



Pulse magazine

Summer
2026



Hi and welcome to the Summer edition of Pulse.

My name is Helen Mackenzie and I've been a Non-Executive Director at the Trust for over 6 years. I have been privileged to meet many amazing members of staff, volunteers and governors who have coped with Covid, CQC inspections and constantly increasing demand for services whilst always smiling and aiming to deliver outstanding care, across all our locations.

The Trust seeks to innovate and change service provision and is seen as a beacon of consistency and help for our local population. The influence of technology in how care is provided continues and, in this magazine, the new pharmacy robots, breast screening unit, and work to make Bracknell Healthspace 'greener' demonstrates how the Trust embraces this.

Yvette Cooper, the newly appointed Secretary of State, visited our maternity services and same day emergency care unit recently and staff were able to showcase our services but equally highlight the challenges of some of our environments.

I leave at the end of August 2026, having enjoyed every moment of my time here and will watch with interest how my local acute Trust goes from strength to strength.

Finally please, come along to our Annual General Meeting on 16 September 2026 to hear more about our past year.

Helen Mackenzie, Non-Executive Director

Governor Feedback Helps Extend Buggy Service Hours

Royal Berkshire governors play an important role in ensuring the voices of patients, visitors and the wider community are heard. Following feedback and enquiries raised by Public Governor Alice Gostomski, the Trust's volunteer buggy service undertook a three-month trial to explore extending its operating hours.

During the trial, the buggy service ran until 5pm, with usage monitored and feedback gathered from volunteer drivers. Following a review of the results, the Trust has agreed to extend the service on a permanent basis until 4.30pm, providing additional support for patients and visitors travelling around the hospital site later in the day.

The decision reflects evidence gathered during the trial and demonstrates how governors can make a real difference by raising issues that matter to patients. The buggy service will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of those who rely on it.

This is an excellent example of governors working constructively with Trust teams and volunteers to help improve the experience of patients and visitors.



Annual General Meeting 2026

This year our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 5.30pm. The meeting will be held in our Trust Education Centre, at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road RG1 5AN.

Our Annual General Meeting gives the local community a chance to come and hear about their local hospital, including an in-depth look at the Trust's performance for the year 2025/26 and our plans for the future.

The doors will open from 3.30pm where you can find a number of showcasing stands and departments from within the Trust. There will also be an opportunity to meet your local Governors.

The main event will commence at 5.30pm. There will also be an opportunity to put your questions to the Trust's Board of Directors at the meeting or you can submit those in advance by emailing foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please submit all questions by Monday 7 September 2026.

To attend the AGM either in person or virtually, please register using the link below:

[Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - Annual General Meeting 2026 -Registration – Fill out form](#)

By registering, you will be able to select whether you wish to attend in person or join the meeting online.



The poster is for the Annual General Meeting 2026, held on Wednesday 16 September 2026 at the Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital. It features the NHS logo and the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust name. The main title 'Annual General Meeting' is in large white text on a blue background. Below it, the date '16 Sept 2026' is shown, along with the location and times: 'Doors open 3.30PM' and 'Event start 5.00PM'. A section titled 'What's Included?' lists five items: Showcasing Stands, Meet your Governors, 2025/26 Trust Performance, Look to the future, and Questions & Answers. There are two circular images: one showing a group of people in a meeting and another showing the Royal Berkshire Hospital building. A 'Register to Attend' button with a downward arrow is present. At the bottom, there is a 'More information:' section with a link to www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/openmeetings and an email foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk, along with a QR code.

NHS
Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Annual General Meeting

16 Sept 2026 Trust Education Centre
Royal Berkshire Hospital
Doors open 3.30PM
Event start 5.00PM

What's Included?

- ✓ Showcasing Stands
- ✓ Meet your Governors
- ✓ 2025/26 Trust Performance
- ✓ Look to the future
- ✓ Questions & Answers

**Register to
↓ Attend**

More information:

For more information on **how to register** to attend or to **submit questions** visit

www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/openmeetings
foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk



Supporting South Asian Women to access breast screening

Colleagues at the Trust have been working alongside South Asian women to help them feel more confident talking about breast health and accessing potentially life-saving breast screening. Funded through a grant from the Burdett Trust for Nursing, the 'Comedy, Samosas & Nursing' project brought together local women, healthcare professionals, researchers and community leaders to tackle barriers that can prevent women from attending breast screening appointments.

The project has also been recognised nationally as a finalist in the Nursing Times Awards 2026.

The project was developed in response to evidence that some South Asian women face cultural stigma, language barriers and discomfort discussing breast health, contributing to lower screening uptake. Working in partnership with King's College London, colleagues co-designed and delivered workshops using humour to create safe, culturally sensitive conversations around breast cancer awareness and screening. Women from South Asian communities played a central role in shaping the project, ensuring it reflected their experiences and concerns.



The Trust team included Dr Mary Tanay, Nurse Consultant at the Berkshire Cancer Centre, Sarah Lupai, Patient Experience Lead, and Sarosh Khymani, Clinical Trials Nurse. They worked alongside community champions and voluntary sector partners, including Sakoon Through Cancer. Women involved described the workshops as safe, open and non-judgemental, with humour helping to make conversations about breast health feel less intimidating.

Dr Mary Tanay said: "This project would not have been possible without the generosity, honesty and enthusiasm of everyone that worked alongside us. We hope this work will help more women feel comfortable talking about breast health, increase confidence in accessing screening services and contribute to earlier diagnosis and better outcomes, locally and further afield."

New Breast Screening Unit hits the road

A new mobile breast screening unit named Ruby is now operating across Berkshire, improving access, enhancing early cancer detection, and supporting preventive health efforts in local communities.

The unit, funded by Royal Berks Charity, features a comfortable waiting areas and private changing rooms.

Clare Morris, Lead Mammographer said, "We're delighted with our new unit, and grateful to the Royal Berks Charity for their support. Coming along for screening is one of the best things you can do for your health. If you do receive an invite, please book your appointment and attend. You'll be in and out in just a few minutes, knowing you are being proactive in managing your own health to spot any issues early."



Opening the doors to our new £3.5 million Same Day Emergency Care unit

We recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open our new SDEC unit. Based in Centre Block, it's a fresh, modern space for the team to support patients needing urgent care that does not necessitate a hospital stay.

The new £3.5 million space, which includes 12 bays in total, a minor procedures area, and a modern spacious office for staff is a great example of creating innovative ways of treating our patients – and providing the right environment for colleagues to enable them to do that.

This service is crucial to ensuring our patients receive the right care at the right time, taking pressure off our Emergency Department, and avoiding unnecessary admissions. And in the last year alone the team supported 12,000 patients to get the care they needed and get home.



Pharmacy Team unveil £1.3 million state of the art robots

The Pharmacy Team at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust have unveiled a pair of brand new, state of the art 'robots', marking a £1.3 million investment in the service provided to patients and staff.

The ribbon-cutting event officially heralded one of the largest investments in pharmacy infrastructure the Trust has made in recent years, significantly increasing the number of prescriptions the department can deal with at any one time. This will help meet growing demand, speed up dispensing and reduce waiting times, for example at the end of a hospital stay when medication is often needed to take home.

Catherine Olie, Chief Pharmacist at the Trust said: "The introduction of our automated dispensing system is a major milestone for our pharmacy services."



The refit and installation was completed from start to finish in less than eight weeks, and alongside capacity, the robots will also allow the team to reduce any waste, make sure stock is always available when needed, and keep the service running 24/7 with two picking heads on each acting as their own 'fail safe'.

James Blythe, Chief Executive Officer at the Trust said, "The introduction of these new robots are a great example of how innovation and technology are helping us to create smarter and more resilient services for our patients now and in the future. Thank you to everyone involved in this project, and for turning our plans into a reality to be truly proud of."

Welcoming the Secretary of State to the Trust during her first days in the role

Recently we were pleased to welcome the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Yvette Cooper MP, on her first visit to an NHS trust since taking up the role. It was an opportunity to showcase some of the important work taking place across our services.

During her visit, the Secretary of State spent time with teams in Maternity and Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC).

In Maternity, colleagues demonstrated the work under way to strengthen triage services and support women who require both planned and emergency obstetric care. The Secretary of State also saw examples of innovative approaches designed to improve the patient experience, including the use of virtual reality headsets to help reduce anxiety for patients undergoing procedures or treatments.

The visit continued in the Trust's £3.5 million Same Day Emergency Care unit, where staff explained how the service enables patients with urgent medical needs to be assessed, diagnosed and treated on the same day whenever clinically appropriate. By providing timely specialist care without the need for an overnight hospital stay, the service helps patients receive the right care at the right time while reducing pressure on the Emergency Department.

It was a valuable chance to highlight both the dedication of our teams and the importance of continued investment and improvement to ensure we can meet the needs of patients now and in the future.



How we've made Bracknell Healthspace kinder to the environment

Colleagues at the Trust have been stepping up to make our Bracknell Healthspace site kinder to the environment, and more comfortable for staff and patients by installing the latest in heat-pump technology.

By eliminating the use of fossil fuels for heating the building, we've delivered carbon savings of approximately 257 tonnes of CO₂. That's equivalent to around 100 UK households annually (using mixed fuels), based on an average of 2.6 tonnes of CO₂ per household per year.

On top of that, patients, staff, and visitors should also feel a difference in how the building is able to respond in real-time to the weather conditions – making it a more pleasant environment to work in, and also to visit while receiving care and support.

This work is part of the NHS commitment to achieve Net Zero and sustainability targets by 2040, including reaching an 80% reduction in carbon emissions between 2028 and 2032.

Guy Kieser, Deputy Director of Estates and Facilities, "I'm really proud of the work our colleagues in Estates have done to see this project through. Not only have we drastically reduced the carbon

emissions on site, we're delighted that the work will also mean patients visiting, and our colleagues working here will feel more comfortable whatever the weather."



Supporting an extra 1000 patients living with Osteoporosis to avoid future fractures

NHS Trust's across the Thames Valley region have saved £1.5m and avoided nearly 2,000 bed days by introducing nurse-led Fracture Liaison Services on-site.

This consistent model of support means that in just over a year an additional 1,000 patients recovering from fractures have been identified, acknowledged as 'at risk' for future fractures based on the outcome of proactive tests, and received treatment including long-term support to reduce that risk. Alongside the financial savings and reduction of bed days needed, the Royal Osteoporosis Society also worked out that in the single 12-month period they looked at, 200 potential future fractures have also been avoided.

This work has been driven by the Acute Provider Collaborative which was set up in 2023 and brings together Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, and Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust to identify where things can be 'done once' – improving patient care and experience. Since its set up it has explored good practice happening in particular Trusts and supported and enabled ways of working to be rolled out across the entire patch.

A simple trip or fall can lead to a fracture, especially in someone over the age of 50 – often ending up in a visit to a local Emergency Department or to the GP. Nurses within the Fracture Liaison Service now in place across these Trusts proactively look for people who have had a fracture and reach out to them to assess their osteoporosis risk. This can involve having DEXA scan to confirm or rule out a diagnosis, and if confirmed organising the treatment and support needed, and following-up over a 12 month period to make sure any support needed is in place.



Bobby Ancil, Head of Health Services Development at the Royal Osteoporosis Society said, "This investment in Fracture Liaison Services should be recognised and sustained as a model of excellent practice. Fracture Liaison Services are the gold standard for secondary fracture prevention, and evidence shows that well-resourced services reduce re fracture risk by up to 40% while improving patient outcomes and driving long term system savings. Ongoing support and development of these services will be vital to improving bone health outcomes across the region."

Haematology team collect MyelomaUK award

The award recognises outstanding person-centred care and clinical innovation, and honours the legacy of Clinical Nurse Specialist Sarah Henshaw. Our team was recognised for putting patients at the heart of everything they do.

Highlights include:

- Bringing clinicians and patient representatives together to improve care across every stage of the pathway
- Working closely with patients and the Reading Myeloma Support Group to create a twice-yearly newsletter
- Developing a comprehensive programme to support patients before and after stem cell transplantation

Dr Pratap Neelakantan, Consultant Haematologist, said: "We are incredibly proud to receive this award. It reflects the dedication and compassion of our whole team."



Meet the Team: Gynaecological Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist Team

We have a huge range of teams and departments at the Trust, all doing fantastic work for the patients they support. As it's Gynaecological Cancer Month in September, here's Lisa Clarke, Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist talking us through the role of the team and how alongside Tonita, and Debbie they provide a much-needed and valued 'constant' presence to the patients and families they get to know so well.

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Hi, I'm Lisa and I am a Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist. Along with Tonita our fantastic Support Worker, and Debbie who is also a Clinical Nurse Specialist we look after ladies diagnosed with gynaecological cancers at the Trust. This includes ovarian, cervical, or womb cancer, and we have roughly 130 new patients coming to us for on-going support each year. Because of the leaps and bounds that have been made in recent years into 'maintenance' treatments, we have patients living for much longer, and living better with their cancer which is fantastic – in total now we are supporting almost 400 patients at every point in their journey with us.



Our role is to provide a 'constant' for the patient and their friends and families – holding their hand, guiding, and advocating for them through diagnosis, prehab, treatment, rehab, and beyond as well as signposting to other services and teams inside and outside of the Trust. We're very privileged in the job we do that we get to know our patients very well over many years, and they trust us so much - we don't take that for granted. Just recently we had a patient get married while in hospital which was very poignant.

One thing we're very conscious of is the emotional and psychological impact having cancer can have. To support our patients with this, Tonita runs Holistic Needs Assessments which give our patients a chance to go through any concerns they have about the wider impacts of cancer – for example their ability to work or finances - and how we can signpost them to organisations to tackle those. And we also run a 'buddy call' where Tonita offers to ring our patients once a week for a simple chat and just to listen to them. Some of our patients have absolutely no one else to talk to and we know it makes such a difference to the way they can face what they are going through and know that we will be there for them.

Most of our patients will have surgery, and often chemotherapy as part of their treatment and often their cancer cannot be 'cured'. So another really important part of the work we do is to make sure they understand that when they are told they will be receiving palliative care, that it is absolutely not the same as end of life care – as that is the assumption people often jump too. Palliative care is simply holding the cancer where it is with treatment, and people can go on to live for many years and even decades.

It's a fascinating job as no two days are the same – we share the good times, and the not so good times. But it's incredibly rewarding, and we get a real sense of pride supporting our patients and their loved ones. By helping our patients to have control and be able to make their own decisions means a huge amount to them, and how it feels to experience care here.

And we never forget that often it's the little things that can make the biggest difference.

Getting to know our Governors: Sunila Lobo, Public Governor Reading

Dear Members and Colleagues,

As I conclude my nine-year term as a Public Governor at the Trust, including the last three years as Lead Governor, I want to share some reflections on our shared journey through some significant strategic shifts, including navigating the pandemic and aligning with the NHS 10-Year Plan launched in July 2025.

I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together. Governors successfully led the recruitment of our new Chair and Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) helping to ensure the Board has the skills and experience needed to support the Trust's strategic priorities. During the year, Governors held two information points on Level 2, providing opportunity to engage directly with patients and visitors and members, answer questions, and promote Trust membership. In addition, Governors contributed to discussions on improving patient safety and experience.



Looking ahead, there is an opportunity for Governors to further strengthen their visibility and engagement with members and the public, whilst continuing to seek assurance on issues that matter most to our communities, including integrated care across primary, community and secondary services, responsiveness to patients, and staff experience.

Most of all, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside such dedicated governors. As I step down, I do so with confidence that the Trust is in excellent hands. I encourage members to continue to engage with their Council representatives and sharing feedback, ensuring that the voices of our communities continue to shape the Trust's future.

We look forward to welcoming members, patients and the wider community to our Annual General Meeting on 16 September 2026. The AGM provides an important opportunity to hear about the Trust's achievements, challenges and future plans, and to engage with Governors and senior leaders.

Thank you, Dr. Sunila Lobo

Celebrating the contribution of Dr Sunila Lobo

This September, Dr Sunila Lobo will step down after nine years of dedicated service as a Public Governor for Reading, including two years as Lead Governor.

Throughout her time with the Trust, Sunila has been a passionate advocate for patients, members and the wider Reading community. She has had a key role in ensuring that the voices of local people were represented within the Council of Governors and has provided valued support and challenge to help strengthen the Trust's governance arrangements. As Lead Governor, she chaired many governor meetings and represented governors at important Trust events and discussions.



Sunila's commitment, dedication and thoughtful leadership have made a lasting contribution to the Trust. On behalf of our members, fellow

Governors, Board of Directors and Trust staff, we extend our sincere thanks for her service and wish her every success and happiness in the future.

Thank you, Sunila, for your contribution to the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Meet your Council of Governors

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

Get involved and have your say

Join us at one of our upcoming open meetings. Full details and agendas are available on our Trust website [Open Meetings - Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#)

- Wednesday 16 September 2026: Annual General Meeting, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital. 5.30pm. Doors open 3.30pm.
- Wednesday 23 September 2026: Board of Directors, Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital. 9am.
- Wednesday 23 September 2026: Council of Governors, Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital. 5pm.

Become a member

Invite your family and friends to become a members through our [online form](#) to receive our latest updates, help shape how hospital services are delivered and enjoy access to NHS discounts. Get in touch with the team Foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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, goods, meals, days out and more! To register contact us at: Foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk for a letter of eligibility follow this link: [Register | NHS Discounts | Health Service Discounts](#)
Select 'Foundation Trust Member' upload your letter.

Interested in work experience and placements?

Work experience gives those interested in a career in the NHS the opportunity to gain hands-on experience observing what happens in hospitals, the day-to-day work of NHS multi-disciplinary teams and an understanding of the attitudes, the behaviours and values that are expected in a healthcare setting. Shadowing our teams, you will have the opportunity to see first-hand what is involved in the job role you are considering.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is committed to supporting young people and adults looking to pursue a career in healthcare. Our placements are open to students and adults resident in the Berkshire or surrounding South Oxfordshire area. Students from outside these areas and outside the UK will not accepted for a placement.

We offer clinical placements and non-clinical placements at set times in the academic year.

For more information and to check out the eligibility criteria please visit [Work Experience and Placements - Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#)

How to apply

Year 12 and 13 Medicine Placements: Due to the high level of applications, medicine placements for are now full.

Year 12 and 13 Placements (All Other Areas): To apply for a placement for areas including nursing, midwifery, allied health professions, pathology, clinical engineering and medical physics, pharmacy, and oral and maxillofacial surgery please contact: healthcareworkexperience@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

Please note we are unable to offer placements within Psychology, Psychiatry, Paramedics, Art Therapy, Music Therapy, Drama Therapy, Dietetics, Social Work or Mental Health.

Adult Placements: Are offered at different times of the year depending on the capacity of the hosting department at the time. Please contact healthcareworkexperience@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.