital Lead Midwife at Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said: "It's great that we've been able to work in partnership together as three trusts to introduce BadgerNet.

"This joined up approach means we can provide women, pregnant people and their families with a safe and effective service, while delivering the highest standard of maternity and neonatal care."

## New endoscopy unit in Swindon will help extra 6,000 patients get care sooner

More than 6,000 extra diagnostic appointments will be made available to patients in Swindon thanks to a new community endoscopy unit, which is currently being built in the town.

Construction of the new facility, which will be based next to the existing West Swindon Health Centre, began in January and is expected to last for approximately six months.

When up and running, the new site will be able to provide diagnostic care for approximately 6,000 patients each year, meaning more people will be able to receive investigative procedures, such as colonoscopies and gastroscopies, sooner and closer to home.

The new endoscopy unit, which will be managed by clinical teams from the Trust, is an expansion of the Community Diagnostic Centre which opened last year in West Swindon, which currently offers patients CT and MRI scanning in a community location. It is one of three new centres across Bath and Northeast Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, thanks to a £14 million investment by the local NHS.

Since April 2024, more than 15,000 patients from across the region have received a test or investigation, such as a CT scan, X-ray or endoscopy procedure, at one of the three new centres.

By April 2025, it is expected that around 60,000 local people will have visited one or more of the centres for a diagnostic test.

Further information about community diagnostic centres on the [Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire website](#).

## Unscheduled medical care services continue to be rated Good by the CQC

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has rated the medical care across the Great Western Hospital, provided by the Division of Medicine, as Good following an inspection of services in May and June last year.

Maintaining a Good rating during such a busy time for the NHS is a fantastic achievement for the Division of Medicine and staff should be proud of the recognition this rating brings as an important marker of safe and high-quality care.

The inspection team looked at medical care which cannot be planned in advance, visiting wards and speaking to patients of all ages, as well as relatives and staff. They explored five key areas of quality to see if services were Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led.

The report praised hospital staff for treating patients, relatives and visitors with compassion and kindness and says that staff manage safety well and understand how to protect patients from abuse.

Patients told inspectors they received excellent care, despite staffing challenges, felt supported by staff, who took time to explain treatment and decisions, were confident to raise concerns and were involved in planning their care and decision-making.

The inspectors also highlighted that staff effectively assessed risks to patients, acted on them and kept good care records and that safety incidents were well managed, and lessons learnt from them.

Alongside great feedback in the majority of areas, the inspection team said that improvements could be made to how responsive we are to patients' individual needs. For example, they noticed that staff were not always aware of how to support people with different communication needs.

The inspection team acknowledged staff concerns about patients being cared for outside of speciality areas, hindering efficient patient care and discharge planning. They also noted that improvements could be made to address the privacy and dignity of patients waiting in corridors.

The Division of Medicine has already made changes and worked on these areas highlighted for improvement in the inspection report.

Medical bed locations across the hospital were recently reorganised, helping to ensure patients are treated in the most appropriate area and a Patient Communication Toolkit will be introduced in the coming weeks, helping staff to support patients with different communication needs.

You can read the full report on the [CQC website](#).

## An update from our Trust charity

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

### Art Appeal

We believe that art has an important role to play in the healing process.

The 2007 Department of Health and Arts Council England publication, 'A Prospectus for Arts and Health' asserted that the arts have an important part to play in improving health and well-being. In 2011, the British Medical Association published a paper on 'The psychological and social needs of patients' which found that arts and humanities programmes have been shown to have a positive effect on inpatients.

The measured improvements include:

- Inducing positive physiological and psychological changes in clinical outcomes
- Reducing drug consumption
- Shortening length of hospital stay
- Promoting better doctor-patient relationships
- Improving mental healthcare

Working with Paintings in Hospitals who create person centred healthcare environments, the Great Western Hospital displays 75 works of art in and around its wards and departments.

We also invite local professional and amateur artists to display exhibitions in the Hospital. Help us to continue to display artwork in the Hospital by making a gift today.

To donate, visit the [Brighter Futures website](#).

## Get involved

### Voluntary Services

Volunteers make a real difference to the experience of our patients and visitors by:

- Supporting patients with:
  - Practical tasks
  - Making mealtimes more sociable
  - Keeping moving
  - Listening to experiences
  - Speaking up
- Helping visitors by:
  - Providing a warm welcome
  - Giving directions and assistance
  - Signposting to further information
- Supporting our staff by:
  - Helping with administrative tasks
  - Ensuring information is readily available for patients

Stay up to date with our news and volunteer vacancies by following us on [Facebook](#).

### Governors

A full list of our Governors can be found on the [Trust website](#).

### 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.

Upcoming talks:

- **Wednesday 21 May 2025 – The Teenage Years:** A compassionate approach to understanding and supporting young people through adolescence.

### Stay connected

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](#)