

Connect

Members newsletter

Autumn 2025

Welcome

Natalie Titcombe, Lead Governor



Since our Summer edition, we've continued to actively engage in activities related to the Group transition. A new governance structure is beginning to take shape, and as a Council of Governors (CoG), we play a key role in building strong working relationships with the Councils of Governors at Salisbury and Bath NHS Foundation Trusts.

Both the Deputy Lead Governor (Chris Callow) and I were involved in the shortlisting and interview process for the recruitment of two Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) and two Associate NEDs (ANEDs). The recruitment process has now concluded, and the selected candidates will be formally approved by the CoG in November before taking up their roles.

The transition to the Group model remains ongoing. An Interim Joint Chair is currently in place while the process for identifying a permanent candidate is being approved. In the meantime, the Council of Governors will remain actively involved and will continue to seek the necessary assurances from the Non-Executive Directors.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement with the Trust. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your family and friends as we always welcome new members to join us. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

You can contact me through our Corporate Governance Assistant, Sharon Scott, sharon.scott27@nhs.net.

Wishing you all good health,
Natalie

Meet our Governors

Sarah Marshall, Public Governor, Wiltshire Northern Constituency

Sarah is from Gloucestershire and has been a governor since September 2024.



After graduating from The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, with a Farm Management qualification, she moved between various agricultural and accountancy roles before relocating to Australia to work as a farm manager.

On returning to England, Sarah worked in private accountancy roles before she started at cookery school and went on to become a private chef - relocating to Wiltshire.

Collecting experiences from work and personal hobbies has allowed Sarah to keep in touch with a broad spectrum of individuals, all with varying local opinion. This gives her an astute awareness of how stakeholders feel about the Trust, giving her the chance to raise concerns or questions designed to bring about a culture of openness, confidence and improvement.

Sharon Scott, Corporate Governance Assistant

Sharon Scott is our Corporate Governance Assistant who supports our members.

If you have any questions, ideas or suggestions, email sharon.scott27@nhs.net.



New Managing Director Lisa Thomas joins the Trust

Lisa Thomas joined us at the beginning of September 2025 to begin her role as Managing Director of our Trust. She joined from Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, where she worked for eight years, with her most recent role as interim Managing Director there.

Lisa said: "There is lots of good work going on here and I am proud to have joined the Trust. I have been struck by how friendly everyone has been and I'm really grateful for the warm welcome I've received so far.

"My focus over the next few weeks will be visiting different parts of the organisation and speaking with as many staff as possible to help me gain a good understanding about what it's like to work here and how I can best support teams to continue to deliver great patient care."



Improvements in annual adult inpatient survey results

The Trust has seen a significant improvement in the adult inpatient survey results for 2024-25, thanks to hard work from all staff to improve the hospital environment for over 18s. The results provide a valuable insight into adult patients' hospital stays, with 17 of the questions receiving an improved score when compared to the previous year.

This includes four out of five questions relating to the sleep environment, which is testament to the successful Trust-wide 'Putting the Hospital to Bed at Night' project. The project has seen positive feedback from patients who are having an improved night-time experience following the introduction of sleep monitors, twilight volunteers and simple measures such as reduced noise overnight.

We did receive marginally lower scores in some areas, including care for patients on virtual wards, ensuring patients are given enough notice about their discharge plans and patients feeling confident to speak with staff about their worries.

Senior staff will be reviewing these scores in more detail to understand where further changes can be made, as part of a wider programme of work to create an improved environment in which patients are cared for.

Our new Green Plan: Leading the way to a sustainable future

We're excited to announce that our new [Green Plan for 2025-2028](#) is now live, setting out the steps we will take to reduce our environmental impact and reach net-zero emissions.

Our Plan focuses on improving energy use, sustainable travel, responsible procurement, greener food choices, reducing medicine waste, and transforming clinical care. We're committed to protecting the environment while continuing to provide excellent care to our patients and community.

Annual Members Meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 7 October at 5pm. This will be held on Microsoft Teams and the agenda will be shared ahead of the meeting.

We look forward to welcoming as many of you as we can to receive updates on the Trust's financial position and future plans.

If you have any questions ahead of the meeting, email Sharon Scott.

Governor Elections 2025

We have exciting opportunities coming up at the end of 2025 with governor elections in some of our constituencies.

Public governors form part of the Council of Governors, made up of staff and appointed governors. Governors of our Trust have advisory and support roles with an effective Council of Governor, being crucial to our future success.

Voting is open until Thursday 16 October for governors to fill the seven vacancies in the Swindon constituency. You should have already received notification of how to do this, either by post or email. If you haven't, please contact Sharon Scott.

To be eligible to vote, you must have been an active member before 1 September 2025.

The new governors will be announced at our next Council of Governor meeting on 25 November 2025. There will also be the opportunity to meet the new governors at our member coffee morning in December.

Research team helps bring new RSV protection to babies across the UK

A research study delivered at the Trust has helped introduce a new protection against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) for babies across the country.

The Clinical Research team, led by Principal Investigator Dr Girish Gowda, Consultant Paediatrician, and supported by Senior Clinical Research Practitioner Laura McCafferty, recruited 17 babies into the HARMONIE study. The study tested a single antibody injection called Nirsevimab, designed to protect babies under 12 months old from serious illness caused by RSV.



Thanks to the contribution of families here in Swindon and more than 3,000 families across the UK, Nirsevimab has now been approved and included in the national childhood immunisation schedule.

RSV is a common virus that affects the respiratory tract and lungs. For many babies, it causes only mild symptoms such as coughs and colds, but for some, it can lead to serious infections including bronchiolitis and pneumonia, sometimes requiring hospital or even intensive care. Nationally, one in six children admitted to hospital are because of RSV, and one in ten children admitted to intensive care are due to RSV.

Dr Girish Gowda said: "We are delighted to have played a part in this important research, which will help protect so many children from serious illness. I would like to thank all of the families who took part in the study here at GWH. Their contribution has helped achieve a change that will benefit babies across the UK for years to come."

The Clinical Research team at GWH continues to support a wide range of studies, giving patients and families in Swindon and Wiltshire the opportunity to be part of research that improves treatments, care, and outcomes.

Neonatal Transitional Care area opens to families

Maternity staff, local families and charity New Life celebrated the opening of a dedicated neonatal transitional care area at the Great Western Hospital.

The new area provides specialised care for babies born between 35-36 weeks gestation, who need additional feeding support, close monitoring or other specialist support after birth. It means that babies and mothers can now receive specialist care together, rather than babies being cared for in a different unit.

The specialist area also allows partners to stay next to mother and baby overnight, promoting family bonding.

Becky Rex and Craig Lewis welcomed their son on Saturday and are pleased with the care they have received. Becky said: "It's wonderful care and nice for Craig to stay with us, it makes such a difference."

Natalie Emery, Senior Nurse for Neonatal Transitional Care, said: "This new facility shows our commitment to compassionate and family centred care, and I thank our dedicated neonatal and maternity staff, the families we care for and Trevor Goodall from New Life charity for making our vision a reality."

This new area was made possible thanks to New Life, a charity who raise money to support special care babies across the UK.

New Life has donated over £600,000 to the Great Western Hospital since 1995, demonstrating a remarkable commitment to Swindon.

New sculpture 'The Gift of Life' unveiled to mark Organ Donation Week

In the last five years, 18 local people generously donated their organs after death to save the lives of 47 others across the country.

To recognise the gift of life given by all organ donors in Swindon and Wiltshire, the Trust has unveiled a new sculpture on the Great Western Hospital site.

Marking the start of national Organ Donation Week, the sculpture was unveiled by the Episcopo family, who sadly lost their mother Diana a few years ago.

Diana became the oldest donor in the south west, when her organs were donated after her sudden death, to help deliver three life-saving transplants to patients across the country. Joanne Episcopo, daughter of Diana, said: "My mum was a doctor and completely committed to the NHS all her working life. We know that as a donor, her organs helped three different people in improving, and possibly prolonging, their lives.

"She would have been delighted about this, and possibly a little surprised that even at the age of 84 she was still helping people to have better lives.

"It is a fitting tribute to who she was, and as a family we are all very proud of her."

The sculpture, which was created by local artist David Murphy, is a handmade brass and steel sphere, with various organ shapes, such as a liver or heart, set into the metalwork.

He added: "I am so thrilled to have been asked to sculpt this art piece for Great Western Hospitals. My own sister has received a kidney transplant, so I know first hand how important the circle of life is and wanted to show this through my art, for others to reflect and recognise local donor heroes.

"I've chosen to entwine various organs into the brass, to show how everyone is joined together through the extraordinary process of organ donation."

93 people in Wiltshire are currently waiting for an organ, so the Trust's organ donation team are appealing to local people to consider joining the donor register, as part of a national drive to encourage at least 25,000 people to register their decision for the first time.

Malcolm Watters, Consultant in Critical Care and Anaesthesia and Chair of the Organ Donation Committee, said: "In just two minutes, you could help save up to nine lives in the future by confirming your decision on the organ donor register and sharing it with family and colleagues.

"Only a very small number of people die in a way that it is possible for them to be organ donors, so the more people who register as donors, the better chance we have of organ donation being possible.

"Knowing your relatives have registered their wishes makes the choice easier and a much more positive experience for everyone should the time come."

To join the organ donation register, visit: [Register your decision - NHS Organ Donation](#)



Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE)

PLACE assessments involve local people, known as patient assessors, going into hospitals as part of teams to assess how the environment supports the provision of clinical care.

Assessors will attend areas in small groups reviewing things such as privacy and dignity, food, cleanliness, general building maintenance, and how the environment is able to support the care of those with dementia or a disability.

Our assessments start at 9.30am and will take place on the following dates:

- Thursday 16 October
- Tuesday 21 October
- Friday 24 October
- Tuesday 28 October
- Thursday 30 October

Refreshments, lunch, free parking, or travel expenses will be provided for assessors.

To sign up to an assessment or find out more information, email:

- Daniel Purdy, daniel.purdy1@nhs.net
- Tania Currie, tania.currie1@nhs.net

An update from our Trust charity and Voluntary Services

[Brighter Futures](#) is the Trust's registered charity, raising money to support Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The charitable objectives are:

- Enhance the environment for patients and staff in which health services can be delivered
- Enable carers and staff caring for patients to benefit from education and facilities not normally available within the NHS funding, providing it has a link with patient care
- Donate extra equipment and staffing to the Trust above the NHS funding envelope
- Spend funds in accordance with the Charity Commission best practice and in support of the Trust's stated values and ten-year vision.

Great Western Hospital Wellbeing Garden

We are creating a beautiful wellbeing garden to honour and celebrate the lives of those we have lost (to COVID and beyond). This garden will be a lasting legacy, offering families, friends, and colleagues a peaceful place to remember their loved ones for many years to come.

To make the space even more special, local artists will create sculptures celebrating both community talent and the NHS. These will be placed along pathways and planting areas as meaningful talking points. Visitors will also enjoy interactive features, a sensory trail, and fun fact stops with wellbeing messages.

To find out more or to sponsor part of the garden, please contact the Brighter Futures team gwh.fundraising@nhs.net or call 01793 605631.

Donate online

Get involved

Voluntary services

Volunteers transform the experience of patients, visitors, and staff at Great Western Hospital. From helping at mealtimes, encouraging movement, or offering a listening ear, to welcoming visitors and guiding them around the hospital, volunteers play a vital role every day.

We currently have 380 volunteers giving over 2,300 hours a month. With just 3 hours a week and a six-month commitment, you can make a real difference.

Volunteering is open from age 16+, offering valuable skills, insight into NHS careers, and opportunities across many fields.

Join us and help create a warm, supportive hospital environment.

Hospital Radio

Hospital Radio Swindon is a charity providing entertainment and information to patients at GWH and the wider community.

www.hospitalradioswindon.org

Public health talks

These informative talks provide an update on various health topics and offer the opportunity to ask any questions.

- Health and Wellbeing Talk – 4 November 2025, 6pm via Microsoft Teams

Members can request to join the meeting via Sharon Scott. Invites will be sent in October.

Members Coffee Morning

Join us for a chance to network with other Trust members and hear from our Tissue Viability Lead will be sharing updates on the great work and progress made on pressure ulcers at the Trust.

The next members coffee morning will take place at 10am to 12pm on Tuesday 2 December, in Lecture Hall 2 of The Academy at Great Western Hospital.

Stay connected

You can keep up to date with our news and any new vacancies by following us on our [Volunteers Facebook page](#).