

ambassador

Public and Staff Membership Magazine – August 2021



Impact of Covid-19 and the Recovery Plan

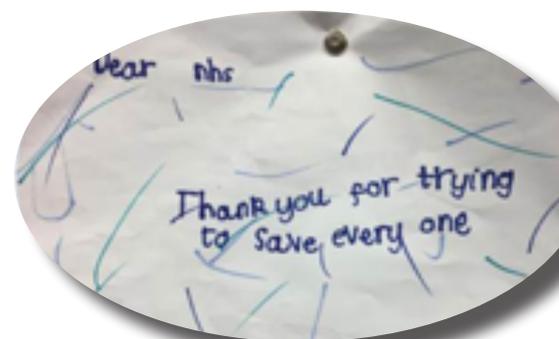
by David Carter and Cathy Jones...

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Welcome to ambassador



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We hope you enjoy our Membership Magazine. If we have your **name or address incorrect** or the person to whom we have sent this magazine no longer lives at the address mentioned in the address label please let us know by emailing us at FTmembership@ldh.nhs.uk. If you have already informed the hospital of any changes but we have not updated our *Membership* database please accept our apologies – this is because our Membership database is not linked to the *Patient* database.

Ambassador is our way of communicating with you, our Trust members. We want to ensure that we keep you up to date with developments at the Trust and how you can get involved. We now have more than 26,000 members and we are keen for as many of you as possible to play an active role in shaping how the Trust is managed and developed for the future.

Dear Members,



Hello again! Everyone will no doubt be surprised to receive another Ambassador magazine so soon after our first, but there is so much activity on both hospital sites that we felt our members should be kept up to date with all that's going on.

There have been significant building works across both sites with upgrades to both Emergency departments following funding awarded at the end of last year. On the Bedford site the work is complete, and work is progressing rapidly at L&D site. However, there is so much that is temporarily different on the L&D site we are hoping that our patients and visitors aren't finding it too difficult to find their way around. Do ask at our temporary main reception desk at the entrance to the service road – they are there to help you. I'm afraid this work will continue for some time so we will do all we can to make it easier for everyone.

Dare I mention Covid! This has been an unprecedented time for the NHS, and we are not out of the woods yet. I would again like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff at Bedfordshire Hospitals for their relentless & unstinted efforts caring for our patients over the past 16 months.

And finally, I do hope to see as many of you as possible at our virtual AMM on 8 September – see page 8 for more details.

My best wishes to you all.

Pam Brown

Public Governor and Chair of the Membership & Communications Sub Committee

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the Ambassador in the future please send your email address to FTmembership@ldh.nhs.uk

Contact us:

The Foundation Trust **Membership Department**. Email: FTmembership@ldh.nhs.uk

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This publication is produced by the Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Membership Department

Chair's Message

Dear Members,



By the time you read this you will know better whether the signs we are seeing at the end of July of a reduction in the extremes of the pandemic have been maintained through the summer. Clearly we concentrate first on the direct impact of the disease

itself, but, in reality, its effect on the hospital, its staff and patients has gone much deeper than the loss and despair so many have experienced personally – our sympathies go out to them. People have had to adjust to different ways of working, including the uncertainty of being unexpectedly “pinged”. They have had to adjust to frequently changing rules and regulations governing their behaviour and freedom. At the hospital we have experienced a change of patterns of demand as people have clearly found primary care to have been overwhelmed by increased workload. All this on top of the normal rigours of worrying about winter flu and everyday trials and tribulations a hospital faces. The ability of our hospitals and our staff to monitor and react

to this changing agenda is truly remarkable; we all clapped with enthusiasm at the beginning of this journey, we should counter our personal exhaustion and cheer our staff right now.

We all welcome the national initiative towards “integrated care” aimed at reducing ill health and operating more effectively to restore the health of those who are unwell, but this involves our hospitals looking to different ways of working. This is both exciting but also challenging, particularly when introduced at the same time as we try and recover from the pandemic.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to your Governors – at the time of writing there are elections being held. Excellently led by Lead Governor, Helen Lucas, they have conducted their discourse around this difficult subject both impersonally and with a clear desire to put the Trust first. Like the staff, you should applaud them also – including for the support and challenge they offer to the Board.

Kind Regards
Simon Linnett

Helipad update

Those of you who are members will know of our longstanding appeal to build a Helipad on the L&D site and we are so grateful for all the support we have had from our local community for this project to date – it has been amazing.

The award in December 2020 of a significant grant to improve and renovate both our Emergency departments (EDs) at the L&D and Bedford, together with the challenges of the last 18 months, has led us to reassess the exact timetable for the building of the Helipad.

While works to expand the Emergency department at Bedford Hospital are now complete, the improvements to the Emergency department on the L&D site are ongoing and have a much wider scope, and form part of a major overall site redevelopment for the whole hospital which is now underway.

For this reason we have taken the strategic decision to put the Helipad appeal on hold

until the majority of building work on the site is completed – we hope that this will be in 2024.

While we realise that this might be disappointing particularly for those of you who have supported the appeal, we feel that this is the right course of action.

The improvements to our EDs will have a significant impact on how we are able to deliver care to our patients. At the L&D the department will virtually double in size to create a multi-functional space, supported by new technology, enabling a smoother journey through the ED for patients, and providing a sound footing for the Helipad project in the future.

For more information on our appeals visit our Fundraising section on the website:

<https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/charity/>

Bedford Hospital Charity & Friends are also supporting Bedford Hospital with a £1m Emergency Department Appeal – more information can be found on their website: <https://www.bedfordhospitalcharity.org.uk>

Impact of Covid-19 and the Recovery Plan



by David Carter, Chief Executive
and Cathy Jones, Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Chief Executive

Delivering health services in a pandemic

It is now a year and a half since the COVID pandemic began and we want to give you an update on the impact this has had on our hospitals and on how we are able to deliver care going forward.

The last eighteen months have seen huge changes for the NHS – managing the demands of the COVID pandemic while at the same time trying to deliver our ‘usual’ service as best we can has been a constant challenge, and one which we are still having to meet. We want to take this opportunity again, to say a huge thank you to all our staff who have worked, and continue to work, so hard to care for our patients.

Both our hospitals – Bedford and Luton & Dunstable University Hospital – are currently extremely busy, with rising numbers of patients with COVID being admitted and cared for, not only on our general wards, but also now again in the Intensive Care Unit. While the numbers are not as high as they were during the peak in January, we are starting to see a steady rise again, which is concerning.

Thankfully, the roll-out of the nationwide vaccination programme has meant that we are now in a much better position to manage the demands of the pandemic. We would encourage all of you to get a jab if you haven’t yet had one, and to take up the invitation of a booster/flu jab should it be offered.

Outside of COVID, over the last few weeks we have seen attendances in our hospitals surge with both our Emergency departments very busy, with a number of acutely ill patients needing to be admitted – these numbers are more in line with what we would expect to see over the winter time.

If you do attend our hospitals, you will find that our infection control measures have not changed, despite the national lockdown easing on 19 July. We are still asking patients and visitors to wash their hands, wear a mask and observe social distancing. This is to protect our patients, some of whom are acutely ill and vulnerable, and our staff.

We know that the visiting restrictions have been particularly hard for patients and their families, and we are pleased that we have been able to relax these slightly, with patients now able to have a family member visit once a day. Please see our website for further information.

Looking to the future

One of the inevitable consequences of the pandemic has been delays to routine care. In common with all other NHS trusts, we have had to postpone many routine operations and planned surgeries.

We are very sorry about the delays that many patients have encountered, and the great personal challenges this wait may have caused.

Both our hospitals have resumed routine surgery, with close to pre-pandemic numbers of theatre lists available each week. Additionally we are putting in extra weekend operating capacity.

One of the positives to come out of the pandemic, however, has been that the NHS has accelerated plans to deliver services digitally where appropriate, so that patients are now able to avoid having to come into hospitals for outpatient appointments, for example, by having their consultations held virtually.

Another key area of work that has been accelerated is joining up health services across the whole local area, taking in hospitals, primary care, community care and other healthcare settings. Bedfordshire Hospitals, working with system partners across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK), is participating as one of seven Accelerator systems nationally to pilot new ways of delivering care in a more integrated way and testing innovative ways of working to reduce waiting times for planned care as quickly as possible.

The backlog of care that has built up over the pandemic is considerable with many patients facing long waiting lists for their care. We are working hard to offer our longest waiting patients dates for their procedures as quickly as possible, and offering patients a range of opportunities for treatment not just at our own NHS sites, but working in partnership with other organisations include local independent sector providers.

There is now a drive towards designing new pathways for patients, providing care closer to home, rather than in hospital, using primary and community care resources, ad hoc health hubs, and other healthcare settings. These solutions need to be sustainable in the future and will bring long term benefits for our patients.

→ NHS 73rd Birthday Celebrations

Thank you to our staff...

As you may have seen and heard on the news, Monday 5 July marked the NHS's 73rd birthday and was also the day that the Queen awarded the NHS the George Cross.

A number of different events were held around the country to say thank you to staff and volunteers and recognise the extraordinary contribution they have made throughout the COVID pandemic.

We would like to thank publicly each and every one of them again for their hard work and dedication over the last eighteen months.

Project Wingman 'Wellbee'

We were extremely lucky to have the Project Wingman 'Wellbee' bus on site providing an opportunity for our staff to take some time out and relax.

Project Wingman is a charity founded in March 2020 in



direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A call was put out to the airline community with the idea of taking crew into NHS hospitals to look after NHS staff during their breaks in dedicated lounges and thus Project Wingman was born. An incredible 6,500 airline crew answered the call for volunteers, from across every airline in the UK.

The crews offer their time, knowledge and skills to serve and support NHS staff, providing vital well-being and mental health support.

Now their double-decker blue bus Wellbee, tours the UK stopping off at hospitals to lay on hospitality



Thank you Project Wingman for the fantastic contribution you have made to the NHS over the last 18 months. Your support has been much appreciated by all of us.

NHS Big Tea celebrations



We held a number of activities on our hospital sites during the week, and took part in the national NHS Big Tea celebrations by

laying on refreshments for our hardworking staff.

Queen awarded the George Cross to the NHS...



Other NHS birthday celebrations included a garden party at Buckingham Palace, hosted by the Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge.

We were one of 10 trusts around the country to invite three members of staff to attend the event in the Palace gardens, on the same day the Queen awarded the George Cross to the NHS.

Congratulations to Amanda Palfreyman-Jones, Paula Owsiejckuk and Aakifah Begum who attended the tea party – they were chosen by our senior team to represent our Trust as they had gone above and beyond in the line of duty during the first lockdown.

Portrait of our most famous patient, Captain Sir Tom Moore at Bedford Hospital...

On 5 July we also unveiled a portrait of our most famous patient, Captain Sir Tom Moore, at Bedford Hospital, which was donated by artist Susan Ballantyne Mortimer. The painting is now hanging in the older part of the hospital (admin block), near the Committee Room, alongside the other portraits of our hospital benefactors.



Our Patient Experience team at Bedfordshire NHS Foundation Trust... *“What matters*



For an organisation like ours to flourish and grow, we need to understand what kind of experience people are having when they use our services. Listening to good feedback – and bad – gives us the opportunity to share what we are good at when things go well, and learn and improve when they don't go as well as we would have liked.

This is why we ask everyone who comes into contact with our services to tell us about their experience. We collect feedback from a number of different sources including:

- **The Friends and Family Test (FFT)** – a real time short survey which asks about your experience: was it good or bad, what we did well and what could we have done better? Here are some of the leaflets that you may see around the hospitals:



- **National Patient Surveys (annual)**– A group of patients who use our services over a certain period of time are asked to complete a comprehensive questionnaire. These include adult inpatients, children and young people, women who use our maternity services, people who attend our Emergency Departments and cancer patients.
- **Compliments, Comments, Concerns and Complaints** – positive and negative feedback is monitored by the central Patient Experience Team and that information is shared with our services and the Trust Board so that changes can be made.
- **Patient Stories** – we ask people who have experienced our services to give their feedback in person to the team who cared for them, and to our Executive Team.



Patient experience is not just about listening to people – it is about engaging and involving the public, regardless of whether they or a loved one are undergoing treatment, so that they become actively involved in the way we shape our future.

It is likely that everyone at some point has had an experience of needing to use health services, be it through their GP or in hospital. It is about working together to design services which meet people's needs.



Bedfordshire Hospitals

to you matters to us”



Since the merger of our two hospitals some of our patient experience projects have unfortunately been delayed because of the pandemic. But In the last six months we have been able to push forward patient experience activity, which will continue to grow as we begin to emerge from the pandemic.

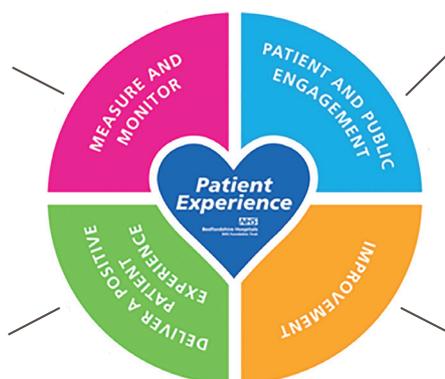
One of those activities was to set up the Patient Experience Council (PEC), which is made up of people from our local community. It includes Trust Governors, Trust Members, our staff, NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other key stakeholders like Healthwatch.

The PEC hold virtual meetings and focus groups on both our hospital sites and has developed a Patient Experience Strategy. This illustrates how we want to drive improvement through patient experience. You can find the strategy on the Trust’s website. It has four key elements:



Measure and monitor what we do to ensure that the service is consistently delivered and that Improvements can be made

Implement patient-centred services that make a positive impact upon the **quality of the experience** and therefore care received



Harness our **patient and public engagement** by listening, understanding and responding to their individual needs

Strive for **improvement** by using what we learn during our engagement activity and by analysis of the broad range of information available

If you have the opportunity to give us feedback, whether through a survey, the FFT or via our Patient Experience Team, please do – your views are very important to us.

If you would like to know more about Patient Experience, or give us feedback, please email us: patientexperience@ldh.nhs.uk

What to do if you are unwell

Your guide to health services



Choose the right service for you...

 When you need help fast and it's not an emergency: <i>unwell / confused / need advice</i> NHS 111	999 Only in an emergency: <i>loss of consciousness / severe breathing difficulties / heavy bleeding</i> Emergency Department	 For symptoms that don't go away: <i>ear pain / back pain / stomach pain</i> GP Surgery	 Feeling poorly and need advice about: <i>fevers / stomach upset / aches and pains / headaches / hayfever</i> Pharmacy	 For common ailments and illnesses: <i>hangover / grazed knee / sore throat / cough / staying safe and hydrated in the heat</i> Self-care
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Remember – The Emergency Department or 999 is for emergencies only.

The NHS belongs to us all. Let's use it responsibly.

Talk before you walk.

The way you use your NHS matters – using it wisely means we can develop and invest in local services to make your NHS fit for the future.

Annual Members' Meeting September 2021

Date: Wednesday 8 September 2021, 5pm for 5.30pm start, 7pm finish

Venue: Held virtually

RSVP: To register email at FTMembership@ldh.nhs.uk by 23 August 2021

Please note: further instructions will be sent once you have registered, but a valid email address will be required to join the meeting.

Trust members can join the online meeting to find out how Bedford Hospital and Luton & Dunstable University Hospital have been performing over the past year, and learn more about their strategy for the future. If you are a member this is your opportunity to hear from the senior staff from the Trust. Due to restrictions associated with COVID-19, the Annual Members' Meeting will be held online. The Agenda and Annual Report will be published on the Trust's website a week prior to the meeting.

If you would like to attend the Members' Annual Meeting please email FTMembership@ldh.nhs.uk by 23 August 2021. Those who have registered will receive the joining instructions via email nearer the time.

(check your junk email box)

★ Limited online spaces are available so register early ★

This magazine is sent by post to Foundation Trust members. However, we only send one copy per household, even if there is more than one Trust member living at the same address. Please help us save on paper and cost by sharing your copy with the Trust members who live at the same address.