

Council of Governors

Report from the Chief Executive, Jo Farrar

COVID pandemic update

In line with other hospitals in a level four incident, Kington Hospital has been under enhanced levels of pressure since the start of the new year, as a consequence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Recently we have seen an increase in patients requiring more complex levels of clinical intervention adding to the pressure of managing a rise in the number of patients in the hospital testing positive for COVID-19 and staffing pressures resulting from COVID-19 related illness and isolation.

Current data however indicates that we may have passed this peak in pressure, and we are cautiously optimistic that the position is improving.

At the time of writing, we are caring for 57 patients who have tested positive for COVID in the hospital. This is significantly less than during previous peaks in the pandemic and has reduced over recent weeks, which demonstrates the positive impact of the roll out of the national vaccination programme in keeping people out of intensive care beds.

The daily and cumulative numbers of patients in Kingston Hospital who tested positive since last year are published online and [are available here](#).

With COVID infection still prevalent, we are maintaining all our infection prevention and control measures that are in place across the hospital – a one-way system around the hospital site, mask wearing for staff, patients and visitors (or visors, if a patient or visitor is exempt from wearing a mask) and promoting good hand hygiene, to help keep infection rates to a minimum.

Increasing levels of staff turnover is creating workforce pressures and we are taking some action to address this. Meanwhile, supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff and encouraging colleagues to have regular breaks, remains an absolutely priority for us, as staff have reported feelings of exhaustion and fatigue having worked under significant amounts of pressure for many months.

Our Emergency Department has been extremely busy during this recent peak, but I am pleased to report that we have continued with planned levels of elective activity throughout the period.

COVID-19 staff vaccination

The Government recently announced that they will be reconsidering the agreed approach to vaccination against COVID-19 as a condition of deployment in CQC registered roles.

As a Trust, we had been focusing our efforts on working towards meeting the Government's legal deadline of 1 April for staff to have received a first and second dose of the COVID vaccine, however the deadlines for mandatory vaccination are now under review and we are awaiting further guidance from NHSE/I.

Notwithstanding the recent announcement, we are continuing to do all that we can to offer support to our staff to get vaccinated. Our on-site vaccination clinic ran from 4 January to 3 February, offering first, second and booster doses of the COVID vaccine to all staff (including our contracted staff) and our established expert panel are continuing to offer confidential conversations for any member of staff who has concerns about being vaccinated.

On Friday 4 February we also held a listening event on mandatory vaccination, which was open to all staff and offered an opportunity for discussion around the current situation.



Quality

Sharing site management practices with other hospitals

NHS England and NHS Improvement's elective and emergency care improvement support team recently visited Kingston Hospital to speak with Tracey Moore (Director of Operations), Berenice Constable (Interim Deputy Chief Nurse) and Louise Hogh (Chief of Medicine, Unplanned Care) about our site management and escalation practices.

The team created a short film to be shared with other Trusts across the country, as part of a winter support resource pack. You can watch the film [here](#).

#HelloMyNames badges for Kingston Hospital staff

Thanks to funding from Kingston Hospital Charity, we are continuing to roll out yellow #HelloMyNames badges to staff across the Trust, supporting a [campaign founded by Dr Kate Granger MBE](#) to promote the importance of introductions within the healthcare community.

Each member of Kingston Hospital staff can order their own yellow badge with their preferred name, to help facilitate a simple introduction between staff and patients, and to prompt staff to ask each patient what they would like to be called. This initiative has been extremely well supported by all professional groups, many of whom are expecting to receive their badges in the weeks ahead.

The new standard name badge consists of bold black text on a yellow background and incorporates the #HelloMyNameIs logo to help support communications between our staff and patients, and to help us ensure we are continuing to deliver patient-centred, accessible, and compassionate care.

Kingston Hospital awarded for commitment to patient safety by the National Joint Registry

Kingston Hospital has been named as a National Joint Registry (NJR) Quality Data Provider for the second year running, following the successful completion of a national programme of local data audits.

The NJR monitors the performance of hip, knee, ankle, elbow, and shoulder joint replacement operations to improve clinical outcomes primarily for the benefit of patients, but also to support orthopaedic clinicians and industry manufacturers. The registry collects high quality orthopaedic data to provide evidence to support patient safety, standards in quality of care, and overall cost-effectiveness in joint replacement surgery. The 'NJR Quality Data Provider' certificate scheme was introduced to offer hospitals a blueprint for reaching high quality standards relating to patient safety and to reward those who have met registry targets.

In order to achieve the award, hospitals are required to meet a series of six ambitious targets during the audit period 2020/21.

National Joint Registry Medical Director, Mr Tim Wilton, said: "Congratulations to colleagues at Kingston Hospital. The Quality Data Provider Award demonstrates the high standards being met towards ensuring compliance with the NJR and is often a reflection of strong departmental efforts to achieve such status. Registry data now provides an important source of evidence for regulators, such as the Care Quality Commission, to inform their judgements about services, as well as being a fundamental driver to inform improved quality of care for patients."

Our People

Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs appointed Chair in Common

Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs will join us as Chair in Common of Kingston Hospital and Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust (HRCH) from 1 April 2022.

Sukhvinder will take over the reins from Sian Bates, whose term as Chairman comes to an end on 31 March 2022. This appointment will further support the work HRCH and Kingston Hospital teams are doing together to improve health services for local people.

Appointment to Chief Executive role at HRCH

Following a formal interview process, I am delighted to have been appointed as the Chief Executive of HRCH where I have been interim Chief Executive since April 2021. This is in addition to my role as Chief Executive at Kingston Hospital.

I am very much looking forward to continuing my work at HRCH and to supporting plans for the integration and development of staff and services across the two NHS Trusts.

Annual staff awards

On 14 January we launched our annual staff awards, to help us recognise, thank, and celebrate some of the brightest stars in our organisation. Nominations are open until 14 February, with 14 award categories for staff members to put colleagues forward for.

In addition, our 'Patient's Choice Award' is open for members of the public to nominate ([here](#)) an individual or team who have had a real impact on improving their experience of using our services. The winners of our annual staff awards will be recognised at a virtual ceremony later in the spring.

Specialist Audiologist presented with 'Audiologist of the Year' award

At the end of last year, Geoff Whitby, Specialist Audiologist at Kingston Hospital, was presented with the British Academy of Audiology (BAA) 'Peggy Chalmers Audiologist of the Year' award. This prestigious award recognises an audiologist who stands out from the crowd with regards to patient care, and who has gone above and beyond to put patients first. Geoff currently leads our post COVID hearing screening service, supporting patients who report hearing and tinnitus concerns.

Systems & Partnerships

South West London Integrated Care System Significant progress has been made in preparing for the new statutory South West London (SWL) Integrated Care System (ICS) which will be made up of three parts:

1. 'Places' / boroughs (Croydon, Merton, Kingston, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth)
2. Provider collaboratives
3. SWL level ICS

We have been notified through the NHS 2022/23 Priorities and Operational Guidance (published 24 December 2021) that to allow sufficient time for the remaining parliamentary stages, a new target date of 1 July 2022 has been agreed for statutory arrangements to take effect and for Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)

to be legally and operationally established. National and local plans for ICS implementation will now be adjusted to reflect the new target date, with an extended preparatory phase from 1 April 2022 up to the point of commencement of the new statutory arrangements.

The new target date is expected to have limited impact on the SWL timelines for the development of the ICS.

To help health and care leaders to work better together, the King's Fund recently ran a simulation event to enable us to think through how as a system we might tackle future potential scenarios. You can watch a short film to find out more about the day [here](#).

Kingston and Richmond Place development

The development of both Kingston and Richmond Places has continued, with individual borough-based Place Transition Committees meeting monthly. The membership of both committees is made up of acute, community and mental health NHS Trusts, primary care, social care, public health, voluntary sector and Healthwatch representatives.

Where appropriate, both Places have collaborated and focused on joint objectives, overseen by the integrated Kingston and Richmond Place Leaders' Group which also meets monthly. Areas of collaboration include:

- Primary Care - Once Voice: Engaging with primary care colleagues to support the transition to the ICS
- Obesity: A joint plan in development with dedicated support to work with system partners
- Supporting PCN development: Regular engagement with PCN CDs to establish how the Places can support them and respond to their needs e.g., updating of the hospitals Access Policy to allow internal clinician to clinician referrals, reducing the requests to GPs to make referrals
- Clinical Leaders' Group: A well-established group of primary and secondary care colleagues collaborating to improve pathways of care
- Kingston and Richmond post COVID services: Successful establishment of local integrated services for those experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19

To support the development of both Places, a supporting governance structure has been put in place, building on existing groups and forums where possible. The national ICS planning guidance also sets out the key leadership roles that each Place needs to have, including a Convenor, an Executive Lead, Primary Care Provider, and Primary Care Development.

Both Places have also undertaken a refresh of their individual Health and Care Plans for 2022-2024. The plans include some of the health and care priorities that no single organisation can achieve alone. The plans will be approved by the appropriate Health and Wellbeing Board before 31 March 2022.

Working with our partners at HRCH: Better Together

New leadership arrangements across Kingston Hospital and HRCH are supporting us to join up acute and community NHS services. Coming together and sharing our resources better will also allow us to achieve things that we could never do as individual organisations - removing barriers to care and providing services that meet the needs of local people in a far more holistic way.

Towards the end of last year, the boards of both trusts agreed that to further these improvements, from April 2022, we will bring the executive leadership teams of Kingston Hospital and HRCH together as one, to help us further develop our partnership. We are currently consulting with members of both executive teams about this and will share more about the future leadership structures when we can.

Through an extensive engagement plan, we have discussed our plans with our health and care partners in Hounslow, East Elmbridge, Kingston and Richmond.

We have established a governance group with members from both organisations (including non-executive directors) and this group has been working through the terms of reference for a Committee in Common, including membership and other governance arrangements. The governance group is also looking at the sub-committee structures which will be needed to support our future governance arrangements.

We have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out our formal commitment to the Better Together Programme and gives us the flexibility to add additional partner organisations at a later date.

We will remain as individual trusts, but we aim to establish a Committee in Common from 1 April, which will make key strategic decisions. This will streamline decision making and focus on collaboration to improve outcomes for local people.

For staff, this partnership will lead to a much broader range of career opportunities as well as the ability to move between NHS organisations, which will help us to retain NHS staff in Hounslow, Kingston and Richmond boroughs.

Supporting patients at home in 'virtual wards'

Kingston Hospital, HRCH and primary care partners, have recently launched 'virtual wards' for respiratory and cardiology patients. The virtual ward initiative has been designed to support patients to stay at home (rather than being in hospital) with their condition monitored remotely if it is safe to do so.

This new model, which involves specialist clinical staff across the hospital and in community settings, sees collaboration between Kingston Hospital and HRHC colleagues, as well as GP partners, to provide the most appropriate care for patients and to reduce some of the pressures on hospital inpatient beds.

Our cardiology virtual ward, which has been up and running since mid-December, has already treated 21 patients and screened a total of 190. The team caring for these patients include a clinical lead, two consultants, specialist nurses and physiotherapists.

Every patient is carefully assessed and counselled by specially trained clinical staff before discussing with them whether they would like to be treated by the virtual ward team at home rather than stay in hospital. Patients are shown how to use the virtual ward monitoring equipment which they then take home with them, allowing them to be monitored in the same way as they would be on a real-life ward.

You can watch a short film about the virtual ward project [here](#).

Sustainability

NHS priorities for 2022

NHS England has set out 10 priorities for the 2022-23 financial year in its annual planning guidance.

The 10 priorities are:

- Workforce investment, including “strengthening the compassionate and inclusive culture needed to deliver outstanding care”
- Responding to COVID-19
- Delivering “significantly more elective care to tackle the elective backlog”
- Improving “the responsiveness of urgent and emergency care and community care capacity”
- Increasing timely access to primary care, “maximising the impact of the investment in primary medical care and primary care networks”
- Maintaining “continued growth in mental health investment to transform and expand community health services and improve access”
- Using data and analytics to “redesign care pathways and measure outcomes with a focus on improving access and health equity for underserved communities”
- Achieving “a core level of digitisation in every service across systems”

- Returning to and better “pre-pandemic levels of productivity”
- Establishing integrated care boards and collaborative system working, and “working together with local authorities and other partners across their ICS to develop a five-year strategic plan for their system and places”

NHSE Chief Executive, Amanda Pritchard, makes clear in an introduction that many of its goals remain contingent on COVID stating:

“The objectives set out in this document are based on a scenario where COVID-19 returns to a low level and we are able to make significant progress in the first part of next year.”

Multi-agency discharge events

As a Trust, we recently organised two multi-agency discharge (MADE) events to help facilitate an increase in the numbers of patients being discharged from hospital, where possible. Working alongside HRCH, Your Healthcare, primary care and voluntary sector colleagues, our teams were focused on enabling patients to be at home, or in an appropriate community setting, freeing up inpatient beds in the hospital.

These focused events provided a worthwhile opportunity for us to review our own processes and shone a light on some practical improvements that we can make in how we work together on patient discharge, moving forward.

Patient portal launch

We are continuing work with two other trusts in South West London (St George’s and Croydon) to develop an online portal accessible on a mobile phone, giving patients easy access to the information they need for their outpatient appointments. St George's is scheduled to go live with the portal at the end of February 2022, with Kingston due to follow later in the Spring.

To ensure that the portal offers the best possible experience for all our patients, we will be engaging with the local community through a series of focus groups, with the support of the Trust’s Patient Experience team.

Electronic Document Management (EDM) system rolled out to specialties across the Trust

We are continuing to extend our system for storing patient health records electronically, creating a paper-lite system across the Trust. Once a patient’s paper records have been scanned, their hospital record can be accessed at any time, by any health professional at Kingston Hospital, enabling us to enhance the quality of care we’re delivering.

The new tool is currently being rolled out throughout the Trust, with training being delivered to staff in each specialty. The services that have gone live so far include Colposcopy, Gynaecology, Maternity, Pain Clinic & Anaesthetics, and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Restorative Dentistry. Ear Nose and Throat, Audiology, Dermatology and Plastic Surgery are all due to go live before the end of February.

Research and Innovation team support Kingston University students with MPharm Masters

Our Research and Innovation team are currently supporting students from Kingston University, to carry out service evaluations alongside Kingston Hospital staff in the Wolverton Centre and Diabetes service, as part of their MPharm Masters courses.

Two university students are working in the Wolverton Centre to review prescribing compliance and to help ensure patients are treated according to relevant national guidelines. A further two students are working in the Diabetes service, to evaluate the effectiveness of continuous glucose monitoring for Type 1 diabetic patients.

Developments on the hospital site

As part of the Trust's estates strategy and vision to enhance hospital services, there are several development projects currently underway on the hospital site:

- External deconstruction of Roehampton Wing has started and is due for completion mid-March. This area will be converted to a car park.
- Demolition of the former Command Centre/Stores has started. Once demolished, a car park will be constructed and the foundations for the new ENT and Audiology department will be laid.
- Work is underway in Main Outpatients Radiology to enhance our CT scanner capacity and is due to be completed by the end of March.
- Work to build the Gynaecology Outpatients department has started at the front of the hospital and is due for completion in August.
- The Emergency Department is being refurbished to improve patient flow, with improvements including an expanded waiting area and renewed staff rest and reporting room in radiology, refurbished kitchen and linen store, two additional cubicles for majors triage, reconfiguration of ancillary spaces in the Clinical Decisions Unit (CDU), and a new lobby, extra triage cubicle and changes to access/subdivisions of waiting space in the entrance area. This work is due to be completed at the end of February.
- Conversion work in Main Outpatients to develop five new outpatient rooms for direct patient care
- Building works to relocate the Assessment on the Day (AOD) Unit from its temporary site, due for completion in early March.

Media coverage

BBC News visited Kingston Hospital in early January, following a request from NHS England for us to let the public know about current pressures and the steps we are taking to keep services running. The coverage featured a short interview with Dr Louise Hogh, Chief of Medicine.

BBC News returned later in the month to film in our cancer services about the increasing numbers of people accessing cancer services nationally. Sarb Sandhu, our Chief of Surgery, featured in this news piece.

Our Chief Operating Officer, Mairead McCormick, recently featured on a podcast created by Richmond Council, to update local residents on the current situation within hospitals, and in particular, staff shortages and current COVID-19 infections. You can listen to the podcast [here](#).