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# Annual General Meeting

## Questions

23 September 2020

### **Are you concerned about the news that a lot of nurses are thinking of leaving due to exhaustion?**

Jane Nicholson, Interim Director of People, answered:

It's always concerning to hear that nurses may leave the NHS due to exhaustion. As a Trust, we always have a focus on the wellbeing of our nurses and all of our staff, particularly so during COVID-19. For that reason, we've continued to encourage our staff to take their holidays so that they can benefit from a break away from work.

We have also developed an enhanced staff wellbeing support offer to help our staff during the pressures of COVID-19. This was staffed by our own psychological support experts and we're continuing to offer this provision.

[Read about our national wellbeing support service](#) that's available for our staff.

### **Despite its place on the health and wealth spectrum, Wokingham seems to have a high incidence of depression (almost 12%). Is action being taken on this to support and enable primary care as the incidence is likely to increase due to COVID-19?**

Julian Emms, Chief Executive, responded:

We're expecting an increase in demand for our services, although uncertain on the exact size of that, we anticipate levels of anxiety and depression going up.

Our Talking Therapies service is our friendly and approachable NHS service that offers support if you're coping with challenges like depression, stress, anxiety and phobias. 1.2 million individuals were seen by Talking Therapies last year across the UK, and over 10,000 in Berkshire.

There has been additional investment put in to Talking Therapies, including in Berkshire, where we expect to be able to increase our capacity by 15%. We believe we will be able to meet increasing demand, including in Wokingham. We will do this through a variety of platforms, including face to face, digital, and online.

[Visit our Talking Therapies website](#) for more information.

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## **36 staff assaults per month sounds dreadful. What do you think is causing them?**

Jane Nicholson, and Julian Emms, answered:

No, staff assaults are never acceptable. We have a programme of work looking at the reasons for staff assaults and how we reduce these.

To provide context behind these assaults, we treat people who often have severe mental health issues and that are admitted in a distressed state, sometimes without full capacity over their actions. The majority of assaults take place on two wards, Sorrel Ward, our psychiatric intensive care unit, and Champion unit, which is our behavioural unit for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Our staff sometimes experience assaults on our Older Adults' Wards, where people might have dementia.

## **How have you reduced agency – are you offering agency style flexibility?**

Jane Nicholson, replied:

We have reduced agency by transferring to the use of fixed term contracts or increasing our use of our NHSP staff bank.

## **Whilst there's much to be applauded in the development of remote working capabilities, how do you plan to address the needs of new staff / younger staff who need to focus on learning and development?**

Jane Nicholson, answered:

Although we have moved to remote working, we have continued to provide learning and development throughout the COVID-19 period. Where possible, we offer our training online, but for training that must be delivered face to face, we're following Government guidelines and ensuring social distancing and other safety measures to mitigate risks to our staff.

[Read our article](#) to find out how we're meeting our new staff's training needs with social distancing.

## **Have you done any research into what would keep staff and reduce staff turnover?**

Jane Nicholson, responded:

Yes, we've done a lot work and investigation on this in the last few months. It's also the focus of a lot of the Quality Improvement work that we have been doing and will form the basis of some of our new People Strategy, which we're developing alongside the new Trust Strategy.

We know that these are two big areas of concern that we are focusing on, particularly around people leaving for career opportunities and work life balance. We're working to try to understand how we can resolve this, and provide the career opportunities and work life balance that they want.

**Thank you for all your questions.**

