

Core brief

**Message from Jane Grant, Chief Executive
(14 January 2022, 6.30pm)**

As staff will be aware, we continue to experience significant COVID related pressures across all of our health and social care services. We are, we believe, seeing the impact of the recent peak of community cases related to the omicron wave in our hospitals and care home settings.

This week, once again the number of COVID patients in hospital with a diagnosis in the past 28 days has exceeded 500. This is impacting on all of our sites with a significant number of wards closed to new admissions and I know that this is creating additional pressures. Likewise, the impact currently being felt by colleagues working in primary care and community care is also significant and mental health, in particular, is also under severe duress. Our colleagues are also responding to a number of outbreaks in care homes, however, encouragingly, on the whole, residents are less unwell than during previous waves of the pandemic. My thanks go to everyone for your ongoing dedication and care to our patients during these testing times.

I recognise the continuing challenge with staffing levels and COVID-related absence across our services and we are working hard to retrain, recruit and realign staff as swiftly as possible, enabling us to provide much needed support to our health and social care teams. I anticipate that over the coming weeks we will begin to see the benefit of this as more people move across to join this front line effort.

Despite these ongoing challenges, our staff continue to show true commitment to our patients and their loved ones. One such example is the recent Mental Welfare Commission report for the National Children's Inpatient Unit at the RHC. The unit provides specialist inpatient psychiatric care for children aged under 12 years old and the report highlighted the team's successes in multidisciplinary working, care planning and compassionate care, meaning that the children who use the service felt very safe and well cared for. One of the key points that I would like to highlight is that the family members of patients who contributed to the report highlighted that staff were thoughtful and supportive and demonstrated a real commitment to collaboration and inclusion of families. Likewise, the team was praised for the use of child-friendly care plans, which were developed with our young patients themselves. This is a hugely important element of the care we provide, and I would like to thank the team at the unit for continuing to go the extra mile and supporting our patients and their loved ones.

It's really important that we remember that often it can be the small things which make an enormous impact to our patients and their families and I would like to add my own thanks to one of our ward clerks at the QEUH maternity unit for her efforts to help a family. Amanda Thornton was on duty when a new father contacted the hospital as scan images of his baby had been lost while his wife was with us giving birth and who was distraught after being misplaced. Recognising the importance of finding these images for the family, Amanda went above and beyond, even searching herself to find them. The family, were absolutely overjoyed and have even submitted a formal thank you via the UK patient feedback website, Care Opinion, which is available to read here. Thank you, Amanda, I am really pleased that you have been recognised by the family in this way. Well done.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that Denise Brown has been appointed as Interim Director of eHealth with immediate effect. The appointment follows current eHealth Director, William Edwards, being appointed as Jonathan Best's successor in the position of Chief Operating Officer. I look forward to working with Denise in her new role.

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