

# Chief Executive CONNECTS



Dear Colleague,

30/03/2021

Last week, we passed the one year anniversary of the UK first being placed into lockdown restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a stark reminder of the impact that this terrible virus has had on all of our lives, but as we reflected on the past 12 months my overwhelming feeling was one of pride for the incredible response of staff right across the healthcare system in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, keeping services going and continuing to treat patients in the most challenging of circumstances.

I was also incredibly proud of the COVID-19: One Year On campaign that was implemented by our Communications team, which captured various elements of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the past year. The [One Year On website](#) that the team created plots the past 12 months with a series of blogs following the themes of response, community, resilience, innovation and hope, which convey just a selection of the sheer volume of activity that our staff have stepped up to deliver throughout the pandemic. It also features a collection of really heart-warming messages of thanks from our community and between colleagues.

On Tuesday, the day of the anniversary, As a Health Board we took part in the Day of Reflection by observing the one minute's silence at 12pm on Tuesday, before lighting up our hospitals in yellow at 8pm alongside the nationwide doorstep vigil. A panel of experts was also assembled from right across our organisation to take part in a Facebook Live

event. It was a very emotional evening as we reflected on our experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and really brought into focus the incredible team effort of everybody across our Health Board in fighting this disease.

The personal sacrifices that people have had to make, the huge challenges that teams and individuals have overcome, the sometimes heart-breaking circumstances within which the teams have had to work, the awesome speed and scale at which we have had to work and the crucial input of our community and partner organisations all came through in the session, which has been seen by more than 16,000 and remains available on our Facebook page. [I would encourage you to watch it here.](#)

It all amounts to something that is bigger than we have ever had to deal with, which will remain with us for the remainder of our lives. I would like to share heartfelt thanks to all of our staff, partners and the wider community for the collaborative effort we have all so far contributed to the COVID-19 response.

However, there is still a long way for us to go in dealing with this terrible virus, and although the vaccination programme continues to make excellent progress and we are beginning to see some of the lockdown restrictions being eased, we are still far from being out of the woods and we need to ward off any complacency.

## Continued

It is that final theme of hope that we all need to remain focused on. Please work with us as we roll out the COVID-19 vaccine as quickly as possible by continuing to observe a

two-metre social distance, wash our hands regularly and wear a face covering as required, so that we continue moving towards a future beyond the pandemic with our loved ones.

## COVID-19 Vaccination Update

It has been another significant week for the Mass Vaccination Programme, as I was pleased to be able to open our fourth Mass Vaccination Centre in Cardiff Bay. The Bayside MVC has further bolstered our capacity to vaccinate our population as quickly as possible, giving further flexibility to offer vaccinations to people closer to their homes.

The following day, a Q&A event was held via Facebook Live with Lorna Bennett, Consultant in Public Health; Darrell Baker, Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Manager; and Tracy Meredith, Head of Operations Testing and Mass immunisation. It was a really valuable session, with three experts giving updates on the Mass Vaccination Programme, addressing some of the misinformation that is being shared about the vaccines, and also answering wide-ranging questions about the vaccines and the vaccination programme, live from members of the public. [You can watch the Q&A here.](#)

I was pleased to see yesterday that we hit another milestone with our Mass Vaccination Programme as we passed the 250,000 mark for vaccines delivered, and moved within touching distance of delivering 200,000 first doses. As it stands, we have delivered 252,455 vaccinations, of which 190,050 are first doses and 62,395 second doses, which means that 46% of our total adult population have received their first dose and 15% of our

adult population have received both doses. As you may have seen, our supplies of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine will temporarily decrease over the next few weeks. To manage this we will be concentrating on second doses within GP Practices for the age 80 and over group and age 75-79. We will also continue to vaccinate priority groups 8 and 9 at our MVCs with their first doses.

Due to the vaccine supply we will reduce our capacity at our Mass Vaccination Centres and Pentwyn MVC will close on the 5th April and reopen on the 12th April. Barry MVC and Holm View MVC will close on Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th April and reopen on Wednesday 7th April. This will enable our staff to take some leave over the Easter holidays. We are anticipating an increase in vaccine supply from 19 April.

I'm pleased to also confirm that we will be increasing our vaccine capacity in Western Vale of Glamorgan from 12th April, as our GP Practices and Community Pharmacies in the area will join to deliver more vaccines – again enabling us to vaccinate more people closer to home.

It's great to see the Mass Vaccination Programme continuing to hit milestones and vaccinating our populations as quickly as possible, which I know our staff will continue to work tirelessly to achieve.

# Introducing the Dragon's Heart Institute

As I mentioned at the start of this newsletter, I am so proud of how every single member of staff at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board went above and beyond in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw the way we work altered in drastic ways as staff were emboldened to innovate and make changes at incredible pace to continue caring for our patients.

We don't want to let that energy, that momentum, and that feeling that everyone can drive meaningful change slip away in the wake of COVID-19. That is why I was very excited to see the preliminary launch of the Dragon's Heart Institute on Friday last week.

The Dragon's Heart Institute will drive transformation within the Health Board, it will spearhead innovation and act as a catalyst for change across public services to improve the outcomes for citizens in Cardiff and the Vale, Wales and beyond.

The Dragon's Heart Institute will provide support and infrastructure to staff, investing in them and making it easier for them to drive change, allowing them to develop their leadership skills, collaborate effectively across traditional organisational boundaries, and connect with partners in other health organisations, industry and academia from Wales and around the world.

Already, the Dragon's Heart Institute has contributed to the COVID-19 Discovery Report, which was published last week, and has established a learning partnership with the King's Fund in order to widely publicise the most valuable lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also contribute to the delivery of Cardiff and Vale UHB's future Spread and Scale Academies and All-Wales Academy for Innovation in Health & Social Care, which was recently announced.

To join the conversation and be part of the Dragon's Heart Institute, visit [www.dragonsheart.org](http://www.dragonsheart.org)

# Transgender Day of Visibility

Tomorrow marks the 12th annual Transgender Day of Visibility, which celebrates the resilience and success of transgender and gender non-conforming people and raises awareness of transgender rights around the world.

The recently-relaunched LGBTQ+ Staff Network is highlighting the event to colleagues and the wider community, in response to reports that transphobic hate crimes have quadrupled in the UK since 2015, but the issue remains largely underreported. It has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, with increasing numbers of trans people being trapped at home, often in unsupportive environments.

We will be flying the progressive at UHW to mark the occasion tomorrow. The LGBTQ+ Staff Network has identified various resources that people can engage with to improve their

understanding of trans issues, as well as action they can take to be effective allies for trans and non-binary people, which will be shared on the Health Board's social media channels and website.

The LGBTQ+ Network was relaunched in February 2021, to provide support and guidance for any LGBTQ+ member of staff, while also working closely with the organisation to create an inclusive workplace for all. In her role as Executive Sponsor for trans issues, our Executive Nurse Director, Ruth Walker will be supporting the group in this work.

The committee is looking to recruit colleagues from trans, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to its committee to ensure its work is representative of these groups. If you are interested, please get in touch with [Rhiannon.Owen4@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Rhiannon.Owen4@wales.nhs.uk).

# Our new partnership with Velindre University NHS Trust

The second meeting of the newly established Cardiff & Vale UHB & Velindre University NHS Trust Partnership Board meeting took place this week. The Partnership Board enables us to work closely together, maximising future strategic development opportunities which will be a great benefit for patients, donors and service users across south east Wales. This note is a summary of the areas of work covered during our latest meeting.

The Partnership Board welcomed the Welsh Government's approval of the Outline Business Case for the next generation Cancer Centre at Velindre and looked forward to working together as the work progresses, recognising the need to keep everyone fully informed of developments.

The Partnership Board identified key areas in the Nuffield Trust report that needed to be developed jointly between Velindre Cancer Centre and Cardiff and Vale UHB and on a regional basis with Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, Aneurin Bevan UHB and Powys Teaching Health Board.

- Our agenda for joint working is ambitious and the initial areas of focus will be:
- the development of the Velindre@UHW model for acutely unwell patients to ensure that patients are seen in the right place, first time;

- developing our joint Research, Development and Innovation programme;
- Haematology-Oncology Service, and
- wider Velindre@ options.

A series of internal and joint clinically led workshops to explore all areas of work further have already taken place and it has been really encouraging to see the work progress quickly.

In addition to these areas, the Partnership Board considered lessons learned following changes to service provision during the pandemic. A particular case in point is the current and future service delivery of the Lung Oncology Service. Previously delivered from University Hospital Llandough, service delivery moved to Velindre Cancer Centre during the pandemic. Our teams are now working closely together and considering numerous options to identify the best, permanent location for future service delivery before a final decision on the future model is agreed.

We are meeting on a monthly basis and look forward to updating you on both our joint and regional work as it progresses. Our next meeting is scheduled for 22 April 2021.

## Transgender Day of Visibility

Since March 2020, NHS staff have been able to access a range of mental health apps to support them through the pandemic.

NHS England and Improvement (NHSEI) has announced that free access to some of the apps is coming to an end, with free subscriptions to the Daylight and Sleepio apps coming to an end tomorrow.

For both of these apps, subscriptions started before tomorrow's deadline will remain active for a year.

[View the full list of apps that are available with expiration dates for free subscription](#)



## Contributing to another COVID-19 study

I'm pleased to be able to share that the Health Board has once again contributed to an important COVID-19 study, this time regarding the impact of COVID-19 on patients receiving common treatment for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

The CLARITY study has been delivered by the Cardiff and Vale Research Delivery Team, through both the Adult IBD team at University Hospital Llandough and at the Children and Young Adult's Research Unit.

Led by gastroenterologists at the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Exeter Medical School and supported by Crohn's and Colitis UK and the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the study's findings indicate that the commonly-prescribed IBD drug infliximab limits the immune system response to COVID-19 infection, potentially increasing the risk of reinfection.

It's a really important finding as it will help to inform the management of patients with Colitis and Crohn's diseases during the pandemic.

The study will continue to follow the participants for 40 weeks to further investigate the impact of immunosuppressive drugs on immunity to COVID-19, further enabling us to understand and manage patients' needs.

I am delighted that our R&D staff have contributed to yet another important clinical trial, and it is great on this occasion to see that effective partnership working across teams to run the trial across both adult and paediatric participants. Congratulations and thank you to our staff and patients who have taken part. [Find out more about the CLARITY trial at Cardiff and Vale UHB.](#)

## Saying fond farewells

In the space of a week, we have had to say a few fond farewells to a trio of staff who have between them committed more than a century of service to the Health Board.

Paediatric ENT Nurse Practitioner Val Willmott is retiring tomorrow after more than 50 years' service with the NHS. Val undertook her training at Cardiff Royal Infirmary in 1968, before at 18 she became part of the first cohort of staff to work at the University Hospital of Wales when it officially opened in 1971. For several years she even lived on site.

After finishing her training she went into neurosurgery and spent time looking after patients in intensive care. Then after returning from maternity leave, she worked part-time as a bank nurse before taking up a role in the Ely Children's Ears, Nose and Throat Hospital. She then had to retrain to become a fully-qualified

children's nurse and has been working in the Noah's Ark Children's Hospital since it opened in 2015.



Val has shared her invaluable experience with Health Boards throughout Wales and hospitals in England such as Great Ormond Street, teaching families and staff in hospitals and the community. I know that Val will be hugely missed by her colleagues and throughout this community, but on behalf of the Health Board I would like to wish her my warmest wishes for her well-deserved retirement. Thank you, congratulations and all the best, Val.

Also retiring tomorrow is Sue Holman, who has been a district nurse in Barry, Dinas Powys and Penarth for the past 27 years. With more than 40 years' experience in the NHS, Sue's years of commitment have culminated with her contributing to our employees' significant, outstanding effort in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current restrictions mean that Sue can't celebrate her retirement in the style that she would like, but I would like to thank her for her tremendous service to the NHS over a number of years. Congratulations on your retirement Sue – hopefully you can celebrate fully in the not-too-distant future.



We have also in the past week said goodbye to videographer Carl Rogers, who after 20 years of exemplary service with the Health Board has called 'cut' on his time with us to pursue an exciting video production opportunity with a live events company in Bristol.

Carl first joined our Medical Illustration team



where he delivered clinical photography and video services,

before moving to our Communications Team four and a half years ago, where he took up a completely new post as the health board's videographer.

I first met Carl when I had to undertake a media interview exercise as part of the interview process for the CEO post with the Health Board. I've recently learned that that was Carl's most nerve-wracking moment during his time at the Health Board, but he was the consummate professional and calmness personified – which are traits that Carl has consistently shown during the countless occasions that I have had the pleasure of working with him.

Carl is well known throughout the Health Board, having done a wonderful job documenting the organisation over the years – not least during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the many stories he has captured, such as the incredibly moving Teddy's story of a young patient who became the world's youngest organ donor, Carl will leave an indelible legacy here with us.

# Genomics Showcase 2021

- Friday 14th May
- 10am - 7pm
- Free Virtual Event

**REGISTER**



## Free bike checks

Working with local charity Cardiff Pedal Power, funded by Cardiff & Vale Health Charity, free bike health checks will be taking place around Cardiff and Vale University Health Board sites.

[Read more](#)

## Nathan's new book

Cardiff & Vale Health Charity Patron, Artist Nathan Wyburn has just released a book reflecting on his art over the past year. 100% of each book sold is donated to the Health Charity.

[Find out more about Nathan's book "2020 Diary of Artist Nathan Wyburn"](#)

## Reflect with Dan's prints

As a reflection of the past 12 months, Artist Dan Peterson has released new prints of the Lakeside Wing at University Hospital of Wales.

[Purchase your copy](#)

## Affordable artwork

An affordable art sale is now taking place from the current Hearth Gallery exhibition "Holding on to Hope". The artworks created with the Beth Morris Workshops Team and their students of all ages and abilities, bringing words, pictures and hope together.

[Read more](#)

## Charity COVID-19 Expenditure report

The Health Charity has published how it has been spending COVID-19 funds to make a difference to patients and staff at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

[Read more](#)

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