

Update from Alison Jones, GP Engagement

Hospitals secure £50,000 grant to help address health inequalities

Shropshire's acute hospitals have secured almost £50,000 from NHS Charities Together to support a 'social inclusion' project aimed at addressing health inequalities in the diverse population they cover.

The Trust will use the money to address areas of inequality, particularly among members of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

SaTH's social inclusion project has three strands:

- ◆ Outreach and engagement with BAME and isolated communities
- ◆ Creation of multi-faith rooms on both hospital sites
- ◆ Unconscious bias training to understand the lives and needs of the diverse communities served by SaTH.



Julia Clarke, Director of Corporate Services at SaTH, said: **“The communities we serve, and indeed our own workforce, are incredibly diverse. In Shropshire and mid Wales, we have an older population with rural isolation being a significant factor, whilst in Telford & Wrekin we have some of the most deprived areas in England. Unemployment in Telford & Wrekin has significantly increased since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and BAME communities have been disproportionately affected by this. The percentage of our workforce from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average and higher than the population we serve. We need to ensure our hospitals and the services we provide are the best they can be for everybody we serve and, equally, that we make provisions for all our workforce. This grant will go a long way to helping us achieve that.”**

Some of the money will be used to employ a Social Inclusion Project Officer for 12 months, whose remit will be to build relationships with under-represented communities and provide ways for them to engage with the Trust to help shape services which meet their needs.

Another portion of the money will be used to create more inclusive multi-faith rooms at both hospital sites. As part of this work, SaTH is conducting a survey about its Chapels, which can be found at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SaTHChaplaincySurvey

Julia Clarke added: **“This is a very important project for the Trust and we are delighted to have secured the money from NHS Charities Together to drive it forward. On behalf of the Trust I would like to thank everyone who has supported NHS charities during this incredibly difficult time.”**

SaTH also has its own charity – SaTH Charity – that people can choose to support and make a real difference to the patients, affected friends and family, and members of Trust staff. For more information about SaTH Charity please visit www.sath.nhs.uk/about-us/charity

New Improvement Alliance set to improve services for Trust patients

It was announced on 7 August that a leading teaching hospital will provide targeted support to improve services for patients at the Trust.

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (UHB) has entered an Improvement Alliance with SaTH to provide leadership expertise that will support the Trust to offer clinically safe and sustainable patient services. It will be a time-limited alliance that will set up a 'Committees in Common' structure to enable the development and delivery of a rapid quality improvement plan. The strategic relationship will address the governance and leadership issues to make the necessary service improvements at SaTH.

Facilitated by NHS Improvement (NHSI) in the Midlands, the Improvement Alliance is part of the strengthened package of support for SaTH, announced last month.

Louise Barnett, Chief Executive of SaTH, who joined the Trust in February 2020, has welcomed the support. She said: **"I welcome the creation of this Improvement Alliance and the opportunity to work with our colleagues at UHB to improve patient safety and quality of care for patients and families in the communities we serve. SaTH cannot accomplish the necessary transformation alone and the provision of this extra expertise will be a really positive step forward on our improvement journey."**

Dr David Rosser, Chief Executive of UHB, said: **"We are looking forward to working with colleagues at SaTH in this new Improvement Alliance. I believe that this development should give confidence to the people served by SaTH that improvements in patient safety and quality of care will be delivered."**

Ben Reid, who has been Chair of SaTH since 2018, has decided to take this opportunity to step down and allow a new Chair, Dr Catriona McMahon, to lead the SaTH Board. A physician with over 16 years' experience in pharmaceutical medicine, Dr McMahon has been a Non-Executive Director and Senior Independent Director at UHB since 2014.

Dr McMahon said: **"I am delighted to be the new Chair at SaTH and look forward to working with my Board colleagues, Louise and her team, as well as everyone who works for SaTH to deliver improvements. In particular I believe patient safety and quality of care will be improved with this strategic Improvement Alliance. I am determined to work hard to provide the right strategic leadership to ensure the whole team can be successful."**

Dr Nigel Sturrock, Regional Medical Director for NHS Improvement (NHSI) in the Midlands, said: **"The challenges facing SaTH are complex and substantial. To achieve the improvements that patients rightly expect, the Trust needs the strong support of the surrounding system. As a leading teaching hospital with outstanding leadership, UHB is well placed to provide the wide range of expertise needed to address some of the key patient safety and quality challenges faced by SaTH."**

To see some questions/answers on the support from the Improvement Alliance please click [here](#)

Thanking our volunteers at SaTH

Our volunteers play a hugely important role and make a real difference to our staff, patients and visitors. Prior to COVID-19 the Trust had volunteers in most wards and departments at both hospitals, including ward helpers, mealtime buddies, meet and greeters, dementia volunteers, chaplaincy volunteers, end of life care volunteers, and many more.

Those who volunteer range from people looking to gain experience in the NHS for future careers, to those who have retired but are looking for a way to give something back. Three of our volunteers have recently been offered substantive paid roles resulting directly from their volunteer experience. Over the last few months, we have had a number of people continuing to volunteer at the Trust and we are currently looking at ways we can safely offer more volunteer placements. The Volunteer Team are always keen to hear from anyone who is interested in a placement, on (01743) 492256/ 261118 or at email sath.members@nhs.net

Local healthcare partners unite to discharge patients safely from hospital in record time

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, local healthcare partners have joined up to improve the hospital discharge process for patients, reducing the time patients wait for discharge support services by an average of two and a half days.

In March 2020, the Government published new discharge guidance for NHS Trusts to follow until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance set out the immediate actions that had to be taken to enhance discharge arrangements and the provision of community support to deliver safe and rapid discharge for people who no longer need to be in a hospital bed.

The Trust, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust (Shropcom), and Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils have united to enable a successful multi-agency and multi-disciplinary process for the people of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales.

An Integrated Discharge Hub was launched to provide rapid access to discharge services once a patient is ready to leave hospital. All referrals are now made by telephone, triaged and discharge arrangements organised by the multi-professional team, with the aim of discharge taking place on the same day whenever possible.

For the first time, all partners working as part of the Integrated Discharge Hub are co-located at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, and the service is provided seven days a week. This new way of working provides an enhanced discharge process and the support offered will improve patient experience.

The Hub has already received over 1,360 complex discharge referrals, and the team focuses on a 'home first' philosophy. Many patients are able to return home with wrap-around support, within hours of being told by the doctor they are able to be discharged. For those who need complex health and social care support the team has achieved a 67% improvement in the time patients wait to be discharged, reducing the average waiting time from four to one and a half days. This reflects a huge improvement in supporting people to leave hospital as soon as safely possible, and to the right place of care.

Nigel Lee, Chief Operating Officer at SaTH, said: **“As soon as a patient is deemed medically fit, there should be no delay in getting them home. Any hour spent in hospital without needing to, is an hour too many.**”

“The team is proud to have worked together bringing expertise from all areas of health and social care practice to establish the integrated discharge hub for the patients of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales. The aim was to improve the process of getting people home, reduce bed capacity when it's not needed and to enhance patient experience. We have certainly done that, and we will now be looking to how we can embed this into our ways of working for the future, beyond COVID-19.”

Claire Old, Senior Responsible Officer for Discharge, said **“All our staff have recognised how important it is to help our patients to return home as quickly as possible, and they have worked so hard to facilitate this. Our patients and relatives have also been part of our team and have understood the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our community teams, local care homes and domiciliary agencies have pulled out all the stops to support our patients when they get back home or to their normal place of residence. We've all been so proud to be part of this caring health and social care system.”**

Mike Carr, Deputy Director of Operations at Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust, said: **“At Shropcom, we were fully committed to this important initiative, and redeployed colleagues from a variety of services to create this enhanced discharge offer for patients. Now we must all look at how we can build on this together over the weeks and months ahead as we look to shape healthcare beyond the pandemic. Our desire is to take the positives from this crisis and develop our services accordingly.”**

£2 million funding secured as hospitals prepare for winter

Shropshire's acute hospitals have been awarded £2 million as part of a £300 million investment announced by the Government on 11 August to help the NHS prepare for winter.

The Trust will use the money to convert the former Wrekin Midwife Led Unit (MLU) into a 'priorities admission unit', which will help to ease pressure on A&E.

The MLU has been replaced with a purpose-built modular building located alongside the Consultant Led Unit at the Shropshire Women and Children's Centre at the Princess Royal Hospital.

Sara Biffen, Deputy Chief Operating Officer at SaTH, said: **"We are delighted to have secured this funding, which will have a significant positive impact as we look to deal with the challenges that winter brings.**

"Winter traditionally brings with it additional demands on our services and this, coupled with our ongoing coronavirus response, will bring a number of challenges.

"By creating a priority admissions unit, we will be able to move patients into beds more quickly, which will reduce the pressure on our Emergency Department and improve care for our patients."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on 11 August: **"We continue to deliver on our promise to build back better and faster, with £300 million allocated today for NHS trusts to upgrade their facilities and improve A&E capacity.**

"These upgrades will help our fantastic NHS prepare for the winter months, helping them to deliver world-leading services and reduce the risk of coronavirus infections.

"Thanks to the hard work and tireless efforts of NHS staff throughout the pandemic, our A&Es have remained open for the public.

"It's vital that those who need emergency treatment this winter access it, and for those who remain concerned about visiting hospitals, let me assure you that the NHS has measures in place to keep people safe."

Health Minister Edward Argar said: **"Our NHS did an amazing job to ensure emergency care continued to be available for everyone who needed it during the peak of this pandemic.**

"Today, we are announcing the details of the Trusts across the country who will receive a share of £300 million to upgrade their A&Es and support emergency care to help them to continue to deliver safe and accessible services throughout the normally busy winter period.

"This funding is part of our record investment in NHS infrastructure to ensure our health service continues to meet the needs of the present and to be fit for future demands placed upon it."

This funding forms part of an extra £1.5 billion capital funding announced by the Prime Minister.

Exemplary care on Chemotherapy Day Unit

The Chemotherapy Day Unit at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital has become the fifth department to be awarded the coveted Diamond status as part of the Trust's Exemplar improvement programme (the highest level of award). To achieve Exemplar Ward status, the team met high standards in a number of key areas from caring, medicine management, leadership, nutrition and hydration to cleanliness, safety and record-keeping.

The other departments at the Trust with Diamond status are the Postnatal Ward at PRH, the Delivery Suite, and Critical Care at both RSH and PRH.