

# Our Outstanding People

Stories of hope, resilience and innovation



Thank  
you

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**Thank you  
for being a  
superhero**



# Foreword

Since the birth of the NHS 73 years ago, the organisation and the people who work for it have not faced a bigger challenge than COVID-19.

We've created this book as our own unique 'time capsule', to give a snapshot of what happened to us as a trust from the period when the pandemic first hit in March 2020, and follows our journey through to December 2021.

We can't ignore the difficulties around PPE, redeployment, service delivery, long working hours, cancelled events and changing how (and where) we work.

But we should also recognise some of the achievements and successes that have come about through your dedication, innovation and sheer unwavering commitment to looking after our patients and each other.

Using video for consultations and treatment is now an effective way to support our service delivery, you found innovative ways of keeping in touch with patients and teams. Services, sites and stores have been transformed, you've kept people safe through stringent infection prevention and control measures, our volunteers stepped in to new roles, our nurseries received top marks and our vaccination hub delivered over 33,700 vaccines to key workers.

Our local community also played a key part with their generosity, donating food, goods and scrubs.

It's not been possible to capture everything but I want to give my personal and heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you, you certainly proved to be outstanding and you should be very proud of what you've achieved.



**Julian Emms, Chief Executive**  
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust



**VETERAN  
AWARE**





# New ways of working



As the country went into lockdown, our services had to rapidly come up with new ways of working to prevent the spread of COVID-19...

## OneConsultation

Using video calls (OneConsultation) has enabled services to continue to care for patients, while allowing clinicians to work from home and helping reduce the risk of infection transmission.

OneConsultation average use has increased from 200 to 8,000 video appointments a month.

Thanks goes to our Information Management and Technology team who made this possible, as well as to our clinicians who adapted to new ways of working at very short notice.

One Consultation has many benefits for both clinicians and service users. Here's what some of them said ▶

"There are advantages for both staff and patients, no commute and no sitting in waiting rooms, and it was easier to meet their families. I think most people in our service will carry on using online consultations in the future."

**Dr Abrar Hussain,**  
Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist

"Without this continued support I may have fallen off my treatment plan. It's been good to still have the support through video."

Service user

"I think this is an absolutely fantastic way for disabled people and people shielding, and those who cannot get out much to speak to a doctor or nurse and feel safe"

Service user





## Increasing access to psychological therapies with online video

Our Talking Therapies team has developed pre-recorded video packages to replace face to face group cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) courses.

Using video means that people can now access treatment from the comfort of their own home, and watch pre-recorded sessions, at a time that suits them.

The number of patients receiving their one-to-one CBT by video call rose from 3% to over 60% during the pandemic.

“We had to adapt almost overnight,” says **Nicola Farrin, Operational and Performance Manager**, “so we’re really proud that, despite moving everything online at such speed, there was no loss of service and we’ve maintained our high recovery rates.”

## Internet-ready devices for EMBRACE service users

In order to tackle digital exclusion, service users were provided with IT equipment so they could continue their therapy with the Slough EMBRACE team when the service moved online.

EMBRACE is a therapeutic programme that supports individuals who have experienced complex emotional intensity problems.



The feedback from those given devices speaks for itself ▼

“I’ve been missing the group so much and I am so appreciative of you for organising this.”

‘AM’ (service user)

“Absolutely wonderful, like being reborn, a whole new way of life. Words cannot express what you guys have done for me.”

‘SE’ (service user)

“This is quite exceptional: it will really make a difference for him. He is all alone in his room and this will help him to re-connect with people.”

‘JL’ (carer of service user)

## Telephone assessments for older people



The Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre (ARC) is a specialist outpatient service for older people, designed to reduce the likelihood of a patient being hospitalised, which was more important than ever when the pandemic started.

Many of these patients wouldn't have been comfortable using video call technology, such as OneConsultation, so **Dr Biru Jha, Associate Specialist**, started carrying out telephone appointments to assess what problems they were having. After this, nurses and physiotherapists would attend the patient in their home, sometimes with a live video link so Dr Jha could see any visible issues, such as in how they were walking, speaking or holding things, for himself.

This new way of working turned out to be much faster than before, since physiotherapists and nurses could go to the patient as soon as possible, rather than the patient waiting for weeks to get a hospital appointment.



## iPads for inpatients

Inpatients at West Berkshire Community Hospital were given access to iPads so they could have video calls with family and friends during their stay.

This contact was invaluable for keeping spirits up as visitors weren't allowed.

In a letter to **Sarah Hopes, Matron at Donnington Ward**, the daughter of a patient who passed away on the ward wrote that she and her mother "thoroughly enjoyed" speaking via the iPad.



# Weekly emails for people with learning disabilities

The pandemic caused people with learning disabilities to lose access to their normal social activities, such as groups and day centres, leading to an increase in anxiety and challenging behaviour, as well as loss of motivation and skills.

As the number of calls into the Community Teams for People with Learning Disabilities (CTPLD) almost doubled, occupational therapists (OTs) across the county came together online and pooled resources to support patients and their carers by providing information, activities and exercises via email to prevent boredom.

The first email went to 140 addresses, but, within a few months, this number went up to 250 and the service saw a decrease of 65.6% in complaints about lack of activities and groups, while the emails got lots of positive feedback. They were also forwarded beyond Berkshire as other OTs

throughout England and Ireland requested to receive the email too so they could share it with their own clients.

**Blandine Carpentier**, who spearheaded the idea, said, "I want to thank all health professionals who shared resources with me and who are still gathering resources to make sure clients receive new activities every week, enabling me to set up this programme and keep it running."

Although the emails were initially designed as a temporary solution, the team are now looking at other ways to bring their clients together digitally, longer term.

"My son REALLY liked looking at any information about the virus. I'm amazed at the effort that everyone has gone to, to keep in touch with us and try to help, when other activities have stopped."

"The weekly activity sheets have been a good idea as this indicated regular support that was reassuring. He was specifically interested in the colouring-in sheets including the colour-by-number sheets. I found some of the carer information interesting, mainly reassuring me that I was up to date with the information. Thank you to all the OTs for their constant support and interest."

Mother of a service user

This image was taken before COVID-19.





## Fast action from Estates and Facilities

Behind the scenes, our Estates and Facilities staff had to manage a lot of changes and new developments to make sure frontline staff could provide safe care to a growing number of patients.

### Wokingham oxygen system

There had been concern for some time about the resilience of the **oxygen system** at Wokingham Community Hospital so it was agreed before the pandemic that it should be replaced with a new and improved system. As we became aware of COVID-19, the project was expedited so that it was ready for this unprecedented usage.

### Sourcing more beds

We'd never had so many inpatients, and so we urgently needed more beds at Prospect Park Hospital and West Berkshire Community Hospital to accommodate our COVID-19 patients.

The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust allowed us to borrow some of theirs and so our Estates and Facilities team were quickly put into action transporting these vital assets until late into night.



### Drive-thru flu clinic

Flu vaccinations still needed to take place, but the usual set-ups of people queuing inside, close together, and being directed into small rooms to receive their jab wasn't an option.

With Ascot Racecourse being closed to its usual audiences, it was turned into a drive-thru clinic. Being in the open air with all their PPE, meant the risk of the COVID-19 virus being passed to or from our vaccinators, was minimal.



## Managing PPE stocks

Something that certainly transformed was our main PPE store.

The first picture, above, shows how it looked after our first delivery in lockdown, then the second shows how crowded it got two weeks in!

Lots of PPE was donated by businesses and local people. You can read more about that further on in this book.

In just the first four months, our Estates and Facilities team managed and distributed around **four million items of PPE**.



## Maintaining flow of patients

Two discharge lounges, one at Upton Hospital and the other at St Mark's Hospital, were set up within three days, to support the flow of patients from acute to community beds, and then to discharge home.

The purpose of the discharge lounges was to free up beds as quickly as possible for patients from acute hospitals, in turn, making more beds available at nearby acute hospitals, such as Frimley Park and Royal Berkshire.

The expectation was that as soon as a patient was well enough they'd be discharged from the ward within an hour so that the bed could be prepared for another patient while they waited for transport. They'd then leave the lounge within two hours to maintain the flow.

The lounges were set up in the gymnasium areas, which had to be stripped back and suitably equipped.

As well as the discharge lounges, a safety netting process was set up to support both patients discharged from the lounge and also those straight from our community beds. These patients were contacted within 24 hours for welfare checks from either a doctor, clinician or support staff, with the aim of avoiding readmission by ensuring they had access to everything they needed.



# Redefining our roles



Many of our staff helped their colleagues on the frontline by stepping into different roles to provide a much-needed extra pair of hands.

## Taking on new challenges



### Tamsin Rycroft

Tamsin Rycroft, Operational Lead for the early years speech and language therapy service, volunteered to do additional hours, taking on the role of Healthcare Assistant on Highclere Ward at West Berkshire Community Hospital.

“Although I have never done anything like this before, there were plenty of tasks that I could assist with, including moving beds, cleaning, assisting with personal care, putting together new patient files, making tea and handing out meals.”

### Jenny Hall

Only a month prior to the lockdown, **Jenny Hall**, a **specialist mental health nurse (RMN)** in the ‘proactive’ branch of our Newbury Integrated Care Home Service (ICHS), completed a physical assessment course to become a prescriber alongside her usual duties. At the start of lockdown, she volunteered to put her newly gained theory into practice by moving to the ‘reactive’ branch of the ICHS – the Rapid Response and Treatment (RRaT) team.

“It was like walking across quicksand,” Jenny said about making the swap from mental health nursing to the RRaT team, “It was a massively steep learning curve, but I had a very supportive team. If I was thrown a curve ball, I could call them.”





## Lynsey Odofin

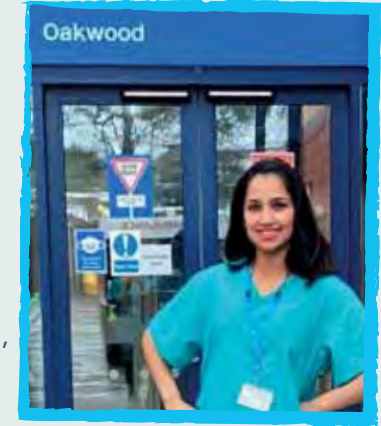
**Lynsey Odofin**, Innovation and Engagement Support Co-ordinator, was redeployed twice to provide support 'behind the scenes'. In April 2020 she supported the Workforce Development Lead, providing reporting and data analytics on staff who could be redeployed, as well as carrying out analysis on safe staffing levels. Then in December 2020, she supported the COVID-19 Vaccine team by providing admin support at vaccine clinics, monitoring the inbox and answering queries.



Lynsey said, "I felt very proud and honoured to be part of it all."

## Aminah Khan

**Aminah Khan**, Credit Control Officer, Finance, had never worked in a clinical environment before when she volunteered for redeployment to Oakwood ward, Prospect Park Hospital, into a role that involved discharge planning and helping patients keep in contact with their family members during their stay.



Aminah described her redeployment as "a once in a lifetime, heart-warming experience".

## Ginny Garnett

Ginny Garnett, our Head of Community Children's Services, explains why she got back in uniform to help our teams in the fight against COVID-19:

"I was last on a traditional type of ward in 1982, and though much has changed, what I've discovered is that the principles of caring for other human beings have not. We need to first listen and understand our patients' needs and deliver care that respects their wishes and dignity in line with best practice."





## Campion Unit

Due to changes in other Learning Disability services, several staff were redeployed to Campion Unit, while the existing team worked extra shifts and filled in for colleagues who were ill or self-isolating.

This enabled the patients to continue with their daily routines and activities as normal and have additional support when it was needed. Activities included yoga and Zumba classes, cooking and even a treasure hunt in the hospital grounds. None of this would've been possible without the support of the on-site facilities team and the team wanted to thank **Sony from the Catering team** in particular, as he kept them well fed!

**Blandine Vasset, Occupational Therapist**, who moved out of her home temporarily, leaving her husband to care for their two-year-old son, said, "I was made to feel welcome with smiles and thanks. I felt safe and it was a pleasure to work on the Campion Unit and engage the clients in new activities."

## Dental team redeployment

Being used to working with mouths, the dentistry team were a natural fit for swabbing people at COVID-19 test centres.

COVID-19 restrictions meant all dental services were suspended. Unlike other services, there was no way of moving the service online or putting social distancing measures in place, so, while a small core team were still providing emergency dental care, most of the team were redeployed to swab people at testing centres in Newbury, Ascot and Reading, while others worked on wards as healthcare assistants.

**Suki Dosanjh, Gifty Palmer, Madi Zafar, and Natalie Sheriff** went to the Henry Tudor ward at St Mark's Hospital and worked as healthcare assistants for eight weeks. They said it was an "emotional journey for all of us, but we came out of it stronger and better".

**Helen Williamson, Head of Community Nursing, Integrated Services and Inpatients (East)**, gave the following feedback: "I know it has not been easy and a completely different speciality from dental, almost a world apart. Faced with this pandemic you put our patients and our Henry Tudor Team first. It is truly commendable what you have done for us."



"Being redeployed has been a positive experience – the team I am working with have been very welcoming and I feel like I am doing something useful."

**Jasmine Davey, Dental Officer**  
(redeployed to swab NHS staff)



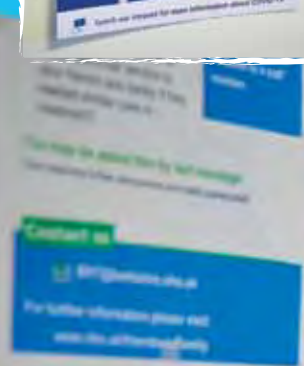
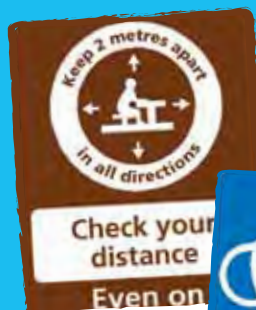
## Keeping staff and patients safe

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) has always been a key element for staff and patient safety, but it has been pushed to the forefront in the last 18 months.

The team had to adapt with the evolving nature of the virus to provide prompt clinical advice as new evidence became available and national guidance was constantly changing, and this meant providing extended working hours and a 7 day service.

Live and recorded training sessions were provided, alongside visits to clinical teams and a programme of virtual Q&As that aimed to understand and address staff anxieties, both personally and professionally. PPE supporters were introduced within teams, particularly for redeployed staff.

IPC also played a critical role in resuming a safe service provision in the active and recovery stages of the pandemic, and worked closely with partners, both locally and nationally, to deliver a safety agenda.





## Estates and Facilities

Our Estates and Facilities team have been busy during COVID-19 and here's some of the things they've achieved:

- Put up new signage at 50 sites and screens at receptions to keep people safe
- Over 100 cleaners have kept our sites clean and hygienic
- Managed a new storage system and distributed around four million items of PPE
- Delivered hundreds of hours of fire safety training for redeployed staff
- Made sure we have enough oxygen cylinders for our patients
- Increased our training and learning space at no cost
- Completed the £4m refurbishment of Erlegh House in Reading

Ian Greggor, Director of Estates and Facilities, said "Our team has had some massive challenges – they've had to learn new skills, take on new responsibilities and work in very different ways. But through all of that they've continued to achieve a very high standard in all the things this team does. I'm hugely grateful to all of those who have consistently gone 'above and beyond'.



### Bee-yond the call of duty...

Even when Estates and Facilities were faced with the unusually sticky incident of a bee colony turning up at Wokingham Community Hospital, our **Interim Estates Manager, David Bascombe**, who is luckily a keen apiarist, was able to take them to join his existing colonies.

Ian Greggor, did confirm, "the honey he brought back later that year was very nice!"



## Celebrating our Admin teams

Our administrative staff and volunteers are the backbone of many services, and this was particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic.

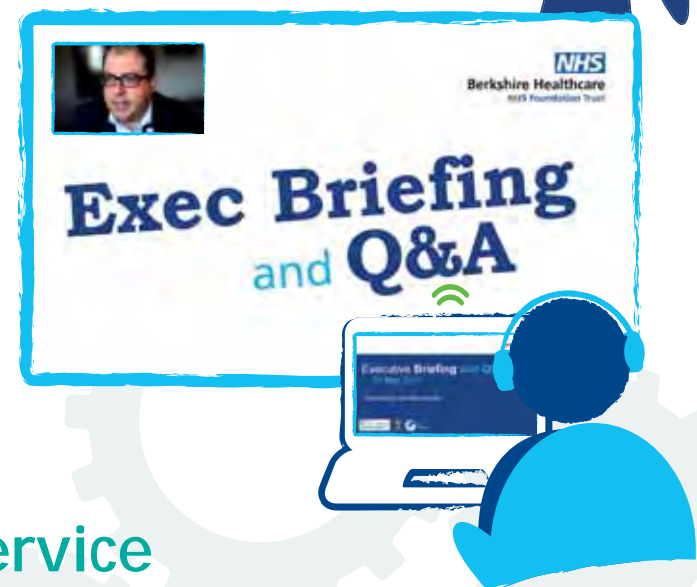
They made sure PPE and other supplies got to the right people as soon as possible, filtered referrals to support our healthcare assistants and nurses, helped deliver requests for data, supported service reviews, and made sure everyone got an equal share of the goodwill donations received from the public and businesses.



## All staff Executive Briefings and Q&As

We started our 'all staff' Exec Briefings using Microsoft Teams back in March 2020, with over 3,000 joining us for updates on the latest COVID-19 issues.

Since then, we've reduced the frequency of our Exec Briefings to every month but expanded the conversation to include updates on new and relevant topics from across our organisation. These have become invaluable and we're still seeing on average 1,000 of our staff joining live each month, with more staff able to watch the recording afterwards.



## Wellbeing Service

We developed the bones of our Wellbeing Matters service during the first wave of COVID-19, with the full service being available to all health and social care staff in Berkshire, since June 2021.

Our new service website is full of self-help information and resources on a range of mental health topics, as well as advice and guidance for managers who may be supporting team members. Staff who need extra support can call our confidential Wellbeing Line and speak to one of our team or get fast access to any psychological support they might need.

**Dr Bridget Gemal, Head of Psychological Therapies said:** "Since April 2020, we have held 273 wellbeing hubs in Berkshire for over 1,000 health and social care workers. 98% of staff completing feedback on the hubs said they felt heard and understood. Many staff call our Wellbeing Line for support too. But we'd like to help many more."

# Part of our local community

It's never been so apparent how integral the NHS is to our local communities and many individuals, groups and businesses stepped up to help ensure we could keep going.



## Sewing success

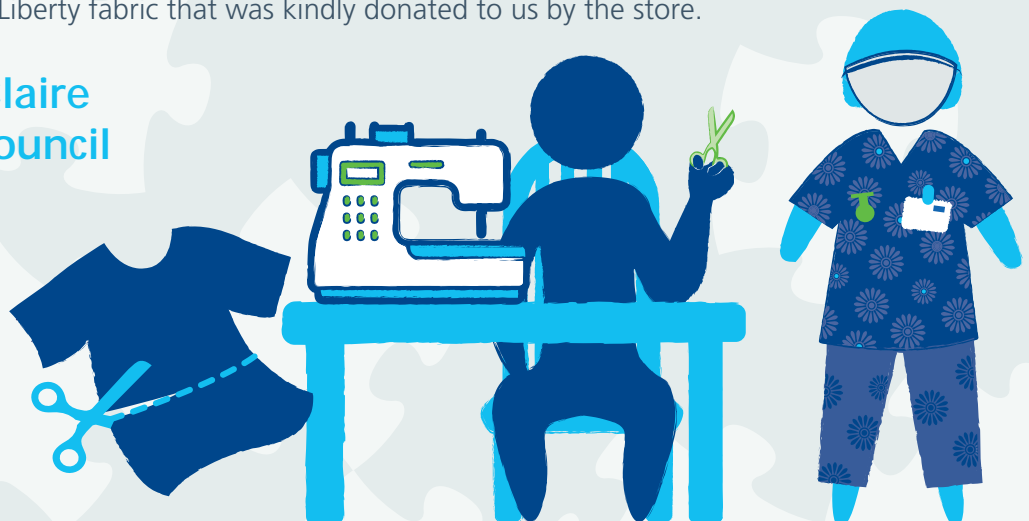
Personal protective equipment (PPE) was a national issue but, luckily for us, people and organisations across Berkshire came together to produce and donate PPE to our services.

**Claire Bird of Birdhouse Creations** led a team of volunteers who produced thousands of scrubs – well over 80% of the sets that we received during the first wave.

Initially Claire raised funds for fabric by selling rainbows to support the NHS, things took off after Claire secured sponsorship from the Greenham Trust and we were able to pass on a huge quantity of Liberty fabric that was kindly donated to us by the store.

In recognition of her efforts, Claire received the West Berkshire Council Volunteer Award.

More donations of PPE came from businesses, individuals, and groups like Claire's.







## Donations that brightened our day

In addition to PPE, we received so many donations from individuals, groups and organisations to help us and our patients cope during the pandemic:

- Beko very generously provided microwaves, kettles, and tumble dryers that went out to Trust sites across the county
- When panic buying meant shelves were empty Waitrose sent us bags of vegetables
- BMW loaned us five cars which were used to deliver personal protective equipment (PPE) and help staff get around and visit patients



# Volunteers

We were overwhelmed by the sheer number of people in Berkshire who came forward and offered to volunteer with us.

Here are just a few examples of how they helped us:

- **Wellbeing calls** - Checking in over the phone with our most vulnerable and isolated patients to make sure they were coping and give them a chance to talk and feel connected to the outside world
- **Patient safety at site entrances** - To prevent the spread of COVID-19 on our wards, volunteers were stationed at the entrances to our hospitals, giving advice and handing out masks as necessary
- **Driving** - Our team of volunteer drivers helped us by transporting prescriptions, medications, PPE and shopping for patients and services, freeing up staff at our hospitals and care homes so they could focus on patients'/residents' needs instead



Our volunteers received one of the highest honours (often thought of as the MBE for this sector) in the form of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS).

This award recognises the outstanding achievements of volunteer groups and puts a spotlight on the time, skills and energy that our volunteers continue to devote to the benefit of others.







## Our award-winning Therapy Gardeners

Our team of volunteer gardeners at West Berkshire Community Hospital won Community Group of the Year award.

The award was part of the Council's 2020 Community Champion Awards, which celebrated the valuable contributions made by volunteers and groups to improve the lives of people in West Berkshire.

Our volunteers' hard work means many patients can enjoy a lovely view from their window and can go outside for fresh air and to safely meet friends and family.

## Peer Mentors move online

Volunteer Peer Mentors helped create 'Virtual' Hope College so that mental health education workshops could continue online through lockdown.

Hope College workshops equip people with the skills needed to help them improve their mental health. Volunteer Peer Mentors play an essential role, developing and running these workshops and helping with any administrative and technical issues. They offer the unique support that only someone with lived experience can to clients struggling through difficult times. When face-to-face sessions return, Virtual Hope College will continue so that we can provide a hybrid model with both remote and in-person sessions.

**Vickie Miller, Development Lead for the Slough Community Mental Health Team, said: "Through the thick and thin of this past year, our Volunteer Peer Mentors have absolutely shone. They've kept each other going, they've kept service users going, they've kept Hope College going. Thank you to them all!"**



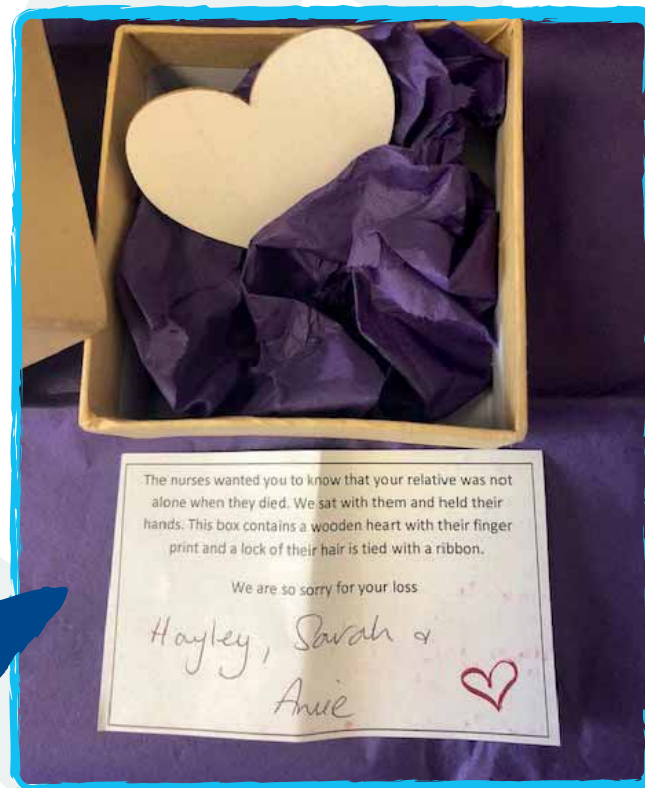


## Thanks to Donnington Ward staff

Sarah Hopes, Ward Matron for the Donnington ward at West Berkshire Community Hospital, came up with the thoughtful idea of sending a memory box to families who sadly lost a loved one during the first wave of COVID-19.

Each memory box contained a wooden heart with the patient's fingerprint, a lock of their hair and a personal note from our nurses who directly cared for them. Sarah's team have also crocheted hearts which are sent to the next of kin, while one is kept with the patient. **Sarah said,** " We've had such great feedback from families, saying how comforting and kind these boxes have been"

"I cannot find the words to express enough gratitude to all the staff on Donnington Ward... To know Mum passed away so peacefully with no distress and no suffering will be an enormous comfort to me for the rest of my life. I will always be eternally grateful for the warm and loving care you gave to Mum."



## Message to a loved one

Liz Chapman, Head of Service Engagement and Experience, and Gurpreet Athwal, Patient Experience Facilitator, launched 'Message to a loved one' in May 2020 as visitors weren't allowed on the ward to see their loved one during their stay in hospital.

Personal messages were received from families, friends, and carers of patients from all over the UK and even as far as South Africa, Canada and Australia. The messages often included photos of family, pets and memories from days out.

The feedback from families has been very positive ▼

"This 'Message to a loved one' is a brilliant idea - like many brilliant ideas, it is simple, works well, and gets good results."



# Praise for our Integrated Care Home Service (ICHS)

Debbie Simmons, Director of Nursing, Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), wrote in a letter:

“The CCG would like to acknowledge the exceptional care, commitment and achievements that the Integrated Care Home Service has demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic... this team’s dedication, long hours, flexible availability, out of hours discussion, and consistent attendance at meetings between clinical assessments and internal staff shortages in the acute period was nothing short of excellent practice”

**Thank  
you**

## Top feedback for our nurseries

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our three nurseries in Berkshire - Kiddie’s Cabin, Little Dragons and Jack in the Box - have stayed open, providing vital care for children of key workers in Berkshire, including staff working for the NHS.

Despite the challenges of maintaining a service while also protecting both children and our staff from COVID-19, **Little Dragons** and **Jack in the Box** both received very high scores on [daynurseries.co.uk](https://www.daynurseries.co.uk) (an independent rating agency), making them the highest rated in their area and across the county. In April 2021, **Kiddies’ Cabin** ranked sixth in their area.

**Little Dragons:** 9.9/10

Bath Road, Reading

**Jack in the Box:** 9.9/10

Upton Hospital

**Kiddies’ Cabin:** 9.7/10

St Mark’s Hospital







## Project Wingman

Project Wingman is run by aviation workers and has been visiting different hospitals offering NHS staff first class airline treatment in a luxury space where they can rest and recharge.

An incredible 6,500 airline crew that had been furloughed due to the pandemic answered the call for volunteers for the 'Wingman Wheels', or 'WellBee' as it's otherwise known.

WellBee arrived at Prospect Park Hospital on 1 June 2021, and came again to West Berkshire Community Hospital on 1 November 2021, staying for two weeks each time. Staff were encouraged to go along to decompress and have a chat and some refreshments in a different setting to the hospital.

## NHS superheroes plaques

Johnathon Whittaker of Carved by Hand, based in Plymouth, sent beautifully handmade wooden plaques to a few of our sites.

In a letter that came with the plaque for Wokingham Community Hospital, Johnathon and his partner, Christie, wrote, "We hope that this acts as a morale boost for you all, every time you see it, and a reminder that everyone's efforts in a time like we've never experienced before, are so very appreciated. We are extremely lucky to have you all protecting us. You are all superheroes."





## Curry for COVID

Dr Raja Natarajan, one of our consultant psychiatrists, responded to the Covid crisis in India by starting an inspired crowd-funding project called “Curry for Covid – Hurry to help”.

By cooking and delivering 400 boxes of curry – following his grandmother’s special recipe – to our hospital staff, Raja managed to raise thousands of pounds to support as many mild-moderately unwell people in India as possible to self-quarantine, funding the necessary medical and food supplies to help stop the spread of the disease and ease the pressure on ICU beds.

Dr Raja said, “COVID knows no boundaries – neither does compassion. This is a great opportunity for us to spread compassion, care and love through these small acts of kindness to let people know that we care”.



## 75 Marathons in 85 days for charity!

Tom Crossland, Clinical Psychologist and Team Lead for our Intensive Support Team in the Learning Disability service, decided to run a staggering 1,900 miles to raise awareness of the trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable refugees, raising money along the way for the Tribe Freedom Foundation and their goal of ending modern slavery.

Tom shared, “Working to support vulnerable people has always been important to me. The original idea, of running the 1,900 miles from Greece to the UK, came from the refugee crisis. Modern slavery can happen anywhere, but refugees are at a higher risk of trafficking and exploitation. It’s pure luck I was born in the UK to parents who could care for me and I never needed to escape somewhere”.

## Cycling for the NHS

Following a health scare back in 2012, Simon Graves, Storekeeper with our Estates and Facilities team, managed to transform his life and lose five stone through Slimming World.

Simon usually keeps himself in shape by joining his weekly Parkrun but, due to COVID-19, these were suspended. Instead he decided to take up the ‘Anyway May Ultra Challenge’ and raise money for the NHS by riding 300 kilometres on his bike in just one month (which he actually exceeded!).



# Moving forward



COVID-19 didn't bring us to a standstill - we've continued to develop and improve the healthcare we provide across Berkshire.

## Delivering the COVID-19 vaccine

Over 166 days, our amazing vaccinators gave 33,796 vaccines to 17,500 local health and social care staff, volunteers, and key workers.

"Our record day was Super Saturday, when there were 1,170 appointments," said Charlotte Church, Lead Nurse for the vaccination clinic, "Even between 12 nurses, that's nearly 100 vaccines each!"

While nurses were keeping patients moving through the clinic, Estates and Facilities were providing transport, managing car parks, and making sure the buildings were ready for use.

**Cathy Beresford, Senior Diabetes Specialist Nurse and Research Nurse,** trained as a vaccinator in 2020 as part of her research role, and decided to support the national vaccination programme in her spare time.

To all our peer vaccinators and everyone else involved in running the vaccination hub – thank you!



▲ Cathy's husband was in safe hands when he was called for his job.



# A royal thank you

In February 2021, **staff nurse Julie Henwood** had the opportunity to have a one-to-one call with **His Royal Highness, The Duke of Cambridge**, about what it was like to be part of the vaccination programme.

**Julie said, “He sounded so genuinely interested in my experience and how my team were coping with the pressure.”**

The Duke thanked everyone working on the programme for doing such an incredible job, describing it as a **“Herculean effort”** to have rolled out the vaccine so quickly.



## Military response

Eight military personnel were deployed to provide support at the vaccination centre in Wokingham and at Prospect Park Hospital. Their duties included traffic management and helping on the wards with patient liaison and discharges. They even did lunch and tea rounds!

The much-needed support relieved some of the pressure from frontline staff. The military presence really lifted the spirits of our patients and staff alike, and we're truly grateful to them for helping us to deal with the pandemic.





## Research contributions

Our research team played a critical role in supporting the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to carry out studies about urgent public health issues related to COVID-19.

This included supporting two vaccine trials in Oxford, developed by Novavax and The Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson.

**Katie Warner, our Head of Research and Development, said:**

“I’m so proud of the huge collaborative effort across the region, which we hope will mark the start of a new era of closer partnership working. Thanks to the commitment, energy and determination of our research team to the vaccine trials and other projects, we’re now third in the country compared with similar Trusts for the number of research opportunities we offer.”



“I have been enjoying working on the vaccine trials and feel honoured to have been part of the process in the innovation for such an essential cause”

**Susan Dhiwayo, Research Nurse**  
(Contributed the most hours to the Janssen study)



## Life after lockdown

A new four-week online course was launched in August 2021 for people who feel worried about aspects of life, such as social contact, working from home, mask wearing and overseas travel, after government restrictions were scaled back.

The course has been developed by psychologists from our Talking Therapies team, and consists of a series of video tutorials which use NICE recommended approaches to notice and manage patterns in your thinking or behaviour. These are then complemented by tasks designed to help apply the theory to life and learn techniques to use when there are early warning signs of anxiety

“The pandemic has transformed our lives,” says **Dr Alison Salvadori, Head of Talking Therapies and Consultant Clinical Psychologist**, “Whether you’ve lost a loved one, a job, or seen the pandemic as an opportunity to re-assess your priorities in life, and your focus, it’s normal to feel concern about what life will look like once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.”

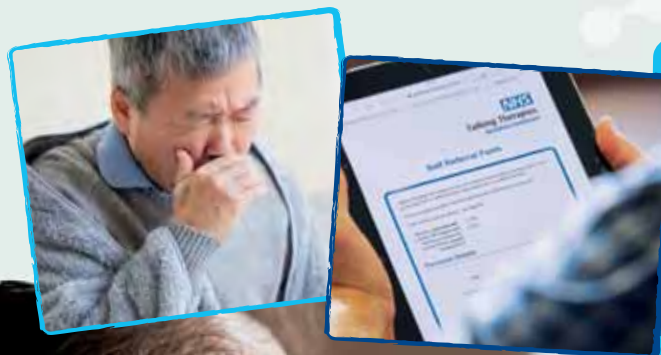


## Improving respiratory health in people with learning disabilities

The creation of the Respiratory Health Pathway (RHP) began in October 2018 and was accelerated when the pandemic struck as it was needed more than ever.

The RHP was proposed after a National Learning Disability Mortality review highlighted that about a third of people with learning disabilities had pneumonia cited as a cause of death. The outbreak of COVID-19 meant its development had to be sped up.

A working group of physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, dieticians and nurses devised a set of tools and guidance to help carers and families recognise, understand and address the health needs of people with learning disabilities. Online training started in Autumn 2020, alongside the development of champions in the community teams, and the working group is continuously meeting to adapt and improve the tools.



### Living well with 'Long COVID'

A growing number of people are living with the long-term physical and mental health impacts of Long COVID.

As our understanding of this condition has increased, our Talking Therapies and Respiratory Health teams have been working together to treat people who are experiencing mental health difficulties linked to their recovery.

The Talking Therapies team already works closely with various community teams to help people to live well with long-term conditions, such as MS, diabetes, cancer or arthritis and manage the negative impact these conditions can have on mental wellbeing.

The service adapted this work to set up bespoke Long COVID clinics, which are believed to be one of the first of its kind in this area.

## The future of our Services...

### Mental Health teams

Throughout COVID-19, our Community Mental Health services have continued to provide quality treatment and support to adults with severe and enduring mental health problems and their carers.

The teams have rallied together to focus their efforts on both recruiting and retaining valuable team members by developing their people skills, improving their overall performance, and sustaining the gains made within their services.

And they continue to introduce a wider range of services that focus on our patients needs, such as the **Individual Placement and Support service (IPS)** to support with employment, an essential part in people's recovery and wellbeing - and to integrate with the wider health and care system to provide better quality healthcare in Berkshire.



### Corporate services

As well as many staff from our corporate services volunteering to step into patient-facing roles to support the response to Covid-19, they also played an important part behind the scenes in supporting frontline services.

Our **Human Resources** function made sure we had the right people in the right place by setting up the redeployment bureau, **Finance and Procurement** found alternative ways to obtain PPE and other important supplies when our usual routes were unable to provide these. Our **Marketing and Communications team** managed donations, set up fundraisers to provide shopping supplies and other essentials for front line workers, launched new Covid-19 sections across our websites to keep patients and the public up to date, as well as providing daily updates to staff with important guidance and information. Our **IM&T service** urgently sourced, set up and delivered equipment (which was in short supply across the country) to enable staff to effectively switch to home working and were instrumental in the rollout of OneConsultation.

We're already talked about the contribution of our **Estates and Facilities** and **Research and Development teams**, overall, our Corporate Services played a key role in the various Covid-19 workstreams, as well as helping staff to adapt to new technologies, learn new skills, and improve practices.





## Community Health teams (East and West)

Our community health services have embraced change at speed.

In the west of Berkshire, the new Hospital Discharge team was developed and the national 'Home First' initiative to rehabilitate patients at home wherever possible was introduced. Services in the west have also delivered the new Urgent Community Response pathways for patients under the 'Ageing Well' project.

In the east of the county, although many staff members were redeployed to directly support the COVID-19 effort, teams have still managed to make significant changes to their services to improve the care delivered. This has included providing help to our patients so they can practice self-care at home (and in care homes).

Improvements remain ongoing, including a focus on addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

## In recognition...

### Historic - the George Cross is awarded to the NHS

The George Cross is awarded by a reigning monarch for 'acts of the greatest heroism or of the most courage in circumstances of extreme danger'.

In July 2021, **Queen Elizabeth II** awarded the NHS of the United Kingdom the George Cross, which is only the third occasion when it has been given to a collective body, country or organisation. She made the announcement along with a handwritten note of thanks:

"It is with great pleasure, on behalf of a grateful nation, that I award the George Cross to the National Health Services of the United Kingdom. This award recognises all NHS staff, past and present, across all disciplines and all four nations. Over more than seven decades, and especially in recent times, you have supported the people of our country with courage, compassion and dedication, demonstrating the highest standards of public service. You have our enduring thanks and heartfelt appreciation".

**ELIZABETH R.**





## In memory of...

While this book is dedicated to all of our staff and volunteers who worked through the pandemic, it is also an opportunity to remember and give thanks to those we have lost.

### Freda Mawi

Freda Mawi worked at Prospect Park Hospital on Rowan Ward when she sadly passed away due to COVID-19.

Freda was an NHS Professional support worker, a second year nursing student, a wife, mother and an aunt. A memorial bench, dedicated to Freda, has been placed in the hospital gardens, and a small ceremony was held in her honour.

### Usman Sesay



Usman Sesay, 56, was a much loved and well-respected member of the Thames Valley Liaison and Diversion team.

Usman joined the Trust as a social worker in 2010 and in 2016 joined Liaison and Diversion, working mainly in police custody, supporting vulnerable people moving through the criminal justice system. **Usman described his job as:** "A combination of social work and mental health care. A lot of my clients have never felt listened to. Making an impact or a difference to someone's life is the most rewarding thing you can do. It's a priceless opportunity. I have this chance every day."

Our thoughts are with the family, friends and colleagues of Freda, Usman and all the staff members who we've sadly lost over this period.

### Captain Tom Moore

Captain Sir Thomas Moore became a figure of hope and courage during the pandemic, winning the hearts of the nation as he walked to raise money for the NHS in the run-up to his 100th birthday.

Tom's initial plan was to do 100 laps of his garden - 5km in total - before his 100th birthday and raise £1,000 for NHS charities while doing so. **£38.9 million** later, Tom had inspired a whole nation, and drawn praise and admiration from across the world.

We thank Captain Tom, not only for his fundraising, but for reassuring us that "Tomorrow will be a good day".



## Health Bus

Some of the charitable funds raised by Captain Sir Thomas Moore, alongside supplemental funding from the Trust, is being used to launch a 'Health Bus'.

**Nicky Smith, Health Inequalities Nurse, CYPF**, submitted a Bright Idea for a bus to go out into the communities across Berkshire, with the aim of reducing health inequalities for people who (for a range of reasons) struggle to access or engage with our services.

**£50,000 is coming from charitable funds raised by Captain Tom**, the Trust signed off additional funding for five years. Initially, the main focus will be on immunisations, but it's highly likely that other services will be able to make use of the bus during this initial period.

Some ideas for the buses use include:

- Catch-up immunisation clinics
- Health visitor feeding advice/drop-in sessions
- Speech and Language Therapy drop-in clinics
- Service roadshows – raising awareness
- Attendance at big events, such as Reading Pride and the Newbury Show





Thank you,  
for being  
outstanding





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