

Advertiser's Announcement

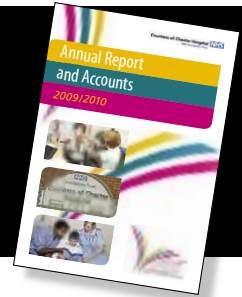
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Countess named top 40 hospital for 10th year running

A large group of Chief Executives, Chairs, Medical Directors and other senior NHS Managers gathered in London for the CHKS Top Hospitals Conference and Awards Dinner earlier this year. Now in its tenth year, the Top Hospitals Programme celebrates the success and good performance of the NHS acute sector.

The Countess of Chester Hospital – which has also been shortlisted for the Health Service Journal Acute Organisation of the Year Award – received a 40 Top Hospitals Award for the tenth year in succession, one of only five Trusts in the country to achieve this.

The awards have only been in existence for ten years meaning that the Countess has successfully received the award every year since they began in 2001.

The winners were announced at an awards ceremony in London hosted by CHKS, the UK's leading independent provider of healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services.

As well as individual awards for patient safety, quality of care and data quality, CHKS celebrates excellence amongst its clients across the UK with the 40 Top Awards. These



are based on the evaluation of 21 key performance indicators covering safety, clinical effectiveness, health outcomes, efficiency, patient experience and quality of care.

Dr Virginia Clough, the Trust's Medical Director said, "I collected this award on behalf of all

the staff at the Countess whose amazing work makes this hospital one of the safest places to be treated in the country. We are privileged to be singled out as one of only 5 Trusts in the country to have been awarded this accolade ten years in a row. To receive this award year after year recognises our ongoing drive for

excellence in clinical care." James Coles, Director of Research, CHKS, said: "We are delighted that the Countess of Chester Hospital is one of our 40 Top Hospitals for 2010. These awards recognise outstanding performance in 21 areas which we believe are critical to delivering good patient care."





Key achievements for 2009/10

The Trust continued to make significant improvements in developing our quality of care, expanding the scope of services we provide, reducing the incidence of infection, and at the same time meeting all key national targets and standards of care.

Here are the Trust's key achievements for 2009/10:

- The Trust won the prestigious 40 Top Hospitals Award for the 10th consecutive year, one of only 5 Trusts in the country to achieve this status.
- In excess of 18,000 (4.2%) more patients were treated at the Countess compared to the previous year.
- All key English and Welsh waiting times and cancer targets were met.
- Public membership has increased to over 11,400 Trust members.
- We reduced the incidence of MRSA by more than 50% and Clostridium Difficile by 62%, and achieved full and unconditional compliance with the Care Quality Commission's Hygiene Code.
- The Trust invested £6.1m in improving the physical infrastructure and environment of the hospital and increasing capacity. This included a new £1.2m building to provide an Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) service.
- The Trust embarked on the initial stages of a substantial business transformation programme, 'The Countess Way', aimed at radically changing the way we work to ensure we engage in continuous improvement in the way we deliver services.

Business transformation – The Countess Way



For the past 18 months the Trust has been embarking on a substantial business transformation programme – 'The Countess Way' – aimed at radically changing the way we work to ensure we minimise waste, inefficiency and delay by redesigning our key processes and patient pathways and to build a motivated workforce who engage in continuous improvement in the way we deliver services.

The Trust Board recognises that in order to meet the significant challenges ahead we need to work very differently in the future – continuing to do what we do now will not enable the Trust to deliver better quality and treat more patients within the more limited resources we can expect going forward.

This year has been a very busy and productive period for everyone involved in the programme and the next year is set to get even busier with more good work being rolled out and implemented across the Trust.

Putting patients first



By Trust Chairman, Sir Jim Sharples

In our sixth year as a Foundation Trust we continued to make significant improvements in reducing the incidence of infection, further improved the quality of care, expanded the scope of services provided, and met all key national targets

and standards of care.

The Trust's focus on the quality of services was once again recognised in the award of the 40 Top Hospitals Award for high clinical standards and outcomes; we are now one of only 5 Trusts in the country to achieve this for the tenth consecutive year.

Outstanding progress was made in the year in our fight against hospital associated infection: the Trust more than halved the number of cases of MRSA attributable to the Hospital with only 4 cases experienced in the year, a further 2 cases were considered to be community acquired infections. In relation to Clostridium Difficile we reduced the incidence

of this infection by 62% with only 66 cases during the year.

We were assessed for the second consecutive year as achieving full and unconditional compliance with the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Hygiene Code and obtained unconditional general registration with the Commission in respect of 2010/11.

In spite of this and a 5% growth in A & E attendance, the target of treating 98% of all patients attending A & E within 4 hours was achieved in all four quarters of the year. All other key English and Welsh waiting time and cancer targets were met.

The financial performance of the Trust was sound with an underlying surplus of £4.8m; this reduced to a surplus of £93k after taking into

account exceptional accounting items.

The Trust embarked on the initial stages of a substantial business transformation programme, 'The Countess Way'. This programme has created significant efficiency, quality, productivity and financial benefits that we can build upon in the forthcoming years.

The Board of Governors and the Board of Directors continued to work closely together during the year, and increased the number of members to over 11,400.

I would like to pay tribute to the commitment of our staff which remains central to all we achieve, and whilst recognising that there is still much to do in our journey to improve the experience of our patients, we can be proud of our achievements last year.

Improving the quality of our services

Emergency admissions and A & E activity increased by 5% in comparison with the previous year, placing pressure on available capacity and frequent operational difficulties in maintaining the 98% A & E target, with a number of planned operations cancelled as a result.

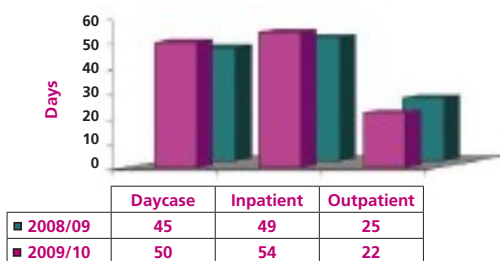
During December a PCT run Walk-in Centre opened on the hospital site co-located in A&E. The centre offers a service to patients who do not require emergency care. The GP run centre which is open from 8am to 8pm sees around 35 patients a day but the model of care provided is likely to change during 2010. Activity in other areas of service provision increased significantly, apart from elective inpatients.

Overall the Trust treated in excess of 18,000 (4.2%) more patients, the income associated with which was reinvested in additional capacity, however these growth trends are incompatible with the need for demand to be managed more effectively and the Trust is at the upper limit of available physical capacity to easily absorb further growth. The increased trend in emergency activity continued in the early months of 2009/10 with a further substantial increase in A & E attendances and emergency admissions.

Waiting times – English residents

The 18 week target for patients to be treated from the time of referral to receiving their first treatment was achieved, however, due to the increasing demands of emergency and trauma activity and lower targets relating to Welsh residents, daycase and inpatient average waiting times were slightly longer than the previous year.

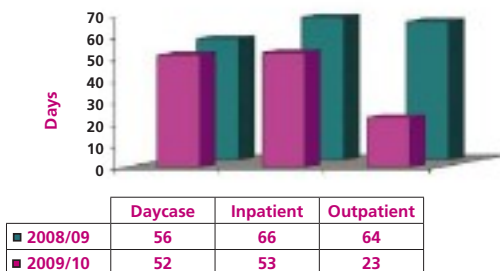
Average waiting time for English residents (days)



Waiting times – Welsh residents

Welsh Assembly waiting time targets are different from those in England and expect all patients to receive their first treatment no longer than 26 weeks from referral to treatment. Average waiting times for an inpatient, daycase procedure or outpatient appointment were all reduced. Improvements were achieved across all patient areas in order to achieve this new target in 2009/10.

Average waiting time for Welsh residents (days)



Working collaboratively with Wirral

The Trust recently announced plans to work collaboratively with Wirral University Teaching Hospital to provide patient services that are among the best in the country.

In response to what this will mean for the Countess, Chief executive, Peter Herring, said: "I have heard the rumour that this means we are merging with Wirral, so I would like to reiterate that there are no plans for a merger between the two Trusts.

"What we have done, however, is formed a Joint Collaboration Board to explore all potential opportunities to work closely together in both clinical

and non clinical areas. Their aim is to develop safe, high quality services that will benefit patients, be sustainable in the long term and support the strategic direction of the two organisations."

The Countess is greatly look forward to strengthening our links with Wirral Hospital and continuing to provide high quality services to the residents of Chester, Cheshire, Ellesmere Port and North Wales. Our innovative partnership will enable our two Trusts to increase efficiency, reduce duplication and deliver better value for money against the background of the deepest economic recession in recent times.



Stopping the clot in the North West

The Countess of Chester Hospital has launched its most important health initiative of the year to prevent blood clots and as a result has become the first North West hospital trust to earn 'Exemplar' status, which ensures the trust is doing everything it can to prevent Venous Thromboembolism (VTE).

More than 25,000 deaths yearly are caused by Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) nationwide, more than breast cancer, AIDS and road traffic accidents put together – and many of these are preventable.

The Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, expects all adult patients to be risk assessed for VTE. As a result, throughout 2009 the Countess of Chester Hospital's Thrombosis Team worked extremely hard to launch a major initiative (which went live in January) to reduce patient harm in the Trust from unnecessary clots. This initiative is called Stop the Clot 2010 and will ensure that a detailed Risk Assessment is carried out in all adult in-patients and day cases when they are admitted to the hospital.

Mr Sameh Dimitri, Chair of the Thrombosis Team and Consultant Vascular and General Surgeon, said: "Stop the Clot 2010 is the biggest patient safety initiative that we will undertake this year and it will aim to tackle VTE in all adult in-patients and day cases. The important thing to remember about blood clots is that they are preventable with the correct care and attention. It is our aim to ensure that everyone that comes into the hospital is given a full assessment in line with their potential risk – based on their age, health and other factors such as

family history – in order to minimise the likelihood of them suffering a clot.

"Depending on a patient's health, the actions we take will vary. For example, a young, fit and healthy adult may require a simple measure such as compression stockings based on their risk assessment. However, more at risk patients with a family history of venous thromboembolism may require more complex management. Each course of treatment is tailored to the individual's needs."

As a result of the Trust's tireless hard work, the Countess was chosen as the first Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Exemplar Centre in the North West of England following the All Parliamentary Thrombosis Implementation Working Group visit and assessment of the Trust in January.

Mr Dimitri commented: "VTE Exemplar Centre status is given to Trusts that excel in VTE prevention and care. As well as implementing the patient risk assessment process, this includes ensuring that continuous clinical training is in place, that information is available to patients on the risks, symptoms and treatment for VTE, and that the team has the skills and ability to offer verbal information and support to patients as and when required."

In addition to the initiative being embraced within the Countess

of Chester Hospital, part of its success will depend on its implementation within the community.

As a result, the Countess is working closely with NHS Western Cheshire to ensure that the knowledge is extended to GP surgeries and to the community in general. As Mr Dimitri points out: "The risk of suffering a clot goes beyond a patient's hospital stay, and in some patients it remains there when they are discharged so our aim is to work closely with the PCT to ensure that 'at risk' patients are followed up after they have left the hospital, to further reduce the risk."

Mr Dimitri concluded: "I would like to emphasise the fact that the Stop the Clot 2010 initiative's successful launch and our subsequent exemplar status accreditation are a richly deserved recognition of the hard work and dedication of my colleagues in the Thrombosis Team and all members of staff. I'd like to thank Virginia Clough, Linda de Cossart, Hillary Leggat, Lucy Langan, Chris Green, Martin Sedgwick, Jed Hawe, Mark Webb and Sally Goode for their valuable contribution over the years. We take great pride in providing high standard, quality care to our patients and continuing to be one of the leading health providers in the North West."





Staff achievements celebrated

The Trust's annual Celebration of Achievement Awards took place to reward staff for their efforts and commitment over the past year.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Chester was the venue for a glittering night of congratulation and celebration for a wide variety of Trust staff. Over 300 members of staff, along with colleagues, friends and family members joined in the celebrations.

The awards offered an opportunity for the Trust to acknowledge the hard work of individuals, wards and departments who have excelled in areas such as service improvement, customer service, and training and development. As a result, a high volume of nominations were received from departments, along with patients and the public, who wished to show their appreciation

for the hard work of individuals and teams. Over 100 people were put forward to receive an award of recognition for achievements in work and academics, which included: leadership and management, health and social care, cleaning, pharmacy, and accountancy.

A new award category was introduced this year to incorporate the new trust values. The 'Living the Values' award was awarded to a very deserving nominee, Katie Johnson, who showed tremendous commitment to her job, despite suffering a serious injury.

Staff Development Officer, Lizzie Shevlin, who coordinated the Celebration of Achievement Awards,

said: "The event was really fantastic again this year. It was great to see so many members of staff enjoying themselves and celebrating their achievements among colleagues, friends and family. It showcases the high level of commitment that is put in by staff all across the Trust, be it to improve their services for patients or to develop themselves."

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement award which was won by Sarah Hoyle, Divisional Manager for Women and Children's, for her commitment to the improvement of women and children's services over the many years that she has spent working for the Countess.

Why are our values so important?

By Chief Executive, Peter Herring

For those of you who have visited the Countess recently, you may have seen information appearing around the hospital relating to the Trust's Values – including large wall mounted displays which have been placed at key locations around the hospital containing the values emblem.

Each day every one of us puts patients at the heart of everything we do in order to consistently deliver excellence across the Trust. We do this because we care and because we are proud of the services we provide. These are values that each of us hold as important: they are our core beliefs, the things that we do because we want to, because it makes a difference to the people we serve.

My aim is for the Countess to be a values driven organisation. The values will form an integral part of the ongoing Countess Way programme and will be the cornerstone of establishing the way we do things both now and in the future. The Countess values define the standards of behaviour expected of all staff and they set the tone for current and future work practices. The values and their underpinning behaviours have been developed in partnership with staff operating at various levels throughout the organisation and with full consideration of the feedback received to date about the current culture.



This approach has helped us to ensure our behavioural standards are a collective commitment and that they are reflective of the views of staff from across the Trust. These values apply to everyone irrespective of their role, length of service or their level of responsibility and I hope all of our staff join me in embracing them to promote the desired working culture.



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