

Executive Summary

Report to the Board of Directors

Being Held on 28 March 2023

Subject	Board of Directors' Out and About Visits
Supporting TEG Member	Sandi Carman, Assistant Chief Executive
Author	Helen Warriss, Executive Assistant Joanne Woodward, Personal Assistant
Status	Note

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide a summary update on the visits that have taken place, by members of the Board during February and March 2023.

KEY POINTS

The following visits have taken place since the last Board of Directors' meeting:

- Facilities: Catering and Reception (Royal Hallamshire Hospital) by Tony Buckham and Kirsten Major on 27 February 2023
- Patient and Healthcare Governance (Royal Hallamshire Hospital) by Ros Roughton, Mark Gwilliam and Steve Barks on 2 March 2023
- Medical Records and IT Desktop Support (Royal Hallamshire Hospital) by Ros Roughton, Mark Tuckett and Shirley Sherwood on 7 March 2023

As previously noted, from October 2022 to April 2023 our Out and About visits will primarily focus on Corporate/non-clinical areas.

Each visit has been hosted by colleagues in the respective area, Board members and Governors would like to extend their thanks to the individuals involved and the courtesy shown during the visits.

To note, during February and March a number of visits were stood down due to operational pressures associated with recent industrial action, these are in the process of being rebooked.

IMPLICATIONS

AIM OF THE STHFT CORPORATE STRATEGY		TICK AS APPROPRIATE
1	Deliver the Best Clinical Outcomes	✓
2	Provide Patient Centred Services	✓
3	Employ Caring and Cared for Staff	✓
4	Spend Public Money Wisely	
5	Create a Sustainable Organisation	
6	Deliver Excellent Research, Education and Innovation	

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trust Board of Directors is asked to note the contents of the update on the Out and About visits that have taken place in February and March 2023.

In November 2021, the Trust launched a scheduled programme of out and about visits for Board members to visit all Directorates, pairing both a Non-Executive and Executive Director. Further to reinstating the programme of visits in March 2022, it was agreed to invite Council of Governors' members to join future visits.

The scheduled programme of visits to Corporate areas commenced in September 2022 and will be completed by end of April 2023. The second programme of visits to Clinical areas will commence in May 2023.

During February and March 2023, the following visits took place and key points to note are as follows:

Facilities: Catering and Reception, Royal Hallamshire Hospital [Tony Buckham and Kirsten Major]

Met with Andrew Jones (Head of Facilities) and Emma Wilson (Head of Catering). They took us through the key issues and challenges of Facilities which largely revolve around staffing of their areas and provision of quality catering services for patients and staff.

The interim catering manager joined and took us around the food preparation, kitchens and food storage areas which provide pre-prepared meals for patients and staff.

We then visited a couple of reception areas on B and C floors.

- Facilities, in common with most industries, have challenges in both recruiting, retaining and motivating staff who occupy jobs at the lower end of the pay spectrum. It was recognised that sickness levels were high, and comment was made regarding the difficulties working with existing staff attendance policies.
- There are a high level of Facilities staff approaching retirement age and succession planning for key supervisory and management roles is challenging.
- Andrew and Emma have numerous avenues for recruitment but have real competition with other retail outlets in the city to attract and retain staff.
- NHS Professionals (NHSP) is used to supply staff on a short-term basis, although VAT needs to be paid and is not always re-claimable. A review of the use of NHSP v Agency staffing is currently underway.
- Comment was made on the extraordinary success of the 'Meal Buster' initiative which has been well received by staff across the Trust.
- It was noted that a professional dietician has been added to the catering staff to help promote healthy eating options.
- The national recognition of our catering offer for patients and staff was noted.
- Whilst the cafes/canteens for staff and patients we visited were clean and tidy, Andrew/Emma suggested a refurbishment was overdue in some other locations and they await some 'space' in capital funding to support an upgrade.
- Laundry services are supported 'in-house' and we also provide the service to other hospitals in the region. Ideas for extending the service to support medical gown re-use were discussed, although this would require some capital funding in extra equipment.
- The reception area on 'B' floor was exceptionally cold. Not just for the receptionist, who was not happy at all with the temperature, but for the patients waiting for transport as well. It appeared to be caused by the automated door opening and closing regularly, letting cold air in from outside. The receptionist did not have floor to ceiling partitions and no extra heater.

- In contrast, 'C' floor reception area was fully enclosed and did have extra heating and the rest of the area seemed fine.
- At both areas the extensive and important support given to patients in way finding was noted.

Actions for consideration:

- Look at potential solutions to ease the temperature issues on B floor reception area.
- Look at some support for helping with retention and motivation challenges through more innovative schemes, such as those being tried in some London Trusts.
- Possibly look at extending laundry services to enable medical gown re-usability.

In summary, a very informative visit. Both Andrew and Emma have clearly got a grip on the challenges they face and have ongoing plans and initiatives to help address.

Patient and Healthcare Governance, Royal Hallamshire Hospital [Ros Roughton, Mark Gwilliam and Steve Barks]

The visit was extremely well organised by the complaints department, providing us with clear directions and point of contact. We were warmly greeted by Katie Thompson, Senior Complaints and PALS Manager, and Lisa Howlett, Deputy Head of Patient and Healthcare Governance.

Katie acted as tour guide to the department taking us to the family contact room. The room was designed with the family/patient in mind creating a setting to provide a less formal relaxing environment. Katie explained that the service is actively promoted through patient and staff networks.

- The team manage approximately 150-200 informal enquiries per month and 90-100 formal complaints per month which are reported to the Quality Committee. Katie explained that most complaints are due to communication followed by attitude and behaviour of staff. That said, 25% of all calls taken are thanking staff for the excellent care provided. There have been seven Ombudsman investigations over the last two years, three of which have been upheld dating back to 2017, 2019 and 2020.
- We heard from staff how they are trained to deal with angry and grieving members of the public, and it was clear that this is a skilled and tricky job. We also heard how the team had taken on managing complaints for maternity services last year - previously this was done separately by the team at Jessop Wing.
- When meeting with colleagues it was clear that they enjoyed working in the complaints department. They all said that they felt extremely lucky to have Katie as their line manager. There was an obvious strong and supportive team spirit where individuals were able to talk with colleagues after difficult calls.
- However, it was noticeable that their office environment was limited on space and bordering on being congested. All the colleagues we spoke with said they have found it difficult adapting back to office working and much prefer homeworking.
- At the time of the visit the complaints department had no vacancies and the majority of the 18 staff have 10 plus years of service.

Actions for consideration:

- Consider how the team can address the office space and the homeworking issue at the same time supporting a flexible working policy.

Overall, a very informative visit providing an insight to the world of complaints.

Medical Records and IT Desktop Support, Royal Hallamshire Hospital [Ros Roughton, Mark Tuckett and Shirley Sherwood]

Mark Norwood and Ian Purdy accompanied us to visit the Medical Records at RHH; where we were met by Rebecca Batty, the Medical Record Manager.

- Our overall impression was one of being deeply impressed: a huge exercise, of critical importance for the Trust, and undertaken by committed staff. Some of the numbers were quite eye-opening. 5,000 medical records being pulled each day; 60 trolleys' worth of notes returned each day; a team going round at night to ensure any missing notes are tracked down and returned.
- The physical environment is a bit tired, and Rebecca explained that they have consolidated from a larger space into the facilities they are now in. This has presented some challenges, in particular, the need to use moveable racking which limits the efficiency of the space. In effect, only certain number of people can access the shelves of records at any one time. The team have also reduced the length of time for which paper records are kept – with a process to digitise those records that aren't accessed for 13 months.
- The team explained that they are doing a review of Datix risks that mention records – so far, this has been a reassuring exercise that there are not significant clinical risks arising from our medical records management.
- We learned this this is one of 12 records' libraries across the Trust and learned too about the Pinpoint system that the team use for case note tracking.
- Some of the processes in place have been established for a very long time e.g., the numbering system and how that varies between NGH and RHH. We heard too that people stay in the team for a long time. From this long history and experience, comes reliability.
- It was encouraging to hear about the much more inclusive approach that the current EPR implementation is taking – and that this is driving a much more positive response from the team. Clearly the medical records team have a huge amount to contribute to that programme of work, given their understanding of different directorates' approaches to medical records.
- We, briefly, went on to visit the IT Desktop support. We were very welcomed there and while there are staffing pressures which were described, the team were positive about working for STH and for the NHS.

Sandi Carman
Assistant Chief Executive
28 March 2023