

Foundation feedback

Portering



Security



Cleaning



Catering



Welcome
from the Editor



All the wonderful work done by clinicians, nursing staff, pathologists and administration at the Trust has to be backed up by a vast organisation at the Countess of Chester Hospital, covering: domestics, catering, portering, security, transport, linen services, postal services, chaplaincy, waste management and other services. Sometimes forgotten, these services together make it possible for the hospital to run smoothly and ultimately provide the best in patient care.

You will read in more detail about some of these services in this edition of Foundation Feedback and you will see how varied is the work of Mike Phelan, Head of the Facilities Directorate, who oversees all these departments, as we read about a "Day in the Life of Mike Phelan". We also focus on one of our Directors, Tim Lynch.

The Trust and the Editorial team of Foundation Feedback have been delighted to receive your comments following previous editions and we hope you will keep them coming!

Sue Elphick MBE
Editor and Governor
Countess of Chester Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

One day in the life of Mike Phelan Head of the Facilities Directorate

Sue Elphick went to talk to Mike Phelan, Head of the Facilities Directorate. Mike has worked at the Countess of Chester Hospital since 1995, originally as the Divisional Manager for Surgery but in his current role since 1998.

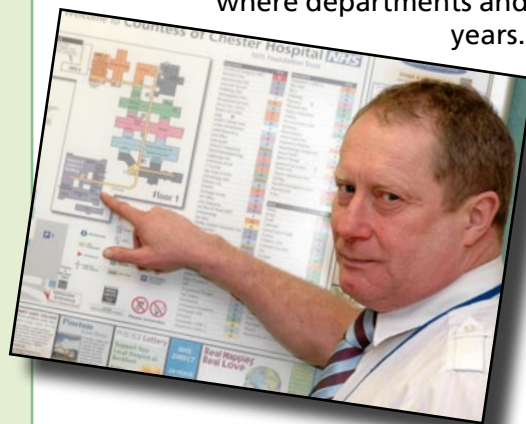
As well as being responsible for the services listed in the editor's introduction, Mike picks up a number of corporate and ad hoc projects as well as chairing the Trust's Disability and Race Equality Groups and the Charitable Funds Board. His life is hectic and varied but the Editorial Team asked him to take a typical day from his diary...

7.30am

Arrive in my office to deal with the early morning phone calls and also tackle my emails and any deadlines that are looming. Yesterday I had to travel to a meeting in Oxford so started today with a backlog of 55 emails.

9.00am

Appointment with an external firm in relation to the renewal of the Trust's internal maps – this involves walking the site to ensure that the maps are appropriate. In addition a comprehensive review takes place to ensure that the maps are updated to reflect where new builds exist and where departments and wards have moved over the past two years. This includes the new Acute Macular



Degeneration Unit, the proposed move of the Sexual Health Department, the proposed move of the Medical Assessment Unit and the new Medical Equipment Library. After this is completed a first draft of the map will be circulated to all wards and departments to be proof read for accuracy prior to formulating a final draft.

10.00am

As usual each Tuesday I meet with all my managers to brief them on information/items that have occurred in the past week, the pilot we have undertaken relating to stress in the work-place and an update on the Services Business Continuity Plan. Concerns are raised from the Children's Unit about the lack of beds for the new six bedded bay that is to be opened – this has to be sorted and plans are put in place to procure six new beds as soon as possible.

11.30am

Meet with my boss, Gaynor Hales, Director of Nursing, Quality and Environment to discuss the business cases I wrote that had been

discussed at the Executives away day the previous Thursday – generally the news was good with corporate investment in:

- IV pumps
- Clinical waste (new regulations)
- New post proposals
- Bed maintenance

The only negative surrounding this is that it generates additional work, in particular a logistical plan that needs to be devised to replace the existing yellow clinical waste bins (about 400) with new orange bins. This is because there are new best practice regulations about clinical waste that will be enforced by the Environment Agency.

As a proposed transport meeting has been cancelled I have a breathing space and cover my lunch hour with evaluating and quantifying the savings relating to the postal tender I have just undertaken with the Procurement Department, and seeing how it fits in against our savings target for 2009/2010.

2.00pm

I listen to a Security Service review presented by Tim Lister, the Security Manager. I am joined by Sue McCormack, the Directorate's Finance Accountant, as we jointly prepare our savings targets for 2009/2010. As with all the other service presentations it has been a high quality review with innovative ideas. We have decided that this will be a yearly process as it is felt to be good practice. It is strange as this is the first working day that I have been in this post without Gareth Hughes, Assistant Head of Facilities who left on the previous Friday, and as a result of his departure we have reduced our general management team so we all have to work a little harder (as if we could!).

3.00pm

Meeting with Sue Elphick who is on the Board of Governors, to discuss this article and the car boot sale that Sue has run for 20 years and that I oversee from a Trust perspective. This has been a valuable source of income.

4.00pm

I meet with an external educationalist to discuss the management development of my team. She has recently undertaken some work with them and certain issues such as managing change, motivation and leadership are subjects that are emerging for further work. We also discuss a workplace assessment student from Chester University who is due to start in May 2009 and the work he/she is to undertake around these topics. We are looking specifically at what contributes towards excellence in a service.

5.00pm

I am beginning to wind up the day but one of my managers receives a phone call to say that he has to go to the Transplantation Unit at Wythenshawe Hospital as there is a possible donor. As can be imagined this generates a great deal of emotion and concerns centred around the individu-



Gaynor Hales and Mike

al's needs but the thought process has to focus on the management arrangements if this materialises. He has to dash.

5.15pm

Stephen Winterson, Director of Communications and Marketing comes in to discuss the issues relating to the maps from this morning's meeting re advertising etc. Stephen and I quite often undertake thoughtful reflection on issues and he is a good sounding board for ideas.

6.00pm

I leave for home but this is not the end of the day as I go for a swim at my local health club.

9.15pm

I text my management colleague about the transplant and to ask what has happened. He tells me that it didn't occur and is on the way home.

10.00pm

He phones me to explain more fully what has happened, how he feels about it. I will need to pick up some pieces tomorrow, but that is tomorrow...



Passionate about cleaning!

Margaret Allen, the Facilities Manager (pictured below) is passionate about cleaning! She has 182 cleaning staff, who police the hospital with their colour-coded mops and buckets 24 hours a day.

The hospital cleaning service was provided by private contractors until 4 years ago, when it was brought 'in house' again. Since then there has been very considerable investment in the service to increase the staffing levels and provide more modern equipment and machinery. It has thus been possible to increase the frequency of cleaning and improve the standards.

Each ward in the hospital has domestic staff providing the cleaning service from 7.30am to 1.00pm, 7 days a week with cleaning teams in the afternoon. The duties apart from cleaning floors, around the beds and the bed frames, high and low dusting, scrubbing and hanging curtains also includes collecting meal trays, serving drinks and providing water jugs and cups. Every day of the week a 'rapid response team' also provides cleaning services. The Accident and Emergency department has a dedicated team of domestic staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

All cleaning staff undertake training in addition to their induction programme. It is a requirement of the Trust that they all take NVQ2 in cleaning and an infection control module. Margaret says:

"We believe that well trained personnel not only keep the cleaning standards high but also motivates and encourages the staff to take pride in their work."



During a recent unannounced visit to the hospital by the Healthcare Commission a member of the domestic staff was asked if she knew where the cleaning procedures and schedules were: of course she did! These are displayed in all areas for the public as well as the domestic staff to see and refer to – and the Healthcare Commissioner was suitably impressed!

Just over a year ago the hospital underwent a 'deep clean', a major exercise which took several weeks to complete and involved taking every single bed apart and scrubbing it, cleaning walls, radiators...

Margaret's pride and enthusiasm for this work is truly infectious – this is an infection we don't want or need to clean away! She and her team certainly deserve the awards and recognition they have received.

Helen Clifton,
Governor



Domestic Assistants,
Pat Spain and Elizabeth Lewis

Our Portering team

Pat Clare went to meet Andy Ellis, Facilities Manager and Clair Smith, Assistant Facilities Manager to talk about Portering at the Countess of Chester Hospital which include the following areas:

- Non-patient transport – within the hospital site or to other hospitals. These tasks may be as diverse as delivering case sheets to clinics to collecting samples from GP practices.
- Post room – internal and external letters and parcels.
- Providing gas and air supplies to maternity patients who are planning a home delivery.

Andy Ellis first came to work at the Countess as a chef in 1986. He worked in several other areas before portering and he was part of the staff group who moved to work for a private contractor when some of the hospital services were managed externally. When these services returned to NHS management in 2005, Andy was pleased to once again be employed by the Countess. He now manages the 70+ staff with the able assistance of Clair who joined the team two years ago.

The porters are recognised by their uniform of short sleeved blue shirts (the tie is optional) and navy trousers. They provide a 24/7 service working two day shifts, 6.00am - 2.00pm or 2.00pm - 10.00pm and there are dedicated night staff. Their initial training includes manual handling and infection control, vitally important for their clinically based

duties. These skills are updated annually as part of their ongoing mandatory training. More clinical elements of training e.g. resuscitation are becoming important as porters become a valued part of the team in the clinical areas. Some porters work in specific areas where they require additional training e.g.

- Radiology (Xray)
- Accident and Emergency
- Out patients
- The Jubilee Day Surgery Centre
- Health Records

Night time duties may be different but may require the same level of sensitivity when dealing with very ill patients or distressed relatives.

The permanent team is supported by a Portering Bank which covers for sickness and holidays. These trained staff come from very varied backgrounds.

Retention of the permanent staff is good. Some have worked in the department for over 30 years and some leave for a career change - e.g. to train as a Radiography helper and another to become a Paramedic.

Andy's aim for the future is to improve the team spirit of these dedicated staff. They play a vital part within the hospital. They want to improve their image and to be seen by the patients, visitors and staff as a valued and caring part of the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Clair wants to provide a better service but feels that this can only happen when their input is identified as part of the planning process. "remember to inform us in advance, not just at the last minute" is Clair's plea. Planning the day is so important if portering demands are to be met. Delivering hot meals to the wards can conflict with requests to clear a ward.

Pat Clare,
Governor



Porter Laura Bennett with Gavin Woolgar, Chargehand Porter

Messages from your Elected Governors



To: Chester and Rural Cheshire Members
From: Richard Taylor,
Elected Governor

I have been a member of the Board of Governors since October 2007, having retired as a Health Service Manager aged 60, with an NHS career spanning 45 years. My involvement with the National Health Service in Chester began in 1962, the year I became a Nursing Cadet at the Deva Hospital at age 15. The National Health Service is a year younger than me, it was then aged 14! I trained as a Registered Mental Health Nurse at the Deva Hospital in Chester and then became a Registered General Nurse at the Chester Royal Infirmary and City Hospitals.

So my background is NHS clinical and managerial. Now, as we both enter our seventh decade, I would like to think that we are still in reasonably good health! Being a member of the Board of Governors has given me the opportunity to become involved with my local hospital again. I feel that I am part of a group of like minded individuals who have a collective role, as laid down in the constitution that governs our roles and responsibilities.

Governors represent the views of members of the Foundation Trust, and actively seek their views, whilst continually striving to recruit more members. Some governors represent stakeholder organisations, others are elected and some are involved with other health support groups as well: all work tirelessly to express their personal views and those of the organisations they represent.

I admire my fellow Governors and their tremendous input to the working life of the hospital. My overwhelming impression of the Countess of Chester Hospital is that I am extremely fortunate to have such an excellent organisation taking care of a major part of mine and my family's health care needs.



To: Chester and Rural Cheshire Members
From: Stanley Skyrme,
Elected Governor

As the credit crunch bites you will be pleased and reassured to know that the Countess of Chester Hospital continues to invest in facilities which will improve patient care in the future. However the effectiveness of your Governors, relies to a large extent on the feedback and comments from members and patients alike. To this end I would strongly promote the services of an unsung but vital department within the hospital. The Patient Advice and Liaison Services' (PALS) primary role is to help make the patients' visit to the hospital as easy as possible by helping to resolve any concerns quickly. In addition they will listen to patients' views, learn from patients' experiences and provide them with accessible and timely quality information. Finally, they act as a gateway to enable patients and the public to access opportunities for public involvement in the NHS.

If you are a patient in the Hospital, or a visitor, I would urge you to complete a comment card supplied by PALS which are available in all wards and outpatient departments. This is an effective and confidential method of reflecting upon your visit and informing the governors through PALS of any comments (good or not so good) relating to your hospital experience.



To: All Members
From: Kate Bernie, Youth Governor

I have really enjoyed my experience as a Youth Governor this year. The 60th anniversary of the NHS was a fantastic time to join the foundation trust and I really enjoyed making a reading at the Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration.

Researching an article on the differences in my grandparent's generations' experiences of healthcare and mine was a real eye opener and made me much more appreciative of the services available today.

Recently, I have enjoyed trying to promote Foundation Trust membership among young people, talking to the public about becoming more involved and informed about their health care. I have also helped out at a careers event talking to students about working in the health service. I hope to pursue a career in medicine so the opportunity to be Youth Governor has been both interesting and very enjoyable.



To: Chester and Rural Cheshire Members
From: Elizabeth Bott, Elected Governor

I was very pleased to be elected as a new Governor of our Hospital NHS Foundation Trust a short while ago. My thanks go to all those who supported my election. I have had a long acquaintance with the Countess of Chester Hospital as a patient and on occasion through my voluntary work with Chester Asian Council and also the Race and Equality Centre for Cheshire, Halton and Warrington (CHAWREC). From past communications with others who have experienced hospital and health services in other geographical locations, it has been very clear that we are, in general, relatively very fortunate here in the standards and quality of care we receive.

Indeed, the fact that my own long "patient experience", including over time various treatments, interventions and operations etc, has left me extremely well speaks for itself. At the same time, especially since becoming a Governor, I have observed how the directors, staff and Governors – all

involved in the running of the Countess of Chester Hospital – are always striving and planning for further improvements in patient care and to minimise or prevent things not going right, waste of resources and so on.

If you have something of any sort regarding the Countess of Chester Hospital that you would like to comment on, complain or ask about, I should be delighted to hear from you: "Feedback" is the name of the game! Please don't hesitate to contact me via Jackie Hughes (jackie.hughes@coch.nhs.uk). If an issue or problem is shared, then there's an opportunity to see what can be done about it: as Governors we meet to discuss hospital matters with the Chair and Directors and other members of staff on a regular basis.

Dates for your Diary

Please check the local press and the website for further details nearer the time. We would love to see you at one of these meetings. As a Foundation Trust the Governors and hospital are keen to keep in touch with the local community and would welcome your views and any suggestions you may have.

Please address these to the Foundation Trust Secretary and post to the address below.

Board of Governors' Meetings

- 21st April 2009 at 5.00pm
- 7th July 2009 at 5.00pm
- 29th September 2009 at 5.00pm
- 1st December 2009 at 5.00pm

Annual Members' Meetings

- 6th October 2009 – time to be agreed

Board of Directors' Public Meetings

- 2nd June 2009 at 2pm
- 1st September 2009 at 2.15pm
- 3rd November 2009 at 2.15pm

Now you can contact your Elected Governors by email, letter or fax:

Email:

Public Governors

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Youth

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Doctors

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All other Staff Groups

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Allied Health Professionals/ Technical/Scientific

heather.shilliday@coch.nhs.uk

Letter:

Please address your letter to:-

Stephen Cross
The Foundation Trust Secretary
Countess of Chester Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust
Liverpool Road
Chester
CH2 1UL

Fax:

Please address your fax to:

Stephen Cross
The Foundation Trust Secretary
Fax: 01244 365292

Security Services

Dave Reardon talked to me about his new role as Line Manager for Security Services and how the service is run.

Tim Lister, Security Manager, is responsible for the day to day management of the service and a Deputy Security Manager is to be appointed in the near future.

The service is staffed by nine men and three women (plus two managers) with three officers on each shift. It is easy to think that the security staff only act as internal police and traffic wardens in the car parks but their role extends far further than that.

There are 132 CCTV cameras situated throughout the Trust (none of these are in private areas) covering all the entrances and exits to the hospital, departments, corridors, car parks and roads. Particular attention is given to the Women and Children's building.



Leroy Ross, Security Supervisor

Security on the car parks has been a big success with no vehicle being stolen for the past two years and no car being broken into in the past 18 months.

Security in the hospital is much more efficient than in the past with all departments locked at night and, where possible, equipment made secure. A system of smart water identification marking enables equipment to be easily identified if stolen and subsequently recovered by the police.

Security staff also assist in dealing with violence and aggression incidents being well trained in restraint and conflict resolution procedures. These can happen on a ward as well as in the much publicised Accident and Emergency department, where some incidents can be very serious and have in the past involved offensive weapons.

Security staff act as escorts for patients being transferred to Bowmere Hospital along with a member of the nursing staff and they can escort late night staff or patient's relatives to their cars in the car park if requested to do so.

They also perform escort duties for the cash office whilst collecting cash from the car park token machines, change machines and other areas. They deal with all the car park and identity badges for over 3000 staff and they can also give out parking tickets. There is concern about cars parking in places where they will block the flow of traffic particularly ambulances and fire vehicles.

The security services have a close relationship with the Cheshire Police and the local Authority.

They also liaise with disability groups and blue badge holders. They monitor the fundraising car boot sale and occasionally offer help with broken down vehicles as well as controlling the traffic flow. Outside the hospital they act as key holders for a few local GP surgeries and have involvement with Warrington Primary Care Trust and West Cheshire Primary Care Trust.

A large amount of work for a small amount of staff who have a reputation for being good humoured and helpful. Would they like more staff – of course but it's all down to money!

Sue Elphick,
Governor



Caroline Gresty, Security Patrol Officer

Waste Management

It takes six waste operatives as well as their management to deal with the vast amounts of waste materials generated by the hospital.

Currently the Trust produces around 500 tonne of clinical waste, 500 tonne of domestic waste in addition to confidential paper waste, cardboard, electrical, glass, batteries, scrap metal and large items of equipment.

All of the above with the exception of clinical waste are segregated and placed into specific waste streams for recycling.

This means the Trust currently recycles approximately 75% of all the general waste it produces, the overall annual cost for waste management is currently around £375,000.

The six waste operatives work three men to a shift covering on an eleven hour shift, seven days a week, from 6.00am until 5.00pm. They are well protected with wet weather coats, fleeces, combat trousers and gloves.

I went to speak to Dave Reardon Assistant Head of Facilities (pictured below), who explained the logistics.

- Clinical waste e.g. dressings, sharps, drugs and pathology waste are disposed of in either yellow bags or sharps boxes and when full these are then placed into large 850 litre wheelie bins. The bins are securely locked and collected by the clinical waste contractor who also delivers clean replacement bins in exchange.

They are then taken to a clinical waste treatment plant in

Wrexham where the yellow bags are heat treated and ground up to make them sterile prior to going to deep landfill. All other clinical waste, sharps, drugs, pathology waste etc is incinerated.

- Non confidential waste and cardboard, is placed into designated compactors sited in the waste compound at the rear of the general wing and compacted down into 8 tonne containers. When the containers are full they are exchanged and taken away to recycling plants where the contents are sorted for recycling.

- Confidential waste is disposed of in blue bags which are collected on a weekly basis and taken to an offsite shredding and pulping facility before being recycled. Certificates of destruction are issued by the contractor to ensure the complete safe disposal of all confidential information.

- All electrical items are taken to a specialist recycling plant where they are dismantled and all recyclable components are segregated for future use.

The Trust has three storage facilities, two of which are off site, in which items such as furniture, beds, chairs and other equipment which are still serviceable are

stored and redistributed to other areas as the need arises.

Some equipment still in working order has been shipped to third world countries by organisations such as "Hospital Aid" who only charge the fuel costs for collecting these items from the Trust.

Mercy ships also gratefully receive equipment for treating people around the world. Equipment is also donated to the hospital in Uganda, Kisiizi, sponsored by the Countess, but the hospital has to bear the cost of these shipments.

This is one area which is not in the forefront of the general public but is an integral part of the organisation of this large hospital.

Sue Elphick,
Governor



Roy Lightfoot and Dave Smith,
Waste/Environmental Operatives



Spotlight on...

Tim Lynch, Director of Operational

Pat Clare went to meet Tim Lynch who was appointed to the Board in October 2008 as the Director of Operational Services.

How have you settled in?

Very well, the Countess is a very friendly and welcoming place to work so I have had no problems settling in. My first impression of the hospital was positive – it looked attractive and well cared for and most of all it had a good feel to it. I am very much a people person so my first impression of the place and the people was very important. Of course my first few months coincided with the hospital facing one of its busiest periods ever – but allowed me to see the very best of our staff.

Why did you apply for the post of Director of Operational Services?

I saw the post advertised and it seemed to tick all the right boxes. I was looking for a new challenge and I wanted to move back to the north of England. When I asked about the Countess of Chester Hospital, all I heard was positive comments. The hospital has an excellent reputation as a well performing trust and Chester is an attractive place to live. The post was a new role with the responsibilities clearly defined and I felt that I had the managerial experience needed to lead the clinical teams at Board level.

Tell me about your previous experience?

Most of my working life has been spent in the Ambulance Service which I joined when I was 21. I have always enjoyed working with people and being a paramedic enabled me to work in the front line of emergency services. I gradually climbed the management ladder which enabled me to influence change on a bigger scale. My last post was as a Chief Executive but I am still a qualified paramedic!

What do you hope to achieve in your new position?

The Director of Operational Services is responsible for the delivery of service in 4 clinical divisions:

- Diagnostics, Therapy and Pharmacy Services
- Medicine
- Surgery
- Women's and Children

This is a new corporate role but there is a strong team of 4 divisional managers to help me. My responsibilities are clearly defined so with a committed team we can overcome any future challenges. I want to provide excellent safe services whether patients come to us via an emergency admission or a planned admission.

I want to work towards becoming a good partner with the other agencies who either purchase our services or provide follow up services in the community. If we are to meet the increasing expectations of our patients, we must improve the way patients move through their hospital journey. As patients get older, they can often have more than one illness so the way we provide services may have to change.

What are your thoughts on the future of the NHS?

I think the future is bright. More foundation trusts are being established – including ambulance and mental health trusts. This drives forward better communication between organisations and



Chris Green, Director of Pharmacy, Debbie Kadum, Divisional Manager for Medicine and Tim Lynch

Services

brings them closer to the communities they serve. The Governors can contribute by acting as a touchstone between the Board and the members. If the partners in health care can work together to improve services, the patients benefit.

To conclude, tell me a little more about Tim Lynch, the man.

I was brought up in Hartlepool. My father was in the Fire Service. I planned to work in engineering doing my HNC, the opportunities became scarce so I joined the ambulance service and the rest you know. I have two grown up children. My son has just qualified as a Paramedic so public service runs in the family. I can see more of them both now that I live closer.

I still follow the football and rugby results from the North East even though I no longer play rugby. My spare time is spent walking, doing odd jobs round the house and trying not to kill the plants in the garden.



Chaplaincy Service

The Patients Charter charges trusts to respect the religious and cultural beliefs of patients and each trust should make provision for the spiritual needs of patients and staff.

At the Countess of Chester Hospital the Rev. John Kingsley (Free Church) is the full-time Co-ordinator of the Spiritual Care Team assisted by part-time chaplains Rev. George Hodgkinson (Church of England) and the Rev. Lawrence Hordley (Roman Catholic) with leaders of other faiths on-call and a team of support lay visitors. These faiths include Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Rastafarian, Islam, Humanist, Quakers to Judaism and more.

We live in a multi-cultural society and there is a centre in the hospital for prayer and reflection which represents all faiths and those who have no faith but who need peace and time to contemplate. This is the Spiritual Care Centre (formerly the Chapel) which is situated at the end of the first floor corridor near to "the bridge". It is open at all times and to all. There is a programme of services throughout the week and Holy Communion for all denominations can also be held at the bedside. Escorts are available to bring patients to Spiritual Care Centre services. Prayer requests can be left in the Prayer Request Book which is in the centre. There is also some literature available and Holy Books, the Tree of Lights Book of Honour and the Baby Memorial Book.

Nursing care should be holistic taking seriously the religious beliefs, values and cultures of patients. Everyone needs love, dignity and has spiritual needs and this often comes to the fore when frightened and ill. The Spiritual Care team has a programme of visiting wards where they understand and try to meet people's needs. It helps if the patient's religious affiliation is detailed on admission. They have also produced a leaflet with information for patients, relatives, visitors and staff which contains the loveliest prayers appropriate for certain times of need.

The Chaplains, are on call 24/7 and can be contacted through the switchboard. Please ask a member of staff if you would like a visit from a member of the Chaplaincy team. The direct line for the Chaplaincy office is 01244 364543.

Sue Elphick,
Governor



Rev. John Kingsley

Your hospital food

6.30am and something is stirring in the kitchen of the Countess of Chester Hospital. It is more than the porridge because seven or eight of the fourteen chefs are busy preparing the days food for patients, staff and visitors at the Countess and neighbouring trusts. Apart from the hum of machinery, silence reigns as the catering staff on the breakfast conveyer line carry out the quietly spoken instructions of the senior supervising chef. It is not a bit like television kitchens!

Breakfast is continental style with the exception of the popular dish of hot porridge. The process starts with an empty plate on each patient's tray on which lies their breakfast

menu. This passes down the line for each member of the team to add to the various patients choices, including pure fruit juice, cereal, yoghurt, bread, preserves, honey etc. until the completed tray is placed in the delivery trolley. Thus starts the 7.30am breakfast on the wards. Meantime the chefs are busy preparing the food for the lunch service, whilst the catering assistants start their day preparing the staff dining room, starting the massive task of preparing approx. 600 fresh sandwiches in the chilled sandwich production unit. Down at the front of the hospital staff are getting ready to open the coffee shop and 'Essentials' newsagents shop.

All this takes place under the guidance of the Head Chef, Sue Miller and the relaxed but exacting eye of Joy Ingram Head of Catering Services. It is she who is responsible for all the activities of her 80 staff and the dietary needs of patients, staff and visitors, including the provision of catering services for Bowmere and Ellesmere Port Hospitals,

Interesting statistics...

- Total catering served per weekday – 2,186
- Staff meals and snacks served per weekday – 400
- Total meals served per week – 14,574
- Total meals served per year – approx 819,000



Head Chef Sue Miller with Food Service Supervisor, Sue Graham

The Young Persons Centre and the Education Centre.

The Contracts Catering Manager, Craig Hough, explained how he places great emphasis on buying high quality food from reliable, local suppliers, whilst at the same time maintaining strict budgetary control. This ensures high standards of efficiency throughout, which is underlined by the extremely low degree of kitchen waste, which is running at below 3%. The impression of good

management is underlined by the good humoured and cheerful atmosphere among the staff and the fact that many of the chefs have served the hospital for over twenty years. All food handling staff are fully trained for their role and meals are freshly prepared and cooked in the hospital using traditional methods by the in-house Catering Team. No outside caterers are used.

Patients order no more than one meal in advance and choose from a good variety of foods, including healthy and high energy choices and a choice of portion size and dietary needs. Different selections are available each day and the menu structure is substantially revised periodically. The department supports the City of Chester Fair Trade, and the Heart of Mersey healthy eating for staff programme. As for food quality I can at least vouch for the excellent curry, fair trade or not! The kitchen is operational from 6.30am – 8.00pm and between 11.30pm – 2.30am providing a service to night staff.

Clearly the Catering Service at the Countess of Chester Hospital is a major undertaking and I am left with the clear impression that it is very well managed and fully supports the Countess of Chester Hospital Trust principle of becoming and maintaining its position as your hospital of choice. My sincere thanks go to Mrs Joy Ingram and all her staff for their courtesy in receiving me and the open manner in which they discussed their work.

George Potter,
Governor

Serving up a Fairtrade menu

The Countess of Chester Hospital is showing its support for farmers in the third world again this year as part of the Fairtrade Foundation's two week awareness campaign 'Fairtrade Fortnight'.

The two week event aims to promote Fairtrade products, in addition to informing the public about how the Foundation's activities aim to get farmers and workers in the developing world a better deal.

Many organisations and businesses are showing their support for the national event – started on Monday 23rd February for two weeks - by taking part in promotional and awareness events.

However, the Countess has gone one step further by introducing Fairtrade options onto their staff restaurant menu. Fairtrade spaghetti bolognese, chilli con carne and similar options have

been present on the menu as a 'Fairtrade dish of the day' throughout the two week period. Fairtrade beverages such as tea and coffee are also on offer all year round, as are a range of Fairtrade cookies, flapjacks and cakes.

The Trust's Head of Catering Services, Joy Ingram, said of the initiative: "The Fairtrade options on the menu are always a great success and prove very popular with staff. Taking part in initiatives like this allows the Trust to make a difference in an active way. As always the catering team work extremely hard to prepare the food on a daily basis, in order for the Trust to make a valuable and meaningful contribution to Fairtrade Fortnight, so I would like to personally thank the whole team for their support".

A Tesco store on Frodsham Street has also donated a hamper consisting of Fairtrade products as part of a trust



Alex Farrell, Hospitality Retail Manager

competition. Members of staff who purchased a Fairtrade meal received a raffle ticket and were automatically entered into a draw for the hamper.

If you would like more information about how you can get involved with the Fairtrade Foundation's events and campaigns, visit their website at: www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight.htm.

A&E praised for efforts

The Countess of Chester Hospital's A&E staff have been praised by both patients and staff for coping with a record number of admissions to the department.

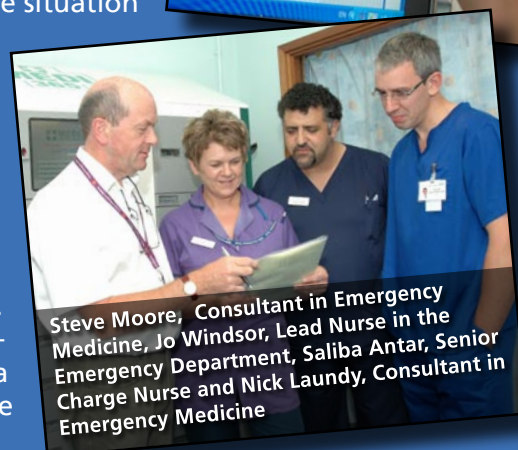
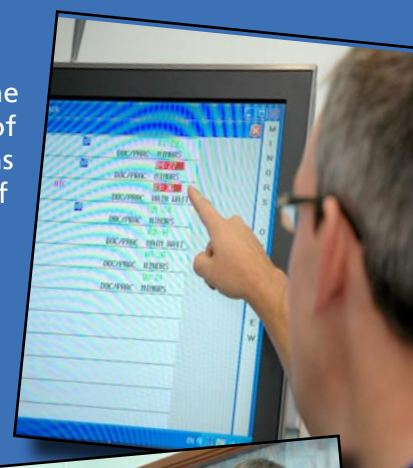
As a result of the treacherous icy weather that hit most areas of the country in January, there was a huge increase in the number of people visiting the Countess' A&E department with various injuries. A number of patients visiting the A&E department suffered from limb injuries after slipping or falling on icy surfaces.

The department reported that 330 patients visited A&E between midnight on Sunday 4th January to midnight on the following day, with a large percentage

arriving between 9am – 1pm on Monday the 5th – which put staff under a huge amount of pressure. This total number of A&E admissions during one day tops the previous record of 270 patients.

Hospital at Night Manager, Jane Evans, said: "As a benchmark we state that 20 patients per hour puts A&E staff under extreme pressure. We operated way above this during certain periods but we have dealt with the situation well, in order to continuously provide a quality service."

Jane added: "This has been a truly corporate approach with a number of other areas of the Trust assisting the A&E department, including divisional managers and outpatient staff to name just two. Everyone has performed excellently and although it has been a struggle it has been great to see such a team effort on show."



Steve Moore, Consultant in Emergency Medicine, Jo Windsor, Lead Nurse in the Emergency Department, Saliba Antar, Senior Charge Nurse and Nick Laundry, Consultant in Emergency Medicine



Governors take part in the patient meal experience.



Youth Governors recruiting members @ the Hospital Open Day.

Governors representing you as Members



Governor Keith Higham questions Dr Rizwan Khan.

The Countess is one of the longest established Foundation Trusts in the country having been set up some five years ago. The Trust was anxious for a number of reasons to become an FT a principal one being, that we believed that the creation of a membership and a representative body called the Board of Governors would exemplify and enhance the relationship between the hospital and the communities we serve.



Governor Pat Clare meets Matron Jane Evans at the Annual Members' Meeting.

This has come to pass with the Trust having over ten thousand members and a very active participating Board of Governors. Together the Trust and the Governors have developed a very close working relationship. Governors are involved in many aspects of the work of the hospital. Crucially they are integrated into the structures that determine the future direction of the Trust along with formulating the strategies necessary to sustain that direction.

Our Governors and membership are a success story and a visible symbol of participation and partnership between providers and its community.





Local family join the membership at the Governors' Roadshow in Flintshire (from left to right) Mike Norfolk, Chairman of Chester Heart Support Group, Michael Hemmerdinger, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Governors and Sir Jim Sharples, Chairman of the Board .



Governor George Potter with Jane Tomkinson, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance at the Finance.

During the past five years the Board of Governors has established excellent working relationships with directors, managers and staff. Governors are represented on several internal committees and a Strategy and General Purpose Committee meets on a fortnightly basis and is updated on trust matters by the Chairman of the Trust Sir James Sharples.

Governors scrutinise the strategic plans for the hospital and work with management to formulate the future plans, which are guided by the views of our members. To this end we communicate with our 10,000 members in several ways. Foundation Feedback and the hospital website are the most obvious but in addition we have commenced a series of roadshows to enable us to communicate directly with members, interest groups and the public. I would encourage members to build relationships with their Governor representatives. By this way we can continue to ensure that the Countess will always be your hospital of choice.

Michael Hemmerdinger
Deputy Chairman,
Board of Governors



Annual Members Meeting.



Governors/Directors Workshop (from left to right) Linda Fellowes, Divisional Manager for Surgery, Governors Sue Elphick MBE and Helen Clifton, Dr Virginia Clough, Medical Director.



Governors Roadshow in Ellesmere Port.

Get your boots on for the
Moonlight Walk 2009
Saturday 20th June 2009

Building on the amazing success of the Moonlight Walk over the last three years, registration is now open for this year's event.



This is a 'ladies only' event offering a fun night out where lots of money can be raised at the same time. This year's walk will be supporting the Relative Comfort Appeal to provide overnight accommodation for relatives of patients in our Critical Care Unit.

Try the brand new route

We are delighted to announce that this year, the route has been revamped and at 10 miles, it is slightly shorter than in previous years. We have also taken note of your feedback and our new walk will now begin two hours earlier at 10pm. The walk is a circular route from the Countess of Chester Hospital which winds its way down, over the River Dee to Handbridge before returning via Vicars Cross, Hoole and Newton to the hospital.

We have managed to keep the entry fee at just £10 and this includes your T-shirt, medal and refreshments for the evening. Entry couldn't be easier, simply contact the Fundraising Office to request an application form or download one from the Trust's website at: www.coch.nhs.uk/fundraising. If you require any more details, please call the Fundraising Office on 01244 366240 / 01244 366672 or e-mail Kathy Kenney at: kathy.kenney@coch.nhs.uk

You can help out as a volunteer

Nearly as much fun as walking is helping out as one of our team of volunteers. We need people to help out in a number of areas so if you are interested please contact the Fundraising Office.



So join us for a great night out and raise money for a good cause at the same time!



Relative Comfort Ball

The Countess of Chester is holding a spectacular 'Golden Age of Travel' Fundraising Ball on October 3rd 2009 to help raise money for the hospital's new fundraising appeal 'Relative Comfort'.

The Ball is to be held at M & S Money and over 400 guests will enjoy an evening of high class entertainment with fantastic food, music, dancing and many prizes.

The hospital needs to raise £500,000 over the next 2 years for Relative Comfort and provide relatives accommodation and counselling rooms for the Critical Care Unit, which looks after over 1000 patients every year.

Currently, families and loved ones often have to sleep in the corridor or on a chair next to the bed at what is often a very distressing time. Therefore, providing a comfortable "home from home" environment where relatives can return to the patient's bedside at short notice will, we feel, provide psychological and practical support when it is needed most. In addition to this, a rest and relaxation area for families to use during the day will also be provided.

The design for the unit has been arrived at after consultation with our Critical Care Unit staff who have spoken about the difficulties arising when multiple people are involved in road accidents and where often there is a need to support more than one family.

Tickets for this 'not to be missed' Fundraising Ball are £75 each. Please call the Fundraising Office at the Countess on 01244 366240 to reserve a table or book individual tickets.

Editorial Team

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