

## Update from Alison Jones, GP Engagement

### Trust receives £5.8m for maintenance projects

Shropshire's acute hospitals have been awarded £5.8 million, a share of £600 million given to NHS Trusts for maintenance backlog. The money is part of £1.5 billion capital funding announced by the Prime Minister in the summer to help the NHS build back better.

The Trust will put the money towards maintenance backlog. This includes improving wards, updating nurse call systems, fire safety improvements, upgrading to lighting and heating systems and modernising kitchens.

James Drury, Interim Director of Finance at SaTH, said: **"The Trust is delighted to have been awarded this funding which will go a long way in helping us to build a better future. The funding will bring significant benefits to our patients, including the upgrade of wards, and will also ensure that our colleagues have an improved environment in which to care for our patients."**

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, said: **"These crucial maintenance projects will deliver immediate benefits and provide NHS staff with the facilities they need to provide world-class care to their patients this winter, helping to ensure the NHS is always there for you when you need it."**

The £600 million has been released to 178 NHS trusts to cover almost 1,800 maintenance projects. Many of the projects are now underway and will be completed by March 2021.

### Trust response to Donna Ockenden's first report

Donna Ockenden released her first report on 10 December following the Independent Review of Maternity Services at the Trust. The full report and press release can be found at [www.donnaockenden.com](http://www.donnaockenden.com) and in response to this report, Louise Barnett, Chief Executive at the Trust, said:

**"I would like to thank Donna Ockenden for this report but more importantly the families for coming forward. As the Chief Executive now and on behalf of the whole Trust, I want to say how very sorry we are for the pain and distress that has been caused to mothers and their families due to poor maternity care at our Trust."**

**"We commit to implementing all of the actions in this report and I can assure the women and families who use our service that if they raise any concerns about their care they will be listened to and action will be taken."** Louise's message to any pregnant woman is that if you have any questions about your current care, to please contact your midwife.

GPConnect contact: Alison Jones, GP Engagement

Stretton House, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XQ  
Telephone (01743) 492591 Email: [alison.jones25@nhs.net](mailto:alison.jones25@nhs.net)  
Website: <https://www.sath.nhs.uk/healthcare-professionals/gpconnect/>

## Scientists at the heart of Shropshire's COVID-19 response

They are at the very heart of Shropshire's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Every day they carefully decipher hundreds of tests extracting and detecting the relevant information to determine who is COVID-19 positive and who is negative.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Microbiology team at SaTH has provided the results for COVID-19 swabs taken from patients, care home residents, staff, the prison service and from within the community – turning around as many as 3,000 samples a week, amounting to around 61,000 in total so far. That is on top of nearly 17,000 NHS antibody tests processed during the summer, along with the regular SIREN testing for clinical research teams and routine day-to-day work.

To cope with demand, they have now taken delivery of much-needed additional new equipment to enable them to provide an expanded service, which will see the number of tests they are able to deal with double from around 500 to 1,000 every day. It also means that some tests can be turned around much more rapidly – some in under two hours – but on a smaller scale.



The team's hours of working have increased to provide a seven-day service to ensure that results are delivered as quickly as possible. In order to meet the rise in demand for its services, the Microbiology department has also completed a recruitment drive taking on new Medical Laboratory Assistants, Associate Practitioners and trainee Biomedical Scientists.

This is a phenomenal response from a small, dedicated team of scientists working behind the scenes in the laboratories at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. The team includes clinical scientists, consultants, biomedical scientists and laboratory assistants.

They have, in the space of just a few months, learned to use new testing equipment, increased the number of samples tested – and they have even continued to work through the disruption of a recent laboratory move required in order to accommodate the additional machines.

Louise Barnett, Trust Chief Executive, said: **“I am so proud of all our teams who are working around the clock to keep our patients safe during the pandemic. The Microbiology team has done a fantastic job providing the results to thousands of COVID-19 tests, whilst also embracing new technology and ways of working at pace.”**

Dr Angus McGregor, Trust Clinical Director for Pathology, said: **“The team has responded incredibly to the challenges of implementing COVID-19 testing. Every time a new challenge comes along, they seem to just deal with it. An amazing team doing an amazing job.”**

Sarah Gilbert, Deputy Head of Microbiology at the Trust, said: **“It has been a phenomenal response by the team who have really stepped up and delivered. The situation, as you would expect in a pandemic, is constantly evolving and has presented many challenges.**

**“As well as a huge increase in the volume of work, we have been given new equipment as part of the response to the pandemic which has also meant a significant training challenge for us. It has been quite a learning curve.**

**“Demand for our services has never slowed down: in fact it has continued to grow and grow and I'm very proud of how the team has responded to provide a critical service at what is an unprecedented time for all of us.”**



## Rollout of COVID-19 vaccination gets under way

People across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have now started to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as part of the largest immunisation programme in UK history. Invitations to book an appointment are being sent to priority groups, with those aged 80 or older, care home workers, along with NHS workers who are at higher risk, being among the first to receive the vaccination.

Dr Elin Roddy, a Respiratory Physician at the Trust who has worked on COVID wards for the past eight months, (*pictured right*) was one of the first to receive the vaccine. She said: **“I am really excited and grateful to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this happen. I have elderly parents whom I haven’t hugged since February because of the pandemic. When I told them, I’d had a vaccination they were so relieved – they have been very worried for me through this, as I have**



**worried about them. As a respiratory consultant, I have experienced first-hand the effects of COVID on patients and families. We all see the effect this pandemic is having on our everyday life and it is fantastic that we now have a safe and effective vaccine, although we still have to be careful. I would strongly encourage everyone to get vaccinated when they are asked to come forward. I know people will understand that we need to start with those who are most vulnerable and at risk first. The vaccine is the best Christmas present I could have wished for and it feels like we are taking the first steps back towards normality.”**

Angie Wallace, the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Director for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, said: **“I’m really proud of how NHS, staff from both councils and volunteers have pulled together to get this programme up and running in such a short space of time. The vaccine was only licensed earlier this month and already we are vaccinating our most vulnerable local residents in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.”**

People across the country are being prioritised in line with national recommendations, with everyone being offered the vaccine over the next few months. The Hospital Hub at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital is the first venue in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to deliver vaccinations. Further centres are currently being prepared and staff are being trained to expand the number of delivery locations across the county in the near future to deliver vaccinations closer to where people live.

Dr Charlotte Hart, a GP and Clinical Director for Shrewsbury Primary Care Network, said: **“All GPs are encouraging their patients to make sure their contact details are up to date, so that when the time is right they will receive a letter inviting them to book an appointment for their COVID-19 vaccine. We are receiving many calls from people eager to find out how and when they can receive their COVID jab. We’re asking everyone to be patient, wait until we contact you, rather than calling us, as our staff are very busy as we move into winter. Vaccinating everyone will take some time, but locally we are moving incredibly quickly, and you will be offered an appointment at the right time.”**

Dr Arne Rose, Medical Director at the Trust, said: **“We’re really excited to be one of the vaccination hubs and to be able to do our bit to help protect our local communities. The arrival of the vaccine is a turning point for us all in fighting the pandemic. The vaccine is safe and is the best line of defence against COVID-19; this is a hugely significant moment in our pandemic response and offers hope at the end of what has been an incredibly difficult year for us all.”** Liz Noakes, Director of Public Health at Telford & Wrekin Council, said: **“The arrival of the vaccine is the news we have all been waiting for and it is great to see those most vulnerable in our communities starting to receive the vaccine. However, this does not mean that we can now stop following restrictions; please continue to self-isolate and get tested when you need to, do not socialise indoors, wash your hands, wear a face covering where appropriate, and maintain a distance of 2m from other people.”**

## Newly expanded Same Day Emergency Care centre operational this month

A newly-built expanded Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) centre at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, which will help reduce hospital admissions and improve patient experience, became operational this month.

The centre, next to the hospital's A&E Department, will house a larger Acute Medical Same Day Emergency Care service running seven-days-a-week.

Patients seen in the SDEC will be treated on the same day, reducing the need for a hospital admission which will ease pressure on hospital beds and improve the patient experience and journey.

Government funding for the new SDEC building was secured earlier this year by the Trust. It has enabled the current Same Day Emergency Care service to be expanded - with its own dedicated centre housing treatment chairs and trolley bays, accessing diagnostics, as well as improved office space. It means that more patients can be seen each day.



Building work has been completed on the new two-storey medical modular building, and became operational from 21 December – several weeks ahead of schedule.

Nigel Lee, Chief Operating Officer at SaTH, said: **“The expansion of the same day emergency care service into its own dedicated building is an exciting development which will be of huge benefit to our patients and our acute medicine colleagues.**

**“Not only will it ease pressure on our A&E and hospital beds at a very challenging time, it will also help ensure that our patients have an improved experience and our clinical colleagues have the right environment in which to carry out their work.”**

Dr Aruna Maharaj, Clinical Director for Acute Medicine at SaTH, said: **“Acute Medicine is very excited about this enhanced model of care which will help us to provide a more responsive service to our patients. It will ease pressure on our A&E department as the appropriate patients will be pulled from A&E into the SDEC for their treatment and care, where they will be treated as day cases.**

**“We know that less time spent in hospital helps improve patient experience and reduced length of in-patient stay in hospitals improve patient outcomes.**

**“The Emergency Centre team have worked incredibly hard over the past few months to prepare for the expansion of the same day service on the RSH site to become comparable with PRH acute medicine SDEC space, and I would like to thank them as we move into a new building, and start this new chapter.”**

As part of the expansion of the same day service, the Trust has boosted the medical and nursing acute medicine team, including the recruitment of additional consultants and nursing associates, with further recruitment ongoing.

The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital was one of 25 hospitals to receive a share of £150 million in funding announced by the Health Secretary Matt Hancock in September this year to expand and upgrade A&Es, and received £6.3 million.

The Trust also secured £2 million in Government funding to convert the former Wrekin MLU at the Princess Royal Hospital into a Priority Admissions Unit, which is expected to open soon. The unit will help ease pressure on the PRH A&E by moving patients out of the department and into beds/chairs.