

Core brief

**Message from Jane Grant, Chief Executive
(26 February 2021, 4.50pm)**

Our NHS Board met this week and I wanted to share with you the gratitude that was expressed by Board members to our staff for the tremendous work you do and there are many examples of this.

What continues to impress me, is that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, when as an organisation we have been pushed further than ever before and challenged so intensely, we have still been able to implement new ideas and ways of working. This, in turn, has supported us to continue providing quality care, albeit in a different way.

These innovations include the redesign of urgent care, which was developed at pace to give people the support they need to avoid unnecessary visits to A&E. Also, our arrangement whereby patients are discharged to a care home for assessment. This will help us to achieve consistent high quality, safe discharge into care homes with no delay for our patients and free up hospital beds for those who need them.

The use of technology to deliver healthcare has increased hugely during this time and it is also helping elsewhere. vCreate, our secure video system, has helped thousands of family members keep in touch with their loved ones who are receiving care in our hospitals throughout the pandemic. This technology has proved vital to so many.

I would like to thank every member of staff who has been involved in keeping innovation at the heart of all we do. Your efforts are hugely significant and greatly appreciated. To our staff and patients who have embraced new ways of working and new technology, thank you for taking a leap of faith. Your commitment helps us to continue to move forward, improve our services and grow our patient centred approach.

Meantime, our staff continue to respond magnificently to the pandemic, both in our community and hospital settings and in the delivery of the vaccination programme. As the daily briefings confirm, this is having an impact and rates of infection and hospital cases are both now falling.

While this is great news, we cannot afford to be complacent, and it is important that we all continue to follow the guidance; wear a face covering, maintain social distancing, clean our hands regularly and remember to self-isolate and book a test if we start to display symptoms. We must also remember that being vaccinated does not make you immune to COVID-19, so please continue to consider your loved ones, your colleagues and your local community in all you do.

Thank you all for your continued support and your commitment to your patients and your colleagues.