



Jan's Weekly Update

Jan Ditheridge, Chief Executive

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Changing Seasons

It's just before 7am and the sun is coming up - a beautiful blue sky - the calm after the storm. I had quite a challenging journey home to Malvern last night across Shropshire and Herefordshire - high winds, sheet rain, surface water and trees down.

Autumn is certainly here - I hope those of you out and about yesterday were ok and took great care - I know you're really experienced drivers on our roads but I'm not sure everyone treats the roads with respect during bad weather, so be careful and make sure you are even more diligent about checking in back at base if you're on your own.

Local Communities

As you know I was away last week - I went on a short trip to the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco with friends - why am I telling you about my holidays? Well we stayed in a local community where the place is self sufficient and uses its profits from walkers, trekkers and mountain climbers (I wasn't a mountain climber) to support the local community. So they have promoted projects to support girls to go to school providing accommodation they can



stay in during the week - school is too far to go on a daily basis, provide training and work for people in the travel industry and a vet supported locals to learn how to care for their mules and donkeys - the main form of transport in the mountains. Roads and cars are still relatively uncommon and they are often subject to landslides as we saw while we were there after a storm similar to the one I drove through yesterday but with more profound affect in the mountains.



I was at the Care Closer to Home Board yesterday - where we are trying to progress a different way of delivering health and care to our communities - we're not tackling the same issues as those people who live in Morocco but it struck me that the community element is the same. Making a difference to people does require local solutions - depending on the issues - principles are the same, all people should have access to health and care but the solutions might be different because of where people live and work.

Interestingly although a world away from Shropshire one of the biggest health issues Morocco are now dealing with? Sugar! Rises in diabetes and poor dental health in children and adults are a really big issue. Sound familiar...

CQC is coming...

We know that we are due another visit from CQC soon and on Wednesday afternoon each of your leaders shared all the work that's happened since they last visited. We need to find a way to ensure you all hear this because it's a testament to all the work you've done to improve things for patients carers and their families - I know you know this stuff because you're doing it but to see it all in one place will make you very proud. It made me proud.

We heard about many examples of how we've improved end of life care, making it easier for people who are in our services with dementia, spotting signs of serious illness and sepsis and changes in some of our staffing establishments to reflect skills and workload.

What struck me is the number of examples of outstanding patient care improvements led by all sorts of staff - particularly our Memory and Wellbeing workers in community hospitals, our rehabilitation technicians and some of volunteers all being innovative and demonstrating leadership to improve patient experience and improve their recovery time.

We heard how the Bridgnorth team facilitated care for a married couple separated by illness but brought back together in the hospital and supported to return home to enjoy a bit longer together. Our MIUs have done loads to hone their skills and experience to improve things for children, spot serious illness and organise themselves to optimise the whole team rather than in separate units. The dentists made sure that a lady who needed chemotherapy had urgent dental care to allow that to happen and our children's services talked about many examples of how they've continued to deliver great services to children and young people through a period of significant change.

Our community teams have loads of examples where they've improved the way they work despite some real challenges with caseloads increasing and some teams hit by absences. The introduction of the refreshed safe handover in community teams and on the wards has been really important for patient and staff safety and the use of RiO to deliver better patient care is evident - I heard someone at the Board meeting yesterday say we're now system leaders in End of Life care and the use of IT to deliver better patient care!

We know we still have challenges - we will always have challenges but I'm now much more sure we know about them, will shout when there is a new problem and work together to reduce risk and improve things. I really hope you know you will get support when things are tough.

So CQC are coming and it is important that we're ready - but this is not about CQC is it? It's about our patients and showing and telling what we do to make them safe, improve their health and so many examples of going the extra mile to keep people well, independent and living well whatever they are living with. It's also about showing that we care about each other, understand that people should take a break, have leave and go home on time and that we have challenges that we're not afraid to talk about and show how we're dealing with it, and that where we've made a mistake we've said sorry if appropriate and learned and changed things.

The CQC team are made up of people like us - in many ways they are our peers and I want them to see who you are and what you achieve every day... you deserve that.

Until next week...

Jan Ditheridge
Chief Executive

