



Pulse magazine

January
2024

StarCard winners, Radiation Protection Team - see page 6

Welcome!

A happy New Year to each of you and I hope, that despite a very busy period of the year, you all managed to get a break and spend some time with your families.

Welcome to this January edition of Pulse, the first of 2024 and allow me to introduce myself. I joined RBFT In October 2023 as a Non-Executive Director and as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and am very pleased and excited to be working with you for such a great organisation.



Over this winter period alone, I can only be impressed with the energy, skill and dedication given by the whole Royal Berks team to ensuring our services meet the ever-increasing patient demand while maintaining the high levels of quality care – amazing.

This month's magazine focuses on our patients and staff with articles relating to safe and timely patient discharge, helping others stay well during the winter period, the response to the Gift Tree appeal and recognition of staff contribution through the Chief Nursing Officer Awards and the StarCard scheme.

I hope you find it useful and of interest and I look forward to meeting many members of our community in the coming months.

Mike McEnaney
Non-Executive Director

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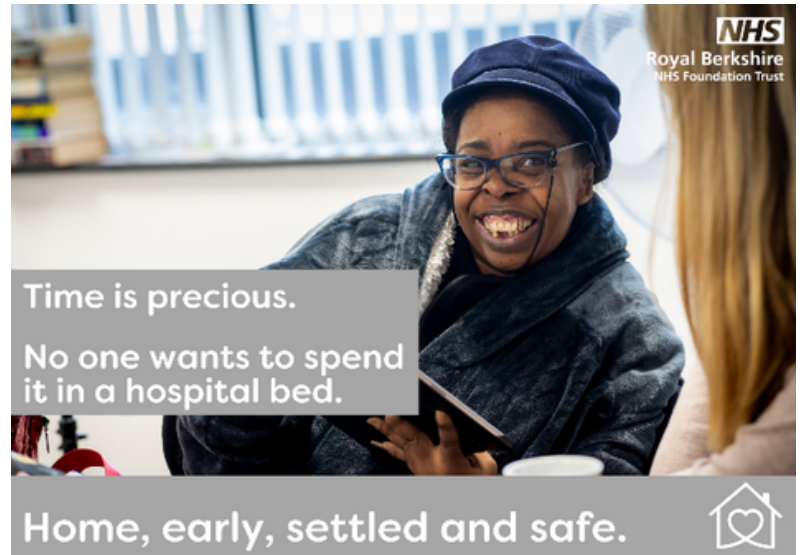
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Time is precious. No one wants to spend it in hospital

Once well, hospital is not the best place for your loved one. You can help us get them home by organising transport and arranging to collect them early in the day.

As well as this, making sure their home is warm, facilities are working, and that there's food in, makes it easier for your loved ones to get settled back home and continue their recovery.

And don't forget to let the services they rely on, including any pharmacy deliveries, know that they are back home too. You can find more information on our website: [Help us free up hospital beds | Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#)



How to help others stay well this winter



Keep in touch with vulnerable friends, neighbours and family and check if they need any practical help, or if they're feeling unwell:

- Make sure they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, in case they cannot go out.
- If they do need to go out in the cold, encourage them to wear shoes with a good grip and a scarf around the mouth to protect

them from cold air, and reduce their risk of chest infections.

- If bad weather is forecast make sure they're stocked up with prescription medicines and any over the counter medications and medical supplies they may need.
- If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, [contact your local council](#) or call the Age UK helpline on 0800 678 1602 (8am to 7pm every day).

Flu and Covid-19 vaccinations

It's important to get your seasonal flu and Covid-19 vaccinations if you're at higher risk of getting seriously ill from these illnesses. You may be able get the flu and Covid vaccines if you:

- are aged 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2024)
- have certain health conditions or a learning disability
- are pregnant
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system

- are a carer
- are a frontline health or social care worker
- live in a care home

Most children can get the [children's flu vaccine](#).

There's more information on how to get flu, Covid and pneumococcal (to protect against pneumonia) vaccines on the NHS website: [Seasonal vaccinations and winter health](#)

Get advice if you feel unwell

If you're 65 or over, or in one of the other at-risk groups for example you have a long term health condition, it's important to get medical help as soon as you feel unwell. You can get help and advice from:

- a pharmacy – pharmacists can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses and can tell you if you need to see a doctor
- your GP – you may be able to speak to a GP online or over the phone, or go in for an appointment if they think you need to
- NHS 111 – go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you are not sure what to do

The sooner you get advice, the sooner you're likely to get better. In an emergency, go to A&E (we call it ED) immediately or call 999.

Keep warm and get help with heating

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

- Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use. This is particularly important if you have a health condition.
- [Ensure your home and appliances are safe.](#)
- Make sure you're getting all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits and advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or [help with bills if you're on a low income](#).
- Find out more about [ways to save energy in your home](#), or call the government helpline on 0800 444 202.

West Berkshire Council's Public Health & Wellbeing ['Stay Well in Winter'](#) web page is a great source of support and advice on cold weather health risks including: respiratory illnesses (such as covid, flu and bronchitis), cardiovascular risks (heart attack and stroke), accidental injury such as falls, and (less commonly) hypothermia.

Share your views on our area's primary care strategy



The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) has published its draft Primary Care Strategy which highlights their ambitions for the future of general practice, community pharmacy, optometry (eye care) and dentistry across BOB.

The draft strategy has been developed with the support of health and care partners and local people to improve access to these services, delivering more personalised care especially for patients with complex needs, and preventing people from becoming unwell.

You can share your views about BOB ICB's ambitions in the draft strategy via the online survey on their [engagement platform](#) – to help further inform and shape these plans.

They will also be holding a BOB-wide webinar next month so you can ask questions about their draft Primary Care Strategy.

More details about the webinar will be made available on the BOB ICB engagement platform: [YourVoiceBOB](#).

Reading Patient Voice Group: Primary Care Strategy consultation 6 February

Reading Patient Voice Group (formerly known as South Reading Patient Voice) will be holding a consultation to discuss this strategy: Reading Patient Voice Group: BOB Primary Care Strategy consultation - 7.30pm Tue 6 Feb 2024

The group is open to all adults who live in Reading Borough or attend primary care services there. For more information see their website: Reading Patient Voice Group or email: info@rpvg.org.uk

New BOB ICB Stakeholder Newsletter

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) have recently published their new monthly newsletter which aims to keep people up to date with news and initiatives on their local health and care services:

[Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB Stakeholder Newsletter - January 2024 \(govdelivery.com\)](#)

Understanding your GP practice



We are launching a campaign to help patients in Berkshire West understand the different roles of healthcare professionals working at their GP practice.

GP practices are changing to make it easier for patients to access a wider range of help and care closer to home.

This means when you make an appointment at a GP practice, you will see the most appropriate healthcare professional for your needs, and often that might not always be your GP. The roles and job titles can vary but each GP practice will have an excellent team of non-clinical staff such as practice managers and care navigators, who will support the delivery of your care.

The GP practice will also have a trained team of healthcare professionals who work alongside GPs and nurses including paramedics, physician associates, clinical pharmacists, and wellbeing advisors.

They all work together to ensure you access the most appropriate care and services from the right healthcare professional.

To help you find out more about who you might meet at your GP practice, we have produced a [series of videos with our GP practice colleagues explaining what they do](#) and why you may see them.

Amazing response to our Gift tree appeal



Thank you to everyone who generously donated a gift to our 2023 Christmas Gift Tree Appeal or who gave up their time to help us achieve our target.

Our aim was to collect 900 Christmas presents to give to patients who spent Christmas Day in hospital.

We had an amazing response, and it was a real community effort. A total of 22 organisations plus

individuals and groups of friends and families helped us with our appeal. After all the gifts were collected, hospital and Royal Berks Charity volunteers, along with local primary school students helped to wrap and deliver presents to the wards ready to give out on Christmas Day.

Thank you everyone who took part!

Congratulations Courtney and Katharine!



L-R Courtney Tutty and Katharine Smith receiving their awards from Katie Pritchard-Thomas

Katie Pritchard-Thomas, Chief Nursing Officer recently presented Courtney Tutty and Katharine Smith two of our Senior Health Care Assistants with the Chief Nursing Officer Awards for Commitment to Quality of Care. These awards are presented on behalf of Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England.

Courtney has been a great advocate for our 'Improving Together' way of working, taking on the role of a mentor to new staff in the Trauma Unit. She is welcoming and supportive and assists in orientating them to the ward and working alongside them whilst they learn. Courtney will frequently go above and beyond to help her patients and the team.

Katharine has become a lead within the Trauma Unit looking at our stores and provisions, alongside championing the finance around stores provisions, helping the unit to make savings. Katharine has shared her learning from this experience with our elective ward and has started to train a small team of staff on the ward to be ordering champions.

Relaunch of our StarCard staff recognition scheme

We recently relaunched our StarCard staff recognition scheme to celebrate a colleague or team going above and beyond, or making a real difference. The scheme helps our staff to thank their colleagues for their excellent work, and each month we recognise the best 'StarCard of the month'.



In December, Dom Hardy, Chief Operating Officer awarded the first new look Starcard certificate to the Radiation Protection Team.

The team were nominated for their amazing contributions throughout 2023 - 'The quality of the work from this small team is incredible and showed such dedication to keep the trust staff safe, and for us to be provide all the services to our patients.'

Tom Lister, Staff Governor

I hope that 2024 has been good to you so far. With junior doctors striking and winter pressures ongoing, I would like to divert your attention for moment and take a look at two other very important staff groups.

I'm thrilled to join as the Staff Governor for Healthcare Scientists and Allied Health Professionals at the trust. My name is Tom Lister, and I am a medical physicist specialising in non-ionising radiations. My day job involves supporting services that use Magnetic Resonance Imaging and ultrasound and optical radiations, including lasers. I'm also the lead healthcare scientist for the trust.

In our healthcare system, scientists like myself play a critical role in supporting and helping to develop clinical care. We also contribute to over 80% of all diagnoses made in the trust, and perform direct clinical roles in essential services such as respiratory, cardiology, and audiology.

Allied Health Professionals are fundamental to healthcare delivery, working alongside doctors and nurses. For example, radiographers provide vital imaging services, physiotherapists aid rehabilitation, and Operating Department Practitioners are pivotal in surgical and anaesthetic procedures.

One challenge we face is the public misconception that clinical services are exclusively handled by doctors and nurses. Many aren't aware of the crucial roles also played by healthcare scientists and allied health professionals. Part of my mission is to raise awareness and celebrate the incredible work done by these essential groups.

The thing that currently excites me most about this role is the potential we have as an organisation to help transform healthcare delivery through integrating new technology (including AI) and exploring new roles to meet current and future demands. I think that these innovations are key to meeting future demand and in some places can be used to improve patient outcomes right now.

I invite each of you to help me support allied health professionals and healthcare scientists across the trust to help advance the way that we deliver healthcare, and to ensure that the contributions of these important staffing groups are appropriately celebrated.

I'm looking forward to collaborating with you to make a positive impact on our healthcare system.

Tom Lister

Staff Governor for Healthcare Scientists and Allied Health Professionals

Discounts? Did you know?

As a member of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust you are eligible to amazing Health Service Discounts to save money on holidays, electrical goods, meals, days out and much more! To register, follow this link: [Register | NHS Discounts | Health Service Discounts](#) and select Foundation Trust Member.

Don't forget to let us know what amazing discounts you get so we can share them!

Check out some of this month's exclusive discounts:

- [HelloFresh from HelloFresh - £65% off](#)
- [Virgin Experience Days – 20% off](#)
- [First home | Remortgage | Moving home | fee-free mortgage advice](#)
- [Admiral from Admiral – 10% off](#)
- [JD Sports from JD Sports – 10% off](#)
- [Top Mobile Deal Apple iPhone 15 - £0 upfront + £30 a month](#)
- [Pandora from Pandora – 10% NHS](#)
- [Hotpoint Home Appliances – up to 50% off](#)
- [easyJet holidays from easyJet Holidays - £25 e-gift card](#)
- [TUI Holidays for Heroes from TUI – save up to £250 + £100 NHS](#)

Meet your Council of Governors

Find a [full list of your Council of Governors](#) on our website.

Get Involved and Have Your Say

Open Meetings

Why not come along to one of our upcoming open meetings: find the details and agendas on our trust website page: [Open meetings | Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Weds 24 January 2024, 9am – Board of Directors – Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital

Thursday 15 February 2024, 5.30pm – Membership Committee – Video Conference Call

- Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86178386429?pwd=dW5wQXVjTm84MWR4dE5uZEFHTVIUZz09>
- Meeting ID: 861 7838 6429
- Passcode: jh84kG

Wednesday 28 February 2024, 5pm – Council of Governors – Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital



Become a member

Sign up family and friends to become a member via our [online form](#) to:

- receive our latest updates
- shape how hospital services are delivered
- be eligible to receive our NHS discounts (see page 8)

Get in touch with the team: Foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Mental health funding awarded to local charities

Seven local charities across Berkshire West can now carry out even more vital work to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

The charities – Berkshire Woman’s Aid, Cianna’s Smile, Daisy’s Dream, No5 Youth Counselling, Refugee Support Group, Sport in Mind and Time to Talk all received small grants from Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) to support projects with a focus on communities at risk of experiencing health inequalities.

The grants were awarded after BOB ICB asked for bids from local charities for inequality projects with a focus on mental health. The ICB was supported in this process by Reading Voluntary Action, Involve Community Services Wokingham and Volunteer Centre West Berkshire.

Sarah Webster, Executive Director of Place in Berkshire West, NHS BOB Integrated Care Board ICB said: “Here at BOB ICB our commissioned services support many people directly with their mental health wellbeing, but we also know that early intervention, often from within their own community and even from their peers, is a vitally important step.

“Our voluntary sector partners are the key to providing invaluable support at the earliest opportunity. We are delighted to support them in this work with much-needed funds and look forward to seeing their plans become a reality. It will make a real difference to people’s lives.”