



Jan's Weekly Update

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A Quick Note

I wasn't going to write this week - because for me it's been a short week and I thought you would either be busy or taking some leave so wouldn't have time to read it. However I've been out and about and was just starting to think I should tell you about it when someone asked if they would be in my weekly brief this week - so that settled it.

I hope you've all had a good Christmas - I have met a number of you who worked over the festive days (thank you). I worked over Christmas for the best part of 20 years and still miss some of the positives that brings - it fosters a lovely team feeling (you feel like the only ones around) patients and their families are really grateful (even more than usual) and if I'm honest I have used it on occasion as a bonafide excuse to escape those more challenging family dos ! Oh and of course the roads are clear and parking is simple.

Many of you who I spoke to shared similar stories of Christmas working.

Spending Time

I haven't been to Bridgnorth or Whitchurch hospitals for ages, so grabbed the opportunity to do that this week. I hit the jackpot because there were plenty of people around - and they had a little bit of extra time to talk. I felt very welcome everywhere I went and was able to check out how things are. You got the chance to tell me what is going well and where you need help - and I asked how you are getting on with your CQC actions. I was pleased you all knew what needs to change - and where action has already happened.

I know not all of you think I should keep on about CQC but it is important to all of us - if we don't have Patient and staff safety quite right then I will keep on about it until we do. I'm also really keen you get credit for the work you do, nationally recognised, I'm not sure we did that when the CQC came last time. I watch you do great work - others should see that too.

I saw and heard some great patient stories - all of our patients told me they felt cared for and well looked after. One of our staff had been at a wedding over Christmas and she told me about the best dressed little boy in town who ended up in MIU because he'd managed to get a bit of the Church pillar in his eye! He and his parents returned to the wedding delighted with the service they got. It's not easy to treat children with eye problems - as you know they have a tendency to want to keep them closed when there is something in them. This story could be a children's book!! The best dressed boy goes to MIU at Christmas

At Whitchurch I witnessed some really excellent person centred care - a gentleman had become quite distressed at the thought of leaving the hospital, although his family were there and he had previously spent a lot of time trying to leave. He was a bit confused and was obviously frightened. The team worked hard to find the right approach, reduce his anxiety and eventually the person (one of our rehabilitation technicians) who he responded to, trusted and went happily to his family's car. Really sophisticated skills to make that happen, and a lot of patience.

I can see a difference in the way we are responding to people who are confused and/or distressed. I met a gentleman at Bridgnorth who was very confused about his surroundings. The team knew what his life had been like before dementia - a farmer out and about 12 hours a day - hospital is going to be a foreign land for him. They put a care plan in place to work with him to find ways to occupy him and reduce his distress. They have done a really good job in challenging circumstances. It made a massive difference to that gentleman and other patients on the ward.

We don't always celebrate these skills and competencies as we should. They are at least as complex as the practical skills we learn and probably twice as important to our patients.

Both hospitals looked clean, tidy and welcoming - a credit to our domestic teams, and recognised by all families I spoke to. Everyone mentioned the food - very positively of course.

Other things

Ros Preen and I met with Shropshire CCG colleagues, Simon Freeman, the new Chief Officer and Julian Povey the Chair and one of our GPs to discuss our future, plans for changing our services and how we work together to achieve all of this. It was a good meeting and while things will be tricky because of the money situation I came away confident we could work together.

Some of you told me you are unsure of what the future holds. I think that's because we all are. We still need to work through plans to understand what all our services should be to meet people's needs in the future and we will work hard to influence that.

Some of you will experience change sooner than other - CAMHs are in the middle of big changes, Children's and Health Visitors are about to go through a similar process.

I will ask Mel Duffy our Director of Strategy and Andy Rogers to think of ways we can keep you involved and informed about potential plans - a lot of the ideas you put forward don't happen, there is always lots of talk and then what feels like no action and of course many rumours. I promise you will know if change is planned and more importantly be involved in what that is - you are the experts.

However whatever the changes we will always need community services, we all agree

more care closer to home and we never have enough people to deliver the services so please don't worry. Things will change but not overnight ...and it could be exciting!

Staff Survey

I also took sometime to read the results of our staff survey. I get an early look before it's made public in February. I have read all of it including all the comments you've made. I have asked my team to read it and we will have focussed conversation about it and what it's telling us on Wednesday at our team meeting.

So many people and things to mention but I'll stop here - my last mention has to be physiotherapists this week. I don't often meet the physios in outpatients because I tend to visit out of hours. However I met with two of the Whitchurch team preparing for the afternoon clinic. They had two full clinics and only one person didn't turn up (we get more cancellations at this time of year) That meant they were able to provide optimum care and others waiting will get closer to their turn to be seen. They quietly get on with their jobs, supporting people to get mobile, become pain free and stay independent.

I also met a physio at Oswestry MIU - training to be an Emergency Care Practitioner at the Acute hospital. Really interesting role, and great to see her getting lots of expert teaching from the nurse practitioners while sharing her expert physio knowledge with them. Brilliant for patients and brilliant for professional development.

Well I'm taking the day off today - I have a bunch of people arriving for lunch - a bit stressful as cooking doesn't come naturally to me! Then we're off to see the new Star Wars film (I confess I am a fan - product of growing up with brothers I guess) and it may help them forget lunch!

Happy New Year everyone I hope I'll see more of you in the next few days to say it personally but if I don't enjoy.....

Until the next time

Jan Ditheridge
Chief Executive

