



# Pulse magazine

November  
2024

## Welcome!

In September I was delighted to return to the Royal Berks as Non-Executive Director (NED) on the Trust Board after a quarter of a century practising as Consultant Paediatrician in Bracknell and several NHS leadership roles. My enduring memories from when I moved to Reading to complete my 'junior doctor' training at Royal Berks Hospital, include how welcomed and supported I felt by my seniors at the hospital.

As the cold weather approaches, we all need to take extra care of ourselves, our families, friends and neighbours. There's advice on staying well and supporting each other's wellbeing during winter on page 2. If you need help, we're encouraging everyone to use the correct NHS service for your condition, and help us keep our Emergency Department for medical emergencies so we can help those most in need.

Elsewhere in this edition, there's news on our [Christmas Gift appeal](#) and our [fantastic cancer champions](#).

Dr Minoo Irani  
Non-Executive Director



## In this edition

2. [Are you winter ready?](#)
3. ['No excuse for abuse' campaign](#)
4. [Give a gift to our Christmas patients](#)
5. [Celebrating our local cancer champions](#)
6. [Governor article, Dora Abbi](#)
7. [Change NHS: share your thoughts](#)
7. [Help for parents to buy healthy food](#)
8. [Discounts? Did you know?](#)
8. [Get Involved and Have Your Say](#)
8. [Meet your Council of Governors](#)
9. [Are you interested in work experience and placements?](#)
9. [Thinking about a career in the NHS?](#)
9. [Become a member](#)



# Are you winter ready? Help your local NHS services this winter



Winter is always an incredibly busy time for NHS services with the increase of seasonal illnesses such as cold and flu, which puts an increased pressure on our GP surgeries, hospitals and community health services.

And as the Trust prepares itself for the winter period, it's launching its Winter campaign called 'Winter Ready' which is asking for the public to do their bit to help their local NHS services during this time.

We're asking residents across Reading and West Berkshire to do the following things to be Winter Ready:

- Use NHS 111 for advice on appropriate service for their needs
- Getting vaccinated for eligible vaccines, such as: flu, Covid-19 and RSV
- Registering to a GP surgery and continuing to contact their GP for health advice
- Stocking-up on over the counter medication
- Looking after vulnerable family members, friends and neighbours
- Collecting prescriptions in time for weekends and upcoming bank holidays

We have already seen over 125,000 attendances to its Emergency Department this year, which makes it our highest amount of attendances going into the winter period.

We have been gearing up, introducing new initiatives and processes to help ease the pressure off our staff to ensure we provide the care to those who need it this winter. But there are many things that you can do to support us to support you, whether that is checking-in on your elderly neighbours more frequently, collecting your prescriptions on time and planning ahead, stocking-up on your medication cupboard.

It's also vital that you use the correct NHS services for your condition as this will help us to keep our Emergency Department for medical emergencies only, so we can help those most in need.

You can visit the ['Winter Ready' advice page](#) on our website for more information.



# Trust launches 'No excuse for abuse' campaign

Staff from the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust have contributed personal messages to a new campaign to remind visitors and patients that there's 'No Excuse for Abuse'.



The Trust has launched the campaign to improve the safety and well-being of staff, as well as ensuring patients feel safe too. It aims to raise awareness and reinforce a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, including physical, verbal, racial, and disruptive behaviour.

In August 2024, the Trust recorded 78 incidents of abuse directed at staff, the highest monthly total in the past two years. Each incident significantly impacts staff morale and their ability to deliver quality care to patients.

Steve McManus, Chief Executive Officer said, "Our staff work incredibly hard to provide compassionate, high-quality care every day and the rise in abusive incidents is unacceptable. Over 7,000 people work here at the Trust and they all deserve to be treated with respect and to be able to do their job without fear. We are committed to providing a safe environment where both staff and patients feel respected and secure."

The 'Stop! No Excuse for Abuse' campaign will feature on posters throughout Trust sites as a reminder to everyone that abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated, and encourage everyone to be respectful.



# Help us give a gift to our Christmas patients

Our Voluntary Services team has launched its annual Christmas Gift Tree Appeal with the aim of ensuring that every patient who's spending Christmas in hospital receives a gift.

Receiving a gift on Christmas day brings a huge range of benefits to patients, especially to those patients who don't receive many visitors. It's only with the support of our community that we are able to reach our target of collecting enough presents for every patient.

If you'd like to donate a present, you can drop off an **unwrapped** present at the following sites:

- Royal Berkshire Hospital Main Reception, Craven Road.
- Link Café, School Road, Tilehurst.
- Leisure Centres: Rivermead Leisure Centre / Palmer Park Leisure Centre / South Reading Leisure Centre / Meadway Sports Centre.
- Libraries: Reading Central / Lower Earley / Caversham / Woodley / Pangbourne / Theale.

Alternatively, you can use our [Amazon wishlist](#) to send a gift direct to the hospital. The wishlist has hundreds of items on it for patients to enjoy from just a couple of pounds.

To make sure the volunteers have time to sort, wrap and deliver presents to wards ready for Christmas morning, our team ask that any donations are with them, **unwrapped**, by **Monday 16 December**.



# Celebrating our local community cancer champions



Staff from the Trust joined Gemma Peters, Macmillian Cancer Support Chief Executive and the Mayor of Reading, Cllr Glenn Dennis recently at a special event to recognise the amazing work of our amazing volunteer cancer champions.

The Berkshire Cancer Centre, based out of the Royal Berkshire Hospital were the first in the country to pilot the idea of champions, and it's been such a success that working with Macmillian Cancer Support, the role is now in place in dozens of locations across the country.

Mark Foulkes, Nurse Consultant said, "We have more than 30 members of the public who volunteer their time to provide very human support to members of their community who have been diagnosed with cancer. Rojina, Shaheen, Joyce, Annalisa, DJ and all of our volunteers are remarkable people, and they make such a difference."

The local cancer champions support communities, especially where language may be a barrier, or where awareness of symptoms and the help available to them may be in need of a boost. Joyce Hernandez, who was a nurse at the Royal Berkshire Hospital for 18 years, said, "I get such a lot out of being a cancer champion, it's something I do alongside my work, and it's a great feeling to know that I am doing my bit for my community, and that they know I am here if they need me.

"Going through cancer diagnosis and treatment is scary. I hope we help to make sure no one feels like they are going through it on their own."

The champions receive training and on-going support from the Macmillian team at the Berkshire Cancer Centre and run sessions in their community to raise awareness of certain cancers, symptoms, and screening programmes. They also provide one-to-one support for example buddying-up and attending GP or hospital appointments if they are asked to, or just being a listening ear, or shoulder to lean on.

## Celebrating our local community cancer champions continued:

The Berkshire Cancer Centre, part of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust provides cancer services including radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and palliative care to patients across Berkshire and areas of South Oxfordshire. It is further supplemented by chemotherapy and radiotherapy services at the Royal Berkshire Bracknell Clinic, and Chemotherapy Unit at West Berkshire Community Hospital.

### Governor Article Dora Abbi, Youth Governor

Hi all, my name is Dora Abbi, and I'm the Youth Governor for the Trust. I'm currently a Year 13 student, studying Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Geography A Levels hoping to study medicine in the future. In my free time I like to read and chat with friends or simply watch a movie.

I started off volunteering with the youth forum last year and was lucky enough to be able to work on many exciting projects along the way. Everything from a Christmas gift drive to working on the Carer's booklets, to being part of the Call4Concern Advisory board, to starting a radio show for the children's ward as part of the hospital radio, and more.

Despite getting lost everytime I come to the hospital it's been great going into different wards and meeting such a wide range of people. Having only become a governor in October, I'm still finding my groove but it's a role that I'm so excited to explore further. I'm passionate about bringing in a youth voice to policies in healthcare and improving health literacy in young people so they can access healthcare easier and more effectively.

To anyone reading this I would 100% recommend joining the youth forum or becoming a public member. You get the opportunity to learn so much as well as make a difference. In addition come along to one of the amazing events or an open meeting at the Trust to learn more. Since joining I have learnt much about the healthcare system itself, as well as invaluable skills such as communication, collaboration and, of course, time management. Balancing school, volunteering, and extracurricular activities hasn't been easy but it's been rewarding.

Now, this article wouldn't be complete unless I gave thanks to everyone who has supported me in my role. I'd like to thank Sukhi Sidhu, Naomi Roberts, and Sharon Herring who put together, run or support the youth forum, you've all been incredible and it's been such an amazing opportunity. I'd like to also thank Caroline Lynch and Kerrie Brent for constantly keeping in touch with me and for everything they do to organise and support the governors as well as every single governor who despite my age has treated me as an equal and actively listens and engages me.

Enjoy, Dora

# Change NHS: Take part in the national conversation

We're encouraging everyone to give their views on the future of the NHS through the Government's 'Change NHS' campaign to help build a health service fit for the future.



Our staff are facing an unprecedented number of challenges - record demand for care, growing pressures from an ageing population, rising levels of multiple long-term illnesses and patients with more complex needs.

And staff are having to manage this while often seeing patients in crumbling buildings and struggling to discharge patients when they're ready to leave due to pressure in social care -

all of which means too many patients are waiting too long for the care they need.

So, it is vital the health service innovates and adapts – as it has always done throughout its 76-year history – to design and deliver an NHS fit for the future.

Change NHS aims to gather views, experiences and ideas to shape immediate steps and long-term changes: a new 10-Year Health Plan for the NHS.

Don't miss your opportunity to have your say about the future of the NHS. Everyone over the age of 16, living in England can take part in this national conversation: [change.nhs.uk](https://change.nhs.uk)

## Help for parents to buy healthy food and milk

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to help to buy healthy food and milk through the NHS's Healthy Start scheme.

If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card that you can use to buy:

- plain liquid cow's milk
- fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- infant formula milk based on cow's milk

There's more information on the [Healthy Start website](https://www.nhs.uk/healthy-start).





## Discounts? Did you know?

# healthservice discounts

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, 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:

- [Quality School Clothing from Trutex](#) -15% off
- [Health Service Cinema Tickets](#) – 40% off
- [Tastecard Exclusive](#) – 12 month FREE membership
- [Virgin Holidays](#) - £125 NHS discount
- [Google Pixel 8 Pro](#) - £29.99 upfront + £41 a month
- [Sports Fashion from Nike](#) – 10% off
- [Haven NHS Discount](#) – 15% off
- [TVs from Samsung](#) – up to 15% off
- [Gifts & Experience Days from Buyagift](#) – 22% off

## 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](#)

- **Board of Directors – 9am, Wednesday 29 January 2025**  
Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital
- **Membership Committee - 5.30pm, Tuesday 11 February 2025**  
Video conference call (email: [foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk) for more details)
- **Council of Governors – 5pm, Wednesday 26 February 2025**  
Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital

## Meet your Council of Governors

Find a full list of your Council of Governors on the trust website:

[Council of Governors | Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#).



## Are you interested in work experience & placements?

The Trust is committed to supporting young people and adults looking to pursue a career in healthcare. We offer clinical and non-clinical placements at set times across the academic year.

Work experience is for people who are interested in an NHS career. Shadowing our teams, you will have the opportunity to see first-hand what is involved in the job role you are considering. It also helps to give an understanding of the attitudes, behaviours and values that are expected in a healthcare setting.

For more information please visit our website: [Work Experience and Placements](#)



Sturti, Getty Images

## Thinking about a career in the NHS?

If you would like to join our team we are always looking for talented staff with a commitment to providing the best patient care.

View our live job vacancies on our website: [RBFT work with us](#)

## 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 and be eligible to receive our NHS discounts.

Get in touch with the team: [Foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:Foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

Pulse Magazine is written and produced by the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Communications Team.

If you would like to have an article included or have any feedback just let us know at [Communications@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:Communications@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)