



DEPUTY CEO CONNECTS

Dear Colleague,

2/12/2021

The news of new variant, Omicron, has cast a shadow across society just as we were starting to come out of the third wave. The picture and scale of the potential spread of this new variant is currently unclear, but what is clear is that we all need to take reasonable steps again to keep ourselves and our families safe. The restrictions placed around our lives is unpopular and in the health service we have felt the backlash with patients and the community who are fed up of the current situation. However, our approach will always remain patient and public safety first and I would reiterate the need to still follow the guidance. [Keep up to date with latest guidance from Welsh Government here.](#)

On a positive note, hospital admissions for COVID-19 delta variant are beginning to reduce but there is still huge demand on our system. Last week Professor Stuart Walker talked about where those pressures are and in particular, highlighted our care packages and domiciliary care in the community. At present we have approximately 200 people, mainly in over 65 age group, who are medically fit to go home but are unable to find a suitable package of care to help support them remain in their own homes and to prevent them from de-conditioning further - a really important part of individuals still wanting to lead an independent life in their own homes. The reasons for this are purely based on staffing

availability – which is affecting local authorities as much as it is affecting the Health Board. Our colleagues in social care are finding it difficult with significant staff shortages. We have opened up a transition ward in St David's Hospital and are constantly working with our colleagues in the local authorities to try and keep our system flowing.

We are continuing to make progress on our plans to reduce the backlog as well as manage current demand. Over the next few weeks, you will see two additional ophthalmology theatres and mobile endoscopy units on our estate and we continue to do significant work in urgent and elective surgery. Overall surgery activity is at 84% of pre-COVID-19 activity, however, this includes activity undertaken within independent sector hospitals. The caveat to this is of course that trying to tackle the huge backlog of waiting lists we need to be operating at a much higher rate than this. We will keep you updated on progress.

As always, we would like to ask for the support of our community and I would urge you to please go for your flu jab and COVID-19 booster and to use NHS services prudently. We have lots of ways in which you can help us to help you.

While we are all under pressure, from GP practices to acute hospital sites, our frontline staff are very much feeling it. Yet again we are asking them to step up and to work in different areas and in ways in which are unfamiliar to them or not in areas they would choose. I am always humbled by their tenacity, resilience and loyalty to their patients and the community. However, we have seen an increase in the level of verbal and physical abuse of our staff with a number of reported incidents. As a Health Service focused on caring for people and keeping them well, this is totally unacceptable and we are committed to taking action against those individuals who behave in this way towards our staff.

This week we were lucky enough to host a Shine Bright appeal event at University Hospital Wales where we lit up stars, the Christmas tree and a Guardian Angel to commemorate and remember all of the staff and patients we have lost through COVID -19 over the past two years. A small gesture but important to let our staff and patients know we remember them and that for the rest of us we still need some joy in our lives and a reason to smile in some challenging times.



1. Plan your journey to our hospitals and think sustainably

A reminder to our patients, staff and visitors that car parking restrictions are being reintroduced from 1 December. Please take a look at our website for the latest information about what you need to do if you are traveling to our sites by car. In line with our commitments to sustainable travel, we encourage you to plan your journey in advance and think about the best way of traveling to our hospitals.

We are one of very few city hospitals which provides car parking, and while we recognise its importance, caring for people and keeping people well will remain our core priority, along with compliance with our governance responsibilities.

We know that we don't have enough car parking spaces for everyone who would like one, so, if you have the option to travel in other ways, we ask you to look into our free Park and Ride service to UHW and UHL which offers a convenient and sustainable way of getting to and from our hospitals. [For more information on locations and timetables, please visit our website.](#)



I'm encouraged to see that these services are being made use of and it goes without saying that the more demand we have for this mode of transport, more reason we have to extend the

service to appeal to those who need to travel from different locations and at different times.

Our sites are all accessible by public transport and we also promote cycling and walking to our hospitals for those who can.

Another way to help us reduce traffic is through patient transport. If you have booked patient transport and you no longer need it, please don't forget to cancel it. Around one in ten journeys are not needed, so you can help reduce the number of wasted journeys by getting in touch with www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk

2. Vaccine update

COVID-19 Booster Programme Update

In light of the threat posed by the new Variant of Concern, Omicron, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended an acceleration to the vaccination programme.

Welsh Government has confirmed that the Autumn Booster Programme in Wales will be extended, and all adults aged 18 to 39 years should be offered a booster, in order of descending age groups, to increase their levels of protection.

By extending eligibility and reducing the interval for booster, the aim is to reduce the impact of the new variant on our population, ahead of a potential wave of infection.

The booster will be offered in order of descending age groups, with priority given to the vaccination of older adults and those in a COVID-19 at-risk group. In response to the changing risk posed by the Omicron variant, the booster will now be given no sooner than 3

months after the primary course.

We will be vaccinating with mRNA vaccines at all our sites, these vaccines have been approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. These mRNA vaccines have been shown to substantially increase antibody levels when offered as a booster dose.

When will I get my booster?

We will be aiming to vaccinate people as soon as possible at least 3 months after second doses were given. As outlined above, priority will be given to the vaccination of older adults and those in a COVID-19 at-risk group, which may mean that you will receive your booster after the 3-month interval.

We are currently working through the details of our programme and will provide an update on the booster roll-out to further age cohorts in due course. At this stage you do not need to contact your GP practice or the Health Board, when it's your turn we will contact you directly to invite you for your booster vaccination. Please therefore wait to be contacted with the details of your appointment.

Why should I get vaccinated?

Now more than ever, with the threat of this new variant, it is important that people come forward for their appointments when invited, especially those who have yet to take up their first dose.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally urge everyone invited for a vaccination to please prioritise their appointment, getting vaccinated offers excellent protection against COVID-19, by preventing

serious illness it has saved lives and prevented many people from needing to go to hospital. If you have already been offered an appointment please keep this appointment, cancelling or delaying an appointment means someone else may have to wait longer to get protected.

It's also important that we all continue to practice the government guidance. Washing hands, social distancing and mask wearing are all proven ways of reducing the spread of COVID-19. Whether you are a staff member, a patient or a visitor to our healthcare settings, please continue to adhere to this national guidance to protect yourself and those around you.

Update on 12-15 year olds

The JCVI has now advised that young people aged 12 to 15 years should receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose.

The decision to have a COVID-19 vaccine is a choice for each individual to make.

We are encouraging people to discuss their choice as a family, and take time to look up accurate information from trusted sources, such as [‘Vaccination information for children and young people on the Public Health Wales website’](#).

If you choose to take up the offer, please take the appointment offered to you – even if this means prioritising it ahead of regular activities. The slots are provided specifically for this age group.

We are asking that everyone in the 12-15 age group to please wait to be contacted, due to

the 12-week gap requirement from first primary dose, we will start inviting the majority of this group for their second dose at the beginning of 2022. Please therefore wait to be contacted with the details of your appointment.

For a full update and further information please visit the Immunisation and Vaccinations section of our website by clicking [here](#).

3. Recovery and Redesign Update – Children and Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Services

Cardiff and Vale delivers a range of services for children and young people experiencing emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns, from mild to moderate needs to complex acute mental health conditions.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had already seen a 30% increase in demand for services and this has been further exacerbated by the pandemic. We’ve seen heightened demand from young people with eating disorders and higher than usual numbers of young people presenting in acute mental health crisis. This has unfortunately meant longer waiting times for patients.

We want to reduce the waiting times for children, young people and families who require support from our services, and ensure they receive this support at the right time. We also want to improve patient care and experience through improved clinical interventions and, where appropriate, reduce the length of stay in hospital, working with children and young people’s networks to deliver their care collaboratively in their community.

We are increasing our capacity across different parts of the service by introducing a range of new roles from different professional backgrounds. We hope these new roles will support longer term sustainability to allow us to meet this increased demand for services. Some of the key initiatives include:

- Creation of a dedicated assessment team
- Extension of the CAMHS crisis service to 24/7
- Introduction of a new Intensive Home Treatment Service including resource to support acute inpatient admissions
- Further development of the CYP Specialist Eating Disorder Service and extension of our assessment clinic model

We are continuing to recruit a number of other roles across the service and our recent recruitment event was well-attended by a range of professionals. These posts will be advertised on Trac. Please visit Jobs - Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (NHS Wales)) to find out more.

More information about Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services can be found on our new website: Home - Children, Young People And Families (cavyoungwellbeing.wales)

New Mental Health Single Point of Access for Professionals Working with Young People

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has launched a new 'Single Point of Access' for professionals working with children and young people with emotional wellbeing or mental health challenges.

The new Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Single Point of Access has been introduced to streamline processes and enhance access to services. The line can be accessed for advice on whether a referral to specialist services will meet an individual's needs and for information on the wider support available. This will help professionals and the Health Board to ensure a child or young person is directed to the most appropriate services upon referral.

4. Staff recognised at awards

I'd like to share my congratulations with Rehabilitation Coach, Beverley Holdcroft, who last week won an Outstanding Achievement award at the annual Advanced Healthcare Awards, which celebrate the work of allied health professionals, healthcare scientists and those who work alongside them in support roles.



Beverley, who has remarkably worked for the Health Board as a Neuro Rehab Coach for 31 years, was recognised for her excellent contribution to continuing to provide the Community Neurological Service during the pandemic, adapting countless face-to-face classes into virtual sessions, which attendees reported as being their life line. She has also been a great support in coaching service users who struggled with using virtual systems, and

has routinely contacted patients to check-in on their wellbeing.

I'd like to congratulate Beverley for her richly-deserved success, and thank her for the excellent dedication, commitment and adaptability that she has shown particularly over the course of the pandemic, which is very much reflective of the efforts of her colleagues both within the Community Neurological Service and right across the organisation.

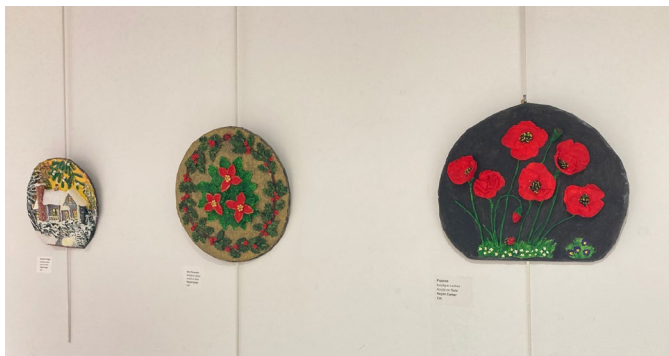
A special mention also to the Acute Radicular Pain Pathway Team, this team entered the Recognising Excellence in Rehabilitation Category and were highly commended for their project.

Well done Beverley and the Acute Radicular Pain Pathway Team!

Arts for Health & Wellbeing

'So Much Gained' Exhibition

The Arts for Health and Wellbeing Programme is excited to present the 'So Much Gained' exhibition by the Patient Experience Team Volunteers at the Plaza in University Hospital Llandough. Showcasing artwork created in a variety of mediums, the exhibition highlights the importance of Patient Experience Team Volunteers to Cardiff and Vale Health Board, and celebrates their amazing skills and talents.



Transgender Day of Remembrance

To mark Transgender Day of Remembrance, the Arts for Health and Wellbeing Programme showcased its recent commission with transgender artist, Jaydan Alexander, and support of the LGBTQ+ community through PRIDE and inclusion exhibitions and also the commissioning of art for the Welsh Gender Service.



Health Charity News

Wales HIV Testing Week

Artist and Cardiff & Vale Health Charity Patron, Nathan Wyburn, marks the launch of Wales HIV Testing Week with his latest commission for the Arts for Health and Wellbeing Programme. Nathan created this portrait of Mark Ashton, a British gay rights activist and co-founder of the Lesbians and Gays (LGSM) support group, using charcoal sourced from Wales.



Christmas Supermarket Collections

Are you able to volunteer two hours of your time this month to raise funds for the Arts for Health and Wellbeing Programme this Christmas? To take part in our local supermarket collections, please email fundraising.cav@wales.nhs.uk

ARTS
FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

GIVE BACK THIS CHRISTMAS!

We are looking for
volunteers to help with our
Christmas collections in
local supermarkets on 14th
and 15th December 2021

If you can help, please contact us on:
02921 836042 or
fundraising.cav@wales.nhs.uk