



CHIEF EXECUTIVE CONNECTS

Dear Colleague,

13/01/2022

It's hard to believe we are almost two weeks into 2022 – much has happened since we brought in the new year already and we're not yet at our traditionally busy winter peak.

The highly-transmissible Omicron variant is still very much with us and our position in managing COVID within our hospitals and across our healthcare settings remains very challenging. We need to bear in mind that we have not yet seen the effect of New Year celebrations and schools returning so we are continuing to monitor the situation very closely.

Our operational teams meet twice weekly to talk through current pressures and we are working around the clock to ensure we remain ahead of the pandemic at all times. We are needing to change the way we work to maintain optimum service provision and adapt our services to allow us to provide the best possible care.

We have previously needed to initiate temporary closures to our maternity services to ensure we can provide care to those in urgent need and we apologise in advance that temporary closures of this nature are likely to persist through this wave.

One of the biggest issues we are dealing

with is the number of COVID- related staff absences. The current pressure on our workforce is unprecedented. With staff shortages across many of our clinical areas, we have needed to look into redeploying staff from other areas of the organisation and reach out to our volunteer community, while still continuing with our ongoing recruitment programmes. I'd like to thank everyone involved in these huge efforts, you really are making a difference.

Our mass vaccination programme is still going at pace. This week we reached 1,037,946 total vaccinations including 268,566 boosters. If you still haven't received an appointment letter or text, please visit our website and [complete the 'Leave Nobody Behind' form](#). Someone will be in touch with you to arrange a slot.

The ongoing spread of COVID-19 is adding a strain across primary care and we have been working closely with Welsh Government to support GP practices across our communities. We are currently exploring options to extend opening hours to provide additional access for patients and to support Out of Hours and CAV 24/7 services which are both very busy.

The dedication, professionalism and resilience of our staff who continue to go above and beyond in their roles to provide exceptional

care to our patients never ceases to amaze me. Thank you to our partners whom we are working with on a daily basis to keep our services running in these tough times. Please continue to look after yourselves and stay safe over the winter months.

Easing staff pressures

As the pandemic continues to take hold and we face continued pressures on our workforce, there are a number of ways in which we have adapted our services to respond to the immediate challenges of staff shortages but to also future proof the way we work.

We opened two transitional care units – one in St David’s Hospital and one in Lakeside Wing at UHW to care for patients who have finished their acute medical and rehabilitation journey and are waiting for their ongoing care needs to be met.

The staffing model reflects the patients’ needs during their transition of care where Transitional Care Support Workers work alongside a Registered Nurse and are supported by a multi-disciplinary team, made up of allied health professionals, pharmacists and our local authority colleagues, in order to deliver and coordinate an effective and responsive transition to the patients planned discharge destination. GPs provide medical supervision of the patients.

As well as continuing with our recruitment and retention of staff in key areas such as nursing and midwifery, we have bolstered our workforce to address the immediate needs such as redeploying staff from other areas of the health board and bringing in volunteers from across our local communities.

To support our mass vaccination programme, we have reached out to our existing networks to fill a number of roles, from vaccinators to those who can meet and greet patients. We have also filled a number of administration, call handling and appointment scheduling roles.

We have set up an internal workforce resourcing team to support our ongoing recruitment and retention by filling roles that help to free up clinical staff so they can focus more on our patients and less on ward administration.

We have so far received 200 applications for healthcare support worker roles and have now appointed in excess of 150 individuals to substantive or temporary posts. In addition we have created 20 new, ward-based Environment Coordinators to support our clinicians and patient-facing staff. These roles were created as a result of feedback from ward sisters and their responsibilities include greeting visitors to the ward, assisting with stock deliveries, preparing bed areas, answering the ward phones and supporting with administration.

Working in partnership with Shared Services we are fast-tracking critical roles into the health boards, focusing on the priority clinical areas and restructuring our HR team has enabled us to support current pressures and the increased demand for recruitment.

Our Patient Experience and Concerns Team have coordinated moving services centrally that would have been carried out previously by nursing staff which has also helped free up more clinical time, for example by extending the Concerns Team visiting booking line to seven days a week and the facilitation of virtual

visiting for families with a loved one in hospital. To date our Patient Experience Support Workers have provided over 12,000 hours of support to patients on the wards, undertaking virtual visits with family and friends, befriending and providing essential items.

Can you join the fight against COVID-19?

If you would like to help us in the ongoing fight against COVID-19 there are a number of areas across the health board we are looking for extra resource. If you work for another NHS body or government organisation or if you are a retired member of staff who can volunteer your time, you could support us on wards or in clinical areas, at our Mass Vaccination centre or support in office administration, CAV 24/7, Out of Hours or in estates and facilities. If you can help during this challenging period please email workforcerecruitment.cav@wales.nhs.uk and be clear where you would be happy to help.

Executive Nurse Director, Ruth Walker MBE, retires following four decades of nursing

After 12 years at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and four decades in nursing, Executive Nurse Director, Ruth Walker, has announced that she is stepping down from her current role.

Ruth has had a long and illustrious career, working continuously in the NHS in both England and Wales. Joining our Health Board in 2009, Ruth has had the opportunity to work with colleagues at all levels of the organisation and, in 2019, she received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to nursing in the NHS.

Commenting on her departure, Ruth said: "I am incredibly proud to be a nurse and to serve the public, my job has always been about people, developing colleagues, providing high-quality care to patients, and their families. It has been a real pleasure to have had the opportunity to work alongside such an excellent group of colleagues across all levels of the organisation. I have been in a privileged position that has allowed me the opportunity to lead a group of highly skilled, competent, and caring nurses and midwives. However, after much soul-searching and 40 years of service, I have decided to retire from this Executive Nurse role. It is the people I will miss, and I would like to thank all my colleagues clinical and non-clinical for their support, service, and fortitude, especially over the past two years."

Ruth will remain in position until May 2022, allowing for the opportunity to support our new incumbent CEO, Suzanne Rankin and to recruit for her replacement, working closely with Deputy Executive Nurse Director while this process is undertaken.

Ruth and her four decades of nursing experience will be a significant loss to Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, but I understand her reasons for wanting to take a step back. I have had the pleasure of working alongside Ruth as both Medical Director and Interim CEO and have always found her to be a fantastic leader, a calm and resolute character and a supportive colleague.

I trust you will join me in thanking Ruth for her service and commitment over the years and wishing her and her family well and the very best for her future.

To read Ruth's full statement, please [click here](#).



Car parking and sustainable travel update

We are aware of the ongoing issues surrounding car parking and we are continuing to listen to staff and patients around their concerns. Parking is a challenge for our busy hospital sites which is why restrictions need to remain in place to help free up spaces for those who need them.

The free Park and Ride service at UHW and UHL is run by Cardiff Bus who, like us, are facing staff shortages in the current climate. This has affected their timetables for services across some areas of Cardiff as a result, but we are pleased that Cardiff Bus has committed to run our Park and Ride service with no changes to the timetable. We are working

with to extend the frequency of our Park and Ride in line with demand, but because of lack of drivers and vehicles, unfortunately this is not something we can progress immediately but are continuing to monitor.

I please ask that you continue to park responsibly on our sites. If you are a staff member, please only park in the car park stated on your permit and avoid parking illegally such as on double yellow lines and in hatched areas as this can block access and put others' safety at risk.

Recovery and Redesign: Creation of new Peer Carer/Support Worker role

The Mental Health Clinical Board is working with Solace and Community teams to provide a new method of support to carers and families who look after someone with a mental health condition.

COVID-19 has impacted significantly on carers and their own physical and mental wellbeing, with many feeling isolated and suffering from anxiety around returning to doing their previous activities.

Many individuals living with dementia and mental health conditions have also deteriorated during the pandemic, and this has in turn had a negative impact on the people that support and care for them. Services were disrupted or even stopped altogether during COVID and carers need support to navigate through systems to understand what is now available for individuals in their care.

The Mental Health Clinical Board is therefore creating a new, peer carer role to provide support to fellow carers. The role will work with

Solace and the Recovery College to engage with carers and find ways to support them and in turn, reduce their isolation and loneliness.

The postholder will provide activities and interventions to help improve the health and wellbeing for carers that support our service users, signpost individuals to useful resources, and create a network to increase interactions between carers. The role will be advertised for recruitment imminently.

Nurse & ODP Winter Recruitment Event

If you're looking for a new and exciting nursing opportunity, register for our Nurse & ODP Winter Recruitment Event which is taking place on Thursday 20th January 2022, All Nations Centre Cardiff, 3-6pm.

These events allow you to meet some of the team, find out more about the Health Board, and the fantastic roles we have available or coming up.

[Sign up now to avoid missing out.](#)



Gold achievement from Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine

Congratulations to the Non-Ionising Radiation Team at University Hospital of Wales. They have been awarded the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM) President's Gold Medal for exceptional service during the COVID-19 Pandemic for their hard work, flexibility, resilience and performance of the highest standard in adapting service delivery. This has been achieved under extreme

clinical pressures in order to maintain urgent COVID-19 and non COVID vascular imaging, so a huge well done to the team.



Recovery & Wellbeing College Launches Spring Term Prospectus (Part 1)

The Cardiff and Vale Recovery & Wellbeing College has launched part 1 of its Spring Term Prospectus. The college provides free educational courses on a range of mental health, physical health and wellbeing topics. Anyone is welcome to enrol as a student and courses take place online or in-person at venues across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Peer support is at the core of all courses, all co-produced and co-delivered by health care professionals and peer trainers with lived experience of mental and physical health challenges. Course leads use their experience to support others.

Courses available for part 1 of this term include; Understanding Anxiety, Living Well with Fatigue, Men and Mental Health, Staying Healthy in Body and Mind, and many more. Take a look at the [new prospectus](#) and sign up now to avoid missing out.



Cardiff and Vale
**Recovery &
Wellbeing College**