

# TRUSTtalk

Magazine for staff, members, volunteers and people who use our services



ELFT Opens New  
COVID Vaccine Centre

New Year's Honour  
for Senior Nurse

Recognising Racism

Mental Health Crisis  
Services

Winter 2021

We care  
We respect  
We are inclusive



# Chief Executive FOREWORD

I think many of us hoped and expected 2021 was going to be a better year than 2020. Instead, we have had a harrowing start to the year with the national lockdown extended across the whole country, an increase in cases of coronavirus, an increase in the number of deaths from coronavirus and the painful news at the end of January that the UK has seen 100,000 deaths. Many of us will have been directly affected and we know that the impact of loss and illness on our communities will last for many years to come. The Trust and local organisations will need to work together to help our communities find a way forward and to support individuals and families who have been hardest hit. The unity of effort between organisations has been the trademark of our pandemic response, and I know this will continue.

A bright light in the midst of this difficult first month has been the start of the rollout of the COVID vaccination programme. We are grateful to our partner acute trusts in Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and North East London who have supported us in ensuring our staff were able to receive the COVID vaccine at an early stage. The COVID vaccine is a real game changer in pulling us out of the pandemic. Whilst some people have concerns about the vaccine and the speed of its development (all down to a concerted global effort and funding), the risk to life and health posed by the coronavirus, in my view, is a greater threat. I urge everyone, who has not yet had the vaccination to take the opportunity to do so. ELFT is now running one of the national COVID Vaccination Centres in Westfield Shopping Centre in Stratford. You can

read about how staff came together to get the service up and running in a matter of weeks. And that has been the thread running through all our work and effort during the pandemic - of people coming together to get things done. There is no getting away from it, we have had some very difficult times but throughout it all, despite their tiredness, and the emotional burden staff have carried in their professional and personal lives, they have been outstanding. There has been good news and some lighter moments to carry us through the dark times. Debbie Buck, Lead Nurse in Bedfordshire, received a New Year's Honour for services to the NHS which was a tremendous boost to everyone. An allotment in Newham for service users became the temporary home to a Harris Hawk on furlough, and on Christmas Eve, a local hero in Bedfordshire helped one of our nurses get through the floods to get to a patient. We heard that Leighton Road Surgery in Bedfordshire has been chosen to develop a project that connects housebound patients and that we are playing a key role in the launch of new a NHS Maternal Mental Health Service from April 2021. Although a number of stories in this issue are about the coronavirus, there has also been substantial work taking place on other aspects of healthcare at ELFT. Onward and upward.

Paul Calaminus  
Interim Chief Executive

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## New Year's Honour for ELFT Lead Nurse



A dedicated nurse with nearly 40 years of experience is to receive a British Empire Medal (BEM) in recognition of her service to the NHS during the COVID pandemic.

Debbie Buck, a lead nurse for practice development in Bedfordshire was named in the Queen's New Year Honours 2021. As part of her work in response to the pandemic, Debbie developed a warehouse and formed a team to deliver vital Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to colleagues to keep them safe and enable them to continue providing vital care and support. Debbie, who works for the Trust's Bedfordshire and Luton mental health

services, also helped prepare trainers to deliver essential training to NHS staff. The 55-year-old, who is based at Twinwoods in Clapham near Bedford, was inspired at the age of 14 to join the NHS after spending time at Fairfield Hospital in Stotfold as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award. She returned to the hospital in 1983 to start working there and started her nurse training in 1984. The 55-year-old, who lives in Irthlingborough in Northamptonshire, has since worked for Leicestershire NHS Trust and spent five years at St Andrews' Hospital. She joined the NHS in Bedfordshire in 2001 and also completed her Master's degree in Psychosocial Interventions at Hatfield University in 2009.

"The NHS is an important organisation and to be part of it has been really important to me as we support those who are most vulnerable in the place where they live," said Debbie. "During my 37-year career I have been fortunate to work in a variety of settings and ways, and each of those roles has had a significant impact on the lives of others." The Trust's Director of Nursing for Bedfordshire and Luton, Claire McKenna, who nominated Debbie, said: "Debbie's individual contribution in response to some of the COVID challenges faced by the NHS has been nothing short of exceptional," she said. "She has risen to new challenges, working tirelessly in getting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies to frontline services and taking additional training needs in her stride, to name but a few."

## LGBTQ+ History Month

ALTHOUGH the UK and the NHS have come a long way in accepting and understanding the rights and needs of LGBTQ+ people, there is still some way to go and prejudices remain in many quarters. So February was a time to reflect, put ourselves in the shoes of others and work towards ensuring that ELFT is the kind of workplace where everyone feels included and involved, and proud to be a part of. Chief Medical Officer and Executive Sponsor of the LGBTQ+ Staff network, Dr Paul Gilluley said, "Wellbeing can only take place in an environment where you feel you can be

yourself. It is important that LGBTQ+ staff are able to bring their whole self to work and not feel that they have to leave part of themselves at home."

"I think for a lot of people visibility and acceptance is still an issue. I feel in a privileged position as LGBTQ Network Lead to try and influence opinions and raise awareness of LGBTQ issues in the Trust."  
- Fiona Lord, lead of the LGBTQ+ Staff Network

## New Non-Executive Director for the Trust



THE Trust is pleased to announce the appointment of Deborah Wheeler as a new Non-Executive Director. She joined the Trust Board on 1 January 2021.

Deborah was formerly the chief nurse at North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust and is now retired. She has an extensive nursing background having been Deputy Chief Nurse (South Region) at NHS England (2013-2016) and Deputy Director of Nursing at NHS South of England and Director of Education (Nursing & Midwifery) at UCL Partners (September 2012 to March 2013) She is also a trustee of the Epilepsy Society. Deborah is no stranger to East London and was Director of Nursing at Barking, Havering & Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust. Her national roles give her a good understanding of broader issues in nursing, nurse education and delivery of services that make a difference to individuals, families and communities. Her appointment will enable her to support the strategic leadership and direction of the Trust and build on its patient-centred values. Deborah said, "I am really excited to be joining ELFT. I'm passionate about ensuring people are supported to live the best life they can, whatever their circumstances. I want to use my work and life experiences to the benefit of everyone who ELFT serves." Chair Mark Lam said, "I am absolutely delighted that Deborah is to join the team here at ELFT. We welcome her knowledge and experience which will be a boon to the Trust. We are building a very exciting Trust Board and Deborah will be a great addition."



# COVID Vaccination Centre at Westfield



The Westfield COVID Vaccination Centre opened on 25 January 2021 and is one of hundreds of nationwide centres set up to deliver the COVID vaccination programme. Attendance is strictly by appointment only. People will be contacted by the NHS to book an appointment according to the Government's priority list.



The Centre is open from 8.00am - 8.00pm seven days a week. When fully operational, it will be able to provide thousands of vaccinations a day. Each visit will take approximately 20 minutes per person using the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine. This needs to be administered in two doses between 4 and 12 weeks apart, requiring two visits.

### Mammoth Project

Dr Paul Gilluley, ELFT's Chief Medical Officer, has led on the project. He said, "It has been a mammoth project to get the Westfield COVID Vaccination Centre up and running in a matter of weeks but staff at ELFT have really come together to make it a success. Everyone is proud to have been able to play their part in providing a central point for the public to get the COVID vaccine. It is another step along the way to protecting people from the virus and helping our local communities to get back on their feet."

### Team Effort

The project has involved ELFT's estates team, pharmacy team, people and culture team, IT team, nurse trainers, medical staff, administrators, communication team and many others. A vaccinator recruitment and training programme had a great response. The centre will be run by 93 staff. A team of volunteers have also been recruited.

### Staff Vaccines and Training

Before it opened, the Trust made use of the Centre to vaccinate health and social care staff including contracted staff such as domestic staff, porters and facilities staff. It was a chance to train new vaccinators, test procedures and processes prior to opening to the public.



### New Friends

The Trust has struck up a great partnership with the Station Manager at Stratford station and the management team at Westfield.

Scott Parsons, UK Chief Operating Officer Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield said: "Westfield Stratford City is delighted to be able to donate space to the NHS to create a large scale vaccination centre in the heart of Newham. The service will be a huge benefit to our local community which has been particularly hard hit by the current crisis."



**"I urge everyone to get the vaccine - when they are called. But we need to remember that we can still spread coronavirus even when vaccinated so we still need to wear masks or face coverings, wash our hands regularly throughout the day and keep 2m away from one another."**

- Dr Gilluley

# How Do You Set up a COVID Vaccination Centre in Four Weeks? With a lot help from your friends!



In early December, the Trust heard it was to open and a run a COVID Vaccination Centre in Westfield Shopping Centre in Stratford in a vacant retail unit. So who do you call when you have four weeks to set up a state of the art centre to provide vaccination to thousands of people? Why, Director of Estates John Hill, of course! Here he tells us the highs and the lows of those four weeks.

The East London Health and Care Partnership identified the retail space in Westfield, previously the IKEA and Dwell furniture store. They set out some key features the centre would need to have, but apart from that, we were free to express ourselves. Once I saw the whole space, a plan started to form in my head. I imagined the journey people would take when they arrived at the centre, the various stages, the unexpected issues we should be prepared for, and how we could maintain the highest infection control measures throughout their whole visit.

So, our new centre boasts a pre-assessment area, an assessment area and six vaccination pods which can house 12 vaccinators with a fridge that can take enough vaccines for a whole day to reduce movement in the centre. There is an observation space between vaccination chairs so that all vaccinators can be observed and vaccinations witnessed by a qualified professional. We have a dedicated

pharmacy area close to the pods, a sluice area for disposal of used items, and a resuscitation area. (The first of our visitors will be frail and vulnerable so we need to be ready for all eventualities!)

There is a mezzanine area creating a first floor which is sparsely furnished to be a breakout area for staff to rest at a distance from one another.

### Challenges

There have been many challenges along the way notwithstanding trying to make this happen in the weeks leading up to Christmas during Tier 3 and 4 restrictions! As an Anchor trust, we try to utilise local tradespeople to do work for the Trust as a way of providing employment and directing funds back to our local communities. The insurance requirements of Westfield meant that many small firms could never have met their threshold so we worked with our main framework building company that could, and they employed local tradespeople.

Getting crucial deliveries was another challenge. Westfield do not allow you to bring supplies through the shopping centre (even though it is empty right now!) so instead you have to book 30 minute delivery slots. Many of our suppliers can't predict delivery times to that degree so that was quite a headache. But our suppliers and contractors have really risen to the challenge and Westfield have been terrific. All have been happy to be part of a project that is going to have such an impact on the health, wellbeing and survival of local people.

The local police commander and his team have been really helpful and advised us on strengthening security at the unit. The Communications team made contact with the station manager at Stratford and the Shopping Centre security team to make sure all staff are briefed and can direct anyone unsure of the way.

### Highlights

When I think about what has gone well - it is the technology. Alison Naughton, John Smith and Simon Fewer have been exemplary. From the very start, they just got on with it - no dramas, no prompts, no stalling, a great team to work

with. The vaccination centre is dependent of the systems, the WiFi and everything that goes with that. Without them, it just wouldn't work.

As for me, I am pleased at how it all came together. There have been long 12 hour days and I have never spent so much time in a shopping centre - without damage to my credit card! It has been a difficult time to do a project like this with Christmas and COVID restrictions. I feel proud that I was trusted to deliver the centre, with no interference. I feel it has drawn on all the skills I have learnt throughout my life from my early days as an engineer. I feel humbled to have been 'allowed' to lead on this and kinda be part of history. I am grateful that our interim Chief Executive Paul Calaminus and the exec team had faith in me and made sure I was OK every step of the way

I have learnt that I am a control freak which isn't really a good thing as no one can help you if you don't tell them what's in your head! But I have embraced it. I retire in nine months and whilst it's not named The John Hill Vaccination Centre, there is a lot of me and the ELFT team in that unit! If all goes to plan with vaccine delivery, at the height of its activity, 3000 people a day will be able to be vaccinated at the centre. That's not a bad outcome after just four weeks!

## Asking for a Friend

If I have my COVID vaccine jab, can I stop wearing a mask and not worry so much about social distancing and washing my hands?

No, it is important that you continue to wear a mask, keep 2m away from others as much as you can and wash your hands thoroughly several times a day. But especially after using public transport, touching door handles, stair rails, lift buttons, key pads, cash point buttons and any surface that other people touch. The vaccine means that you have a low risk of catching the coronavirus (76% protection) but you can still spread it to others if you pick it up. So remember: hands, face, space at all times.



# COVID Vaccine Rollout

AS well as running the Westfield COVID Vaccine Centre, staff working in ELFT primary care services have been working at weekends to be able to vaccinate practice patients. At ELFT's Homeless GP Practices in the three East London boroughs, the COVID vaccine is being offered to these vulnerable groups. Additionally, a roving team of vaccinators are visiting our inpatient units to offer the COVID vaccine to inpatients, and to any staff that have not yet had theirs.

## Hesitancy About the COVID Vaccine

Some have reservations about the COVID vaccine and want more information about it to be able to make the best decision for their personal health. The Trust has information on its website with frequently asked questions and answers. We have encouraged staff to send in their questions and queries and put these to a panel of experts to answer. Their discussion of the points raised has been filmed and is available for anyone to view on YouTube and on the ELFT website.

Staff have been talking about why they have had the COVID vaccine, and have recorded short films in English, and some in community languages, so that everyone can hear the facts. There are a range of films on the ELFT website in different languages to overcome language barriers, and the Trust has worked with local councils and faith leaders. BAME communities have been among the hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic so it is vital to ensure people have reliable information. See the back page for the 'Final Word' column from Mark Lam, ELFT's Chair who explains why he had the COVID vaccine.

## Supporting People in Quarantine

### Supporting Quarantine Hotels

ELFT's Newham Talking Therapies service is providing mental health support to passengers in quarantine hotels in the borough, and support for hotel staff too. London City Airport is one of the designated airports receiving flights from one of the 33 'red list' countries for UK nationals returning to the country.

On arrival, passengers arriving from these countries will be taken to government-sanctioned hotels for a quarantine period of ten days. This is part of the Government's measures to close the UK's borders to reduce the transmission of the coronavirus.

Being isolated in one room will be challenging and will have an impact on their mental health wellbeing so the Newham Talking Therapies (IAPT) team came up a plan to offer online sessions/workshops on mindfulness, sleep hygiene, worry management, managing irritability, etc. The team have also developed a specific Quarantine Wellbeing workshop to support hotel guests to pace themselves and cope with the imposed break to their usual activities - all accessible from their tv.

These services are already provided to residents in Newham, Tower Hamlets, Richmond and Bedfordshire. Teams have been supporting many during the lockdown with online sessions, workshops and videos to help them to find strategies to cope.

**Newham:**  
<https://newhamtalkingtherapies.nhs.uk/>  
**Tower Hamlets:**  
<https://towerhamletstalkingtherapies.nhs.uk/>  
**Richmond:**  
<https://www.richmondwellbeingsservice.nhs.uk/>  
**Bedfordshire:**  
<https://bedfordshirewellbeingsservice.nhs.uk/>

## Pioneer Nurse Caroline First to Have Westfield COVID Vaccination



CAROLINE Oguniola, Professional Development Lead Nurse for Community Services, was the first staff member to have her COVID vaccine jab at the new COVID Vaccination Centre. Caroline was delighted to be playing a small part in NHS history. She said, "I am pleased to have had my first jab and I want to encourage everyone, especially those from BAME communities to get it. There are many myths out there but you need to get the facts to be safe."

She went on to say, "I didn't experience any problems after the vaccination. If anything, it's given me peace of mind. Knowing people who have been seriously ill from COVID, you don't realise how much the worry of contracting coronavirus is with you. I do feel a sense of relief to have had the vaccine."

Caroline was also involved in the recruitment and training of the Westfield centre's staff.



# Mental Health Crisis Support Is Available 24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week



ALL the Trust's mental health crisis lines are now available 24 hours a day and are free for people to call. But what do people call about and what happens when someone gets in contact? In this article, a team of mental health professionals explain what kind of support they can offer.

## Q: What types of calls can people contact the helpline about?

A: We have people's friends or a family member contact us because they are worried about someone, perhaps because they have mentioned that they are feeling suicidal, said they cannot cope with their worries or anxiety about life; or because they have money, job worries, or a partnership breakdown and are overwhelmed. In some cases, people call because they are hearing voices that aren't there, or they are in danger of harming themselves or others.

## Q. What can the ELFT Crisis Lines do to help?

A: We encourage the family member to ask the person to call the crisis line immediately so a face-to-face assessment can be done to give care or signpost appropriately. If the family member is there, we might ask if the person will talk to us on the call and an intervention can be held over the phone – they will always be talking to a clinician so help will be instant.

If they are reluctant to have help at that moment, we would advise them to book an appointment with their GP for further support. It is usually better to speak to the person in order to get a full picture of what is going on because often the family member is unable to answer some of the questions we need answered.

## Q. Do people call the Crisis Line for reasons not connected to a mental health crisis?

A. Yes – sometimes we have people call when they have run out of money. We signpost them

to appropriate services that can help them. We might also advise them to speak to their bank for an emergency overdraft.

Sometimes students might call who are not meeting a deadline for an assignment. We will advise they speak to their tutors or other college authorities.

Sadly, and it is something that is happening a lot at the moment - people who are going to be evicted from their home may call us. We are able to advise them to go to organisations that can assist them, or Homeless Person's Unit/Housing Options unit. We advise people to approach the Citizen Advice Bureau or other third party providers for advice. We have a large directory of services that we can.

We know that situations like these can cause major upset and may even trigger the onset of a mental health crisis. Situations can unravel but the Crisis Line service is not able to support people with financial, employment or housing issues. There are other organisations that can help with these types of issues. Our remit is to support people who are experiencing such acute mental health distress that they are in danger of harming themselves or someone else, and cannot see a way out of their situation. We are here to support them and to let them know that there are things that can be done, and that there are mental health professionals who can offer support.

## Q. What immediate support can you offer to someone who is feeling suicidal or under such extreme pressure they may harm themselves or others?

A: The immediate support for someone feeling suicidal is to ask them to attend for a face-to-face assessment at one of the Crisis Hubs. There we can give appropriate treatment, refer on for further care and therapy or arrange admission should the person require it. In certain circumstances we can do an urgent assessment in the community.

For those who are having thoughts to harm others, there are various ways to help. Although they can still be seen at the Crisis Hub, it may sometimes be more appropriate for the safety of our staff for the police to be involved. We may opt for the person to be seen in a more secure environment such as the Emergency Department or a home visit if it is safe to do so.

## Q. Sometimes a mental health crisis might start because of domestic abuse. If

someone calls the support service and your staff can ascertain that they are in such a situation, what advice would you give?

A. We would listen. It often takes a lot to take that first step. We would advise the person to inform the police and direct them to domestic abuse support information and organisations.

## Q: Can young people use the service? What support will someone who is under 18 receive if they should call

A: Young people do use the service. Often we are called by young people already in touch with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) so they will have a care plan in place that we can follow. If not, we support and also inform our CAMHS.



**ELFTs Mental Health Crisis Lines are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week across the following areas:**

City & Hackney call Free Phone: 0800 073 0006

If you live in Bedfordshire or Luton call: NHS 111 (then ask for option 2)

Newham call Free Phone: 0800 073 0066

Tower Hamlets call Free Phone: 0800 073 0003

# PPE Buddy

A NEW PPE Buddy system has been introduced at ELFT to ensure staff are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) correctly and appropriately throughout their shift.

At the start of every shift, staff agree who the buddy pairs are going to be. Then throughout the shift, check in on each other to make sure masks are in place and changed every couple of hours. They can double check that gloves and aprons are changed at intervals throughout the shift. They can also make sure their buddy has had a break and has had a drink to keep them hydrated during a busy shift. They can together ensure that they wipe down surfaces before/after use – phone handsets, computer keyboards, desks, etc.

The PPE Buddy system is the brainchild of Director of Nursing, Andy Cruickshank. He said, "The general principle of the PPE Buddy approach is to promote the noticing of good PPE practice and to address lapses that can contribute to the spread of infection. Staff can get absorbed in what they are doing and using PPE correctly is vital protection. This peer-to-peer arrangement could save lives."





# New Partnership Maternal Mental Health Service



Photo by Marcin Jozwiak from Pexels

“Collaboration with health and social care colleagues – and talking to the mums who this service will support – are fundamental in helping shape this vital piece of work,” said Justine Cawley, Trust-wide Lead for Perinatal Mental Health.

“Our absolute priority is to provide care that reflects the needs of service users and that better connects parts of the NHS to deliver an approach that feels joined-up to the people we care for and to health and social care professionals.”

## North East London Integrated Care System (ICS) Maternal Mental Health Service

The ICS bid has involved substantial patient engagement and co-production, working with local mums to work out the best approach, as well as a joined-up approach by ELFT with NELFT – the other ICS mental health provider, three acute providers (Barts Health, BHRUT and Homerton University Hospital Trust), voluntary and community organisations and commissioners.

NEL will receive £960,442.09 for 21/22 to deliver the service. It covers all seven Clinical Commissioning Groups and will involve additional investment in local NHS and voluntary organisations. The co-production process started at the bid writing stage, with engagement and co-production work continuing throughout as NHS partners work with local mums to work out the best approach.

## Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICS Maternal Mental Health Service

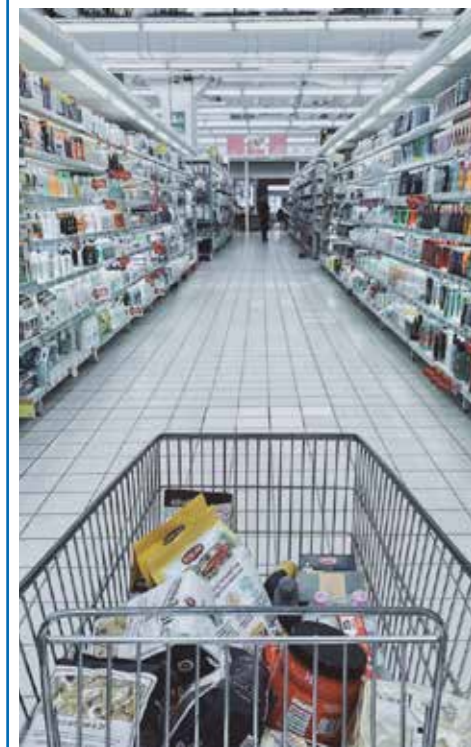
The ICS bid involved a joined-up approach by ELFT and Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), who both provide mental health services across the area, working in partnership with voluntary and community organisations, Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, maternity services and health visitors. This resulted in substantial patient engagement and co-production, working with local mums to work out the best approach.

THE Trust is playing a key role in the launch of new a NHS Maternal Mental Health Service from April 2021.

ELFT is a partner in projects to provide support for women who are going through, or have gone through pregnancy, by providing joined-up care in north east London and in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes.

This much-needed service will support women with experience of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following birth trauma, following perinatal loss (including early miscarriage, recurrent miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death, termination of pregnancy for any reason, parent infant separation at birth due to safeguarding concerns), and severe fear of childbirth (tokophobia).

Ultimately, these new services will integrate maternity, reproductive health and psychological therapy for women experiencing mental health difficulties directly arising from, or related to, the maternity experience, in all areas of England by 2023/24.



# Returning to Work in a Pandemic

NED joined the City and Hackney IPS Employment Support Programme in November 2019. When he started work in Sainsburys in March this year, he had no idea what was in store for him with panic buying and lockdown bringing challenges he could never have foreseen. But as Catherine Warren, Occupational Therapist/Employment Specialist notes, Ned has risen to the challenge and become one of the heroes helping to feed the nation. Ned shares his story to inspire others who would like to get back to work as he did but are struggling to overcome the barriers on their own.

“I had been unemployed for a while. Previously I worked on construction sites which I found very stressful. My mental health got worse, to the point I had to leave my job. I was referred to the Fast Track to Work programme and met my advisor, Catherine, at Homerton Library. We arranged regular

meetings one to one and at the Job Club in the local community centre. She has supported me in a many different ways; with my CV, online applications and preparing me for the interviews. I really appreciated when she helped me with my CV. It was difficult to talk about my skills, and I just could not think of anything.

I wanted a simple job in a retail where I did not have to do much multi-tasking. At a second interview, I was successful. I was a bit anxious at the beginning but it became easier as I settled in to the team. I am still in touch with Catherine and I really appreciate her checking in on me regularly. I currently work 20-25 hours, and I really enjoy my work because I feel supported. Additionally, it is only half an hour away from my home on the bus making it convenient for me.”

Read the full story on the ELFT website.

Photo by Oleg Magni from Pexels

# Patient Participation Group Profile



PEOPLE Participation is about helping our service users and their carers to have a say in how we run the Trust. Mary Prior, lead of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) for Leighton Road Surgery in Leighton Buzzard explains how patients and staff work together to offer a better service for all.

## What does the Patient Participation Group (PPG) do?

We support the activities of the practice and work to share views, opinions and ideas from patients with the Leighton Road Surgery (LRS) team to help improve how care is provided.

Our members also play an active role in helping the practice and during the last year we have helped organise a health and wellbeing fair, been car park marshals for the LRS drive-through flu clinic, provided support during the Care Quality Commission inspection and have members volunteering at the Leighton Buzzard covid vaccination centre.

We are in the process of helping support our Lead Nurse to launch a project to connect housebound and/or lonely patients and we are also involved in interviewing staff.

## Do the PPG feel valued by the practice?

There have been ups and downs during my time with the PPG, over 10 years, but since the surgery joined ELFT 12 months ago there has been fantastic energy and engagement which has been generated by the current

Practice Manager.

We really feel our opinions and suggestions are taken into account and given serious consideration.

What I love is the practice always listens and always comes back with a response to our suggestions.

It might be ‘yes we will do that, ‘your idea might need to be adapted’ or ‘we can’t do that at this point because’ – but there is always a conversation.

## Why did you get involved with the PPG?

I have lived in Leighton Buzzard since 1974, taught in several schools in the town, and had not long retired when I was asked if I would like to get involved.

I love this community, wanted to give something back and health affects everybody.

## How do you engage with other patients?

We used to go and meet patients at the surgery and now meet them virtually, working in pairs. We listen to their praise, concerns or questions and take them back to the practice.

We can’t talk about clinical issues but can help find the answers if they have other questions.

## What kind of backgrounds do the PPG members have?

We come from a whole range of backgrounds so we have a variety of experiences and skills to bring to the group.

## Do you need other members?

At one point all members were retired or semi-retired but we have had some younger people join the team, which has definitely helped improve the balance.

We would love to have some young adults in their late teens get involved and tell us from their perspective what works, or how they would like to see changes made.

## What achievements are you proud of?

The progress made during the last year has been tremendous.

We have worked jolly hard with the surgery team to turn things around.

There is a genuine sense of momentum and the willingness of members to be involved in projects has been exceptional.

That tremendous hard work is reflected in how LRS is perceived. If you look at social media you now regularly see ‘what a fantastic surgery’ and other positive comments.

That hasn’t always been the case and shows the progress which has been made.

It has been a genuine team effort and being able to support LRS in whatever way we can is our greatest achievement.

## Can other patients join the PPG?

Absolutely. If people are interested then we ask them to join as an observer at one of our meetings to get a feel for it, think about it and then they are welcome to join us if it feels right for them.



# Getting People Safely Home from Hospital



It can include patients who are post-COVID, the frail and elderly, any physical conditions, long-term disabilities including cerebral palsy and some mental health conditions if the person is not subject to section under the Mental Health Act..

### Are patients involved in discussions?

Yes. Before a referral is made from the wards there will have been a discussion with the patient and/or their relatives and that continues as we develop a discharge and support plan.

Pre-COVID a member of the hub would have spoken face-to-face with the patient but we have had to adapt to prevent the spread of infection and now use the telephone for those discussions.

### How many staff are involved in discharging a patient through the hub?

What patients won't see is a lot of the work that takes place behind the scenes to help get them home, or to somewhere more suitable than a hospital bed.

The referral process to the hub would involve two colleagues from the ward, the needs of the patient would then be discussed by our triage nurses, then discussed by up to seven healthcare professionals at the daily team meeting and another colleague will then coordinate the discharge.

### How do the hubs help patients?

The hubs are designed to look at the bigger picture of a patient's needs. We consider if they should be discharged from hospital and what support package is needed for them and their family/carers have the right support to cope, so they don't need to be re-admitted.

The hubs help connect organisations and services, working together with focus on the care – and care journey – of the individual.

It is about integrated care, collaboration, partnership and removing any 'that's not my role' attitudes.

### How do the hubs help the NHS and social care?

The hubs are there to help get the care right, the first time.

We work to get patients in the right place and with the right care in place for their needs.

It makes the system more efficient and more effective.

### What is the role like?

Discharge planning can be incredibly fast paced, complicated, demanding and rewarding. It is a bit like Marmite – and I always go back for another bite!

*The BCHS integrated discharge hubs have been shortlisted for the NHS Parliamentary Awards.*

*The awards are organised to celebrate NHS staff across all sectors and services that 'go above and beyond the call of duty to make the NHS a better service.' The ceremony is on 7 July 2021.*

THE Trust's Integrated Discharge Hubs work alongside partner organisations to help safely manage the discharge of patients from hospital - and build support around the needs of the patient to prevent the need for them to be re-admitted. Bedfordshire Community Health Services (BCHS) Bedford discharge lead Leanne Welch explains how the system at Bedford and Luton & Dunstable Hospitals helps patients, NHS and social care services.

### What do the discharge hubs do?

The hubs join multi-professionals together to plan and deliver a smooth transfer to someone's home or to other care environments.

### Who is involved?

The hub at Bedford Hospital involves a huge range of NHS professionals and colleagues from Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. Roles include social workers, hospital staff, therapy staff, safeguarding staff, hospital at home team, mental health staff – to name just a few.

### How do the hubs work?

Referrals come in to the hub from the wards. They are managed by ELFT staff and we triage them to see what the patient's needs are. We use a pathway scale of 0-4 to assess patients – with zero being a case of the patients can go home with no need for support, up to 4 which can be end of life palliative care at home or in a hospice.

### Who do the hubs help?

Any adult that needs support on discharge from hospital.

## Easing Lockdown Restrictions in England

ON 22 February, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the Government's roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England.

He said progress will be based on four factors: successful vaccine rollout, evidence the vaccine rollout is reducing hospital admission and death, that infection rates do not surge and that new variants

do not increase risk significantly. He stated that the Government will examine the impact of each change at four weekly intervals. You can find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-roadmap-to-cautiously-ease-lockdown-restrictions>

# Recognising Racism: Using QI to Help Take Action

A spotlight on the powerful improvement work being undertaken by East India Ward, a personality disorder service in forensic services.

The majority of staff on East India Ward did not think that the team could discuss racism, but the world is changing. The Black Lives Matter movement has brought this conversation in the mainstream media and the Trust are encouraging all staff and service users to have conversations about race and privilege. The ward has done a deep exploration into what is going on in their local context, using Quality Improvement methods to understand and dismantle the problem and develop a strategy to achieve a more respectful, equal workplace. The project team collected anonymous data from staff on East India Dock Ward that disclosed the extent of the issue. In this, they heard there's "too many black nurses", and that "they don't know how to look after white people" or "African staff don't understand Personality Disorder". One of the project leads, Modern Matron Cornelia Kundishora, described the problem as, "Black staff opinions or contributions to discussions are being shut down (by others) or not responded to." A service user on the project team reflected "it is sad to see staff helpless, afraid to deal with racism... and nothing is done." The charts below show the results of the staff poll taken in March 2020:

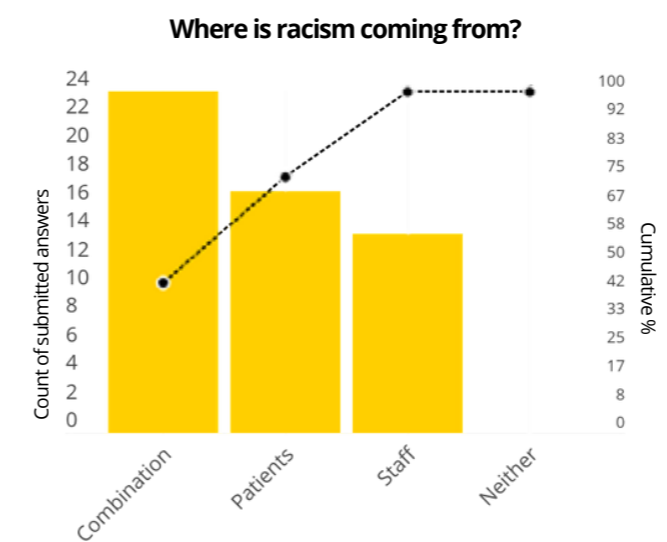
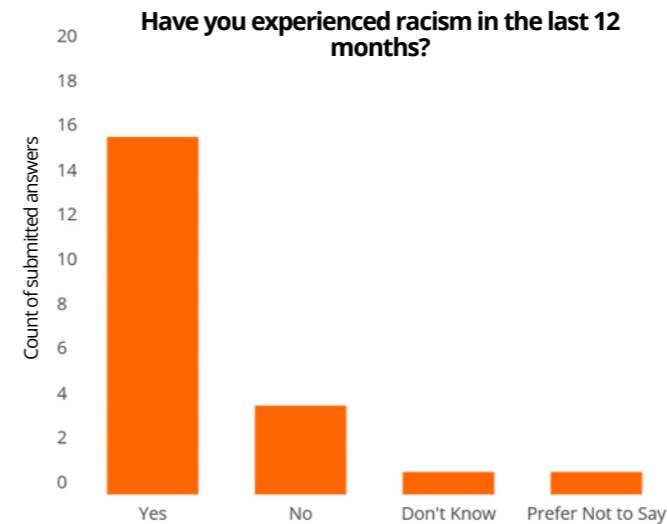
The QI project team mapped out what contributes to the problem and this helped them uncover its root cause: a lack of education and understanding around racism, diversity and inclusion.

It also has not been easy to maintain an open dialog between people with backgrounds and disciplines, but together, they came up with practical ideas for change including a Racism Action Plan, "a fantastic tool, it helps staff know what to do when there is racism".

The team have also created opportunities to celebrate different cultures and race, for example by inviting speakers to talk about the black experience. The project team record incidents of racism visually on a poster as well as on Datix and reporting to the police. They have also created a chart to count the incidents of racism over time.

Tony Kasambira, Forensics Head of Nursing, describes the impact of the work so far: "What are we seeing? Less incidents of racism, staff are able to freely talk about racism, we are also seeing challenges for our white colleagues...but we are slowly getting there." For the full details on the important work being done by the team and to view their Racism Action Plan search Recognising Racism, ELFT QI.

If you've experienced discrimination or racism and want to report it, contact People and Culture on 020 7655 4000.



**“What are we seeing? Less incidents of racism, staff are able to freely talk about racism.”**

- Tony Kasambira, Forensics Head of Nursing

The team used QI to help them identify root causes of the issue and collect change ideas to test.

See full details of how they mapped out the issue and worked up their successful Racism Action Plan on the QI website.

Search: **Recognising Racism, ELFT QI**



## Interview with Mayuri Parmar, Head of Admin – Forensics



creating databases from scratch for an ACL research project that I am named in! This led on to private work creating databases and training staff. I also did a stint in shoe shops, management in nurseries and cancer services. Whatever it took to pay the bills...

### Who are your heroes?

Day Njovana (Now Director of Tower Hamlets Directorate) I was shattered and feeling burnt out during the first wave of COVID-19 last year. He sat me down and explained that I need to approach the pandemic as a long term event and that there was no fast fix - so to slow down and think about self-care. He praised me, showed gratitude and concern for my wellbeing. I have learnt much from him about compassionate leadership during the time in my current role.

However, I must also include a film persona I also admire! Captain Picard from Star Trek who was a fighter and never gave up. I am a Trekie and love attending Star Trek conventions at which I met Jean Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) a few years ago. Although fiction, I learnt from Picard that life can throw some crazy challenges but there is always a way through with some lateral thinking.

### What is your bug bear about the perception of admin?

Not being involved in decision-making with senior managers. People often underestimate the role of admin and we can initially be left out of project and planning meetings. But all processes and service provision are underpinned by strong admin support. We are practical, knowledgeable, problem-solvers and are a key link with other specialities. If you want something done quickly and smoothly ... make sure there's an administrator in the room!!!!

### A personal highlight?

Being able to teach service users new skills.

### Any turning points?

Passing my degree as a mature student and then completing a teaching degree a few years later – the boost to my confidence pushed me forward in speaking up as I used to be shy and rarely speak up at meetings.

### Why do you think a career in administration is the way to go?

A career in administration is not only about typing. I know of a current CEO of a Trust who worked in Admin years ago and ward administrators who are now in senior roles. Admin are jack of all trades! Multi-skilled! Not much happens without us!

2020 has the most challenging year I have experienced in my career. But a year of flexibility and new ways of working. I have also learnt to rely on my colleagues more.

### What task do admins do that no one knows they do?

They listen and support service users in crisis that turn up at reception.

### What would you say to your 16 year old self?

Don't worry so much about the small stuff. Most of all, don't be afraid to break the rules and travel to the unlikeliest of places and make memories.

### What would you say to people thinking about a career in administration in the NHS?

Don't view Admin as a stop gap but go to college, do the admin training – there is so much variety in the NHS and a team or department is waiting for you to join them. I was lucky enough to move around in the NHS and identify where I wanted to work and it was ELFT - I feel lucky to have had the chance to join our Trust.

### What would you like to say to non-admin staff about the role?

Admin is the backbone of the NHS and also the second largest non-clinical group of staff after nursing. We need to be valued!

### Why do you love it/what has kept you in ELFT/NHS/public sector all this time?

I've been able to become a QI Improvement Coach – the best place to be is in ELFT for this!

**If you are interested in a career in health and social care administration, check out [www.nhs.jobs.co.uk/ELFT](http://www.nhs.jobs.co.uk/ELFT)**



## Staff Support Sessions



Photo by Torsten Dettlaff from Pexels

### COVID Vaccine for Staff

AS we go to print, we have vaccinated almost 3,000 of our staff which is almost 50% of our total workforce. Several wards (Rosebank and Leadenhall ward in Tower Hamlets) are reporting 100% of their staff are vaccinated.

We first offered the COVID vaccine to frontline staff and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable staff but with many of those now vaccinated, the offer then opened to all health and social care staff in keeping with the Government Vaccine Priority listing.

Some staff have not had the vaccine for a health reason: those who have had a positive PCR test within the last 28 days, have had coronavirus symptoms or who may have been told by their doctor they cannot have the vaccine for a number of health reasons.

We are strongly urging staff to have the COVID vaccine if they can. We are aware that some staff have reservations and want more information about the vaccine. So the Trust has provided key information in twice weekly updates and communications to ensure staff can access webinars, data, reports and submit their questions to a panel of ELFT experts. We have featured 'Staff COVID Vaccine' stories so that staff can hear from others what made them opt to have the COVID vaccine.

### Supporting Staff During the Pandemic

THE Trust is aware that the pandemic has affected staff in many different ways. At work, they have responded and adapted to the huge demands in mental health, community health and primary care services to ensure that people are supported and cared for.

But they also have had to contend with the same personal stresses that everyone has had to face such as managing childcare, home schooling, coping with isolation, coping with illness, bereavement and loss, and adapting to the social restrictions of lockdown. Plus the worry that by using public transport to travel to work, working in COVID positive wards, and having close contact with others, that they might inadvertently pass on the coronavirus to their own family.

Director of People and Culture, Tanya Carter, is under no illusions about how hard this has been for staff and has spearheaded a number of measures to ensure they are fully supported.

### Staff Support Sessions

Tanya set up and chaired sessions for staff in particular situations. Online virtual sessions have taken place for:

- **Staff who live alone** – who might not have the usual outlets to talk about their day, how they feel, etc.

- **Staff and Apprentices who started in ELFT during the pandemic** – who in many cases haven't met their work colleagues in the flesh or been able to learn systems and processes face-to-face
- **Staff returning from maternity or adoption leave** – always a strange time as they adjust to being back at work while having a small child - but more so during the pandemic
- **Staff who are shielding** – who are worried about the risk to them of contracting COVID – but also report feeling guilty not to be working alongside their colleagues
- **Staff experiencing Long COVID** – some staff who contracted the coronavirus who have post-viral symptoms

### Mental Health Wellbeing Support

TWO wellbeing hubs have been set up in North East London (NEL) and in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) for health and social care staff in all NHS settings in these areas in recognition of the need for staff to have somewhere to go if things become overwhelming. The advice to staff is to not take work stress and worries home or hold it in but to contact the hubs to get help and support. The hubs are being well used in both areas.

**BLMK Staff:** [www.keepingwellbmk.nhs.uk](http://www.keepingwellbmk.nhs.uk)

Offering free fast psychological support for staff. Keeping Well is a free confidential psychological support service run by care professionals for care professionals, in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes service. You can get help quickly by phone or online

**NEL Staff:** <https://keepingwellnel.nhs.uk/>

Keeping Well NEL is a free confidential emotional wellbeing support service run by health care professionals for care professionals, in North East London. This a NHS funded service in response to COVID-19 outbreak. Help is available online, via Chatbots or by phone.

### Support Sessions for Staff Who Are Parents/Guardians

#### Keyworker School Places

The Trust has supported staff to have the necessary keyworker documentation to enable their child/children to be in school.

#### Timetable of Online Educational Activities

Additionally, the Trust has offered a selection of free activities for the children of staff who are parents or guardians. The activities are to supplement what the school is offering, rather than in place of it. All sessions are interactive and led by qualified teachers who have had DBS checks. A timetable of activities for each year group is issued each week. Staff can register their child/children for each specific session by 11:30pm the night before.

#### Improving Family Relationships

We have offered parents and guardians support to improve communication between parents and their youngsters. Lockdown and the social restrictions in place over the past year have impacted on family relationships with family members living in closer contact than ever before. The Non Violent Resistance or NVR training is a 10 week course that is free to staff but they must commit to the whole course. NVR training is an established course that strengthening parenting skills and improves familial relationships. Further courses will take place throughout the year.

PEOPLE typically think the NHS is all about doctors and nurses, but there are many other roles and skills which keep the show on the road and ensure that patients, service users and their families are cared for professionally, respectfully and with kindness. In this issue of Trusttalk, we are focusing on the role of Administrators in the NHS. Often regarded as the oil in the machine, very little would happen in the Trust without the behind-the-scenes work and frontline work of Admin staff. Admin staff are often the very first contact that the public have with the NHS. They are the ones that put people at their ease and are the sorter-outers! They set the tone for the patient's journey.

### How did you end up in this field in the NHS?

I have five amazing children of whom I am very proud. It was important for me to spend time with them before they started nursery/school. I therefore opted for admin agency and bank work in the NHS from 1990 onwards and was lucky to be placed by my agency at a number of different NHS Trusts and sites. I didn't know at the time, that this career move would one day lead me to being Head of Administration in Forensic Services.

### What other jobs did you do along the way?

I worked at the University of East London

## Brexit Update

After many months (and years) of discussion, Brexit has come to pass. There have been no immediate impacts and ELFT's supply chains and deliveries have continued as usual. We are urging EU staff (excluding Irish colleagues) to apply for Settled Status. And when we are once again able to travel to the continent, we will need to have travel insurance for European destinations and the new Global Health Insurance (GHIC) card.



### What Links Face Coverings and Vitamin D?

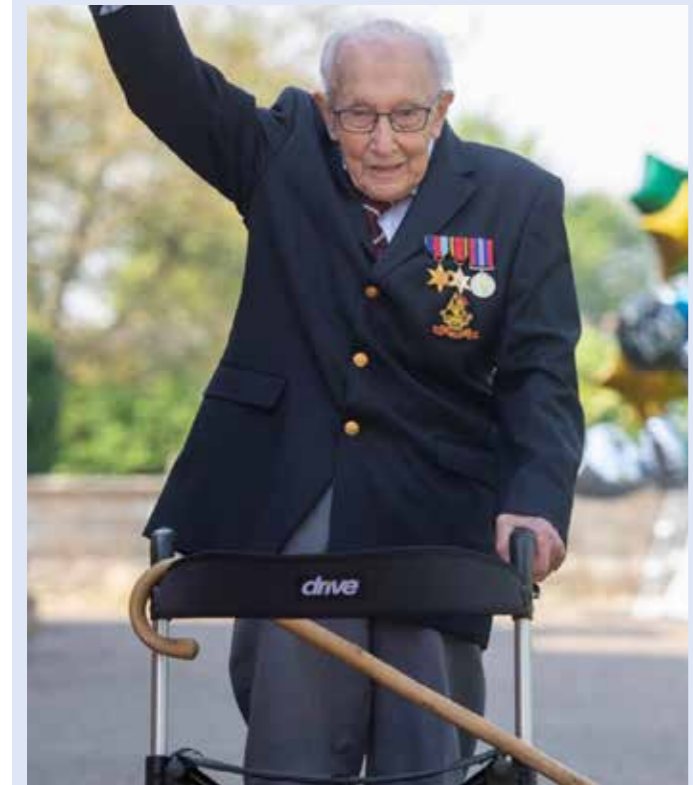
The answer is: ELFT Director of Corporate Governance Cathy Lilley!

CATHY got her sewing machine out and sprang into action at the beginning of the pandemic when there was high demand for face coverings and masks. There are few people at ELFT's headquarters who DON'T have one of Cathy's masks. They are a thing of beauty, skilfully made, in a range of lovely fabrics.

Cathy asked for a donation of £4 for each of her masks and ended up raising £6,000. She has kindly donated this to ELFT's Charitable Fund. The monies were used to fund the purchase and distribution of packs of Vitamin D to staff. (Jointly funded by Compass Community Interest Company. Thank you!)

Lack of Vitamin D in the winter months is thought to lower immunity and mean that people are more susceptible to infection. The Trust has been keen to do whatever it can to support the health of staff so were happy to be able to provide a course of Vitamin D to any staff member that wanted it for free. So Cathy's masks haven't just protected people when out and about, they have boosted staff immunity! If you would like to make a donation and receive a mask, email: [stephanie.quitaleg@nhs.net](mailto:stephanie.quitaleg@nhs.net) or [nicola.mccoy1@nhs.net](mailto:nicola.mccoy1@nhs.net)

### Farewell Captain Sir Tom



The public and the NHS family were saddened to hear that Captain Sir Tom Moore died on 2 February 2021. Captain Sir Tom raised a phenomenal £33m for NHS Charities by walking laps of this garden in his 100th year, of which ELFT was a beneficiary. In his final year on earth, he reminded everyone of the importance of exercise, unity and thinking of others. His efforts captured the imagination of the public and his inspiring walk became a high point for many.

### Plans to Set Up ELFT Charity

THE Trust is taking steps to set up its own ELFT Charity to administer the funds ourselves rather than going through a third party. Currently, any monies received by ELFT are administered by the Barts Charity and Cambridgeshire Community Services. Applications on behalf of staff or service users are made to these charitable funds. (Charitable funds can be used for items or projects that are not funded by mainstream NHS funding.)

Becoming a charity will make it easier for ELFT to increase the funding pot through ongoing fundraising, to be more involved in decision-making about the use of the funds, and enable us to broaden the scope of projects support through the charitable funds.

We are working on the structure of the new charity which will include consolidating all of funds into one large ELFT fund, information on fundraising plans and grant application process.

### census 2021

### Census Day is 21 March 2021

THE census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. The next census takes place on Sunday 21 March 2021. It takes about 10 minutes to complete the household questions and 10 minutes per person. This census will be the first one to be completed digitally where this is possible using a personal code.

Answers to the census questions helps organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services, including transport, education and healthcare. Census 2021 will also provide fresh information to improve our understanding of the pandemic. It will help to make sure that services meet the needs of our changing society as we recover.



### First impressions from New Public Hackney Governor, Adam Forman



I was elected in September 2020 and started as a public Governor for Hackney on November 1st. Preconceptions usually turn out to be wrong and that is certainly true of my experience of the first few weeks as a Governor. It has been much easier than I imagined to learn how such a large Trust as ELFT is structured and who the various

committees and senior people are accountable to.

The Trust is really interested in what the Governors have to say and see them as an integral part of improving the services and developing the Trust's future strategy. My being able to learn so fast is down to the Governors and Member office that is fantastic at keeping us informed and helping new Governors with training and induction. Also they have helped me, despite COVID restrictions, feel I belong to the wider group of Governors.

What is really frustrating is not being able to find out how Trust services work on the ground nor being able to meet people in Hackney to find out their views about the Trust. This all due to the COVID restrictions. Usually there would be opportunities for Governors to visit Trust sites and take part in stakeholder meetings. Due to the pandemic, none of this is currently possible. Which is why it is important that Hackney members send me your views, experiences and thoughts

on how the Trust is doing in Hackney, or any questions you may have via [elft.council@nhs.net](mailto:elft.council@nhs.net). Would you be interested in joining an online forum for Hackney members?

### Cancelled Stakeholder Meetings and Annual Plan Event

Due to the restrictions imposed in early January and the focus on addressing the current high level of COVID infections, all meetings published in the last issue of Trusttalk for regular Stakeholder meetings for members, service users, carers and anyone interested in our services planned for London, Luton and Bedfordshire (Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire) have had to be cancelled for the time being. We will be in touch with all of you when we are able to resume our meetings.

With the increasing pressures on ELFT's services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ELFT's priority is to focus on its service provision and make sure staff time is devoted to ensuring service users are able to access the required level of care needed during this challenging time. We will keep you informed and update you once these meetings can be reinstated.

ELFT is also currently unable to hold its Annual Plan Event, where we ask for feedback about our services. This is due to the fact that Annual Planning has been deferred by NHS England to ensure senior leads/Directors are able to prioritise the delivery of services.

Should you have any question about any of these meetings, please email the Governors and Members Office at [elft.membership@nhs.net](mailto:elft.membership@nhs.net) or call 0800 032 7297

**Please remember that the NHS remains open to all your concerns – so please do not hesitate to get in touch with your GP, or call 111 should you have any concerns about your or a loved one's health.**

### ELFT Chair Mark Lam

ELFT Board Chair Mark Lam has been appointed chair of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, based in Hampstead.

Mark will remain chair of ELFT but will be relinquishing the same role he has with Barnet, Enfield & Haringey (BEH) Mental Health Trust.

His appointment was made by the Royal Free's Council of

Governors on Tuesday evening (February 9). Mark became chair of ELFT in June last year and was already at BEH at the time.

Mark said he is delighted to be taking up the new role with the Royal Free and added that he remains fully committed and focussed on ELFT, adding that his dual role would bring great benefits to both trusts with the opportunity to share best practice with both organisations being internationally recognised for their clinical excellence and governance.

### Contact the Governors and Members Office

If you are not already a Trust member and would like to join, email [elft.membership@nhs.net](mailto:elft.membership@nhs.net) or call 0800 032 7297. You can also join online at <https://www.elft.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/Members>

If you received this Trusttalk magazine by post, but have an email address, please email us to let us know so we can email the newsletter to you. We can also send you details about any events and meetings we hold. Please include your full name and address when you email us.



## Basil the Harris Hawk Joins OT Staff at Newham Allotment



SO would you know what to do if you saw a rare bird in your garden? Fortunately for Harris Hawk, Basil, Claire Perry, Occupational Therapy Assistant at the Newham Centre for Mental Health was on the case. The Occupational Therapy team had heard reports of the special guest at their allotment site. One of their regular service users had thought they'd seen a Kestrel flying about.

Claire explains, "I figured he was a prized and loved bird and that someone out there was missing him. I googled 'Lost Birds of Prey UK' and there is an actual organisation who have an extensive database. I called and explained what I was looking at and

where I was and sure enough - our bird was on the database. The owner was traced and he called me immediately.

Basil had apparently been 'lockdown busting' since September so his owner was glad to be reunited with him. Basil is usually a working bird keeping down the pigeon populations at Liverpool Street and St Pancras stations, as well as 10 Downing Street! But took a shine to the Newham plot." Or as Claire quipped "Maybe he wanted to be furloughed!"

## Flood Hero Helps Nurse in 4x4



A grateful Bedfordshire community nurse has issued a public thank you to a good Samaritan who helped him bypass serious flooding to reach a vulnerable patient.

Ed Phillips, a practice development lead with Bedfordshire Community Health Services (BCHS) was called out to a residential home in Carlton, Bedfordshire, on Christmas Eve. He was asked to provide care to a vulnerable patient and to carry out urgent COVID mask fitting for the care home staff before the Christmas break.

The call-out came in the midst of serious flooding across the Bedford area and Ed could not reach the home as the river had burst its banks. Some homes in the area had lost electricity and were flooded. Ed noticed a 4x4 parked outside a house, knocked on the door and asked for help.

Professional photographer Andy Howe answered the door and immediately offered to take Ed through the water-filled roads so he could treat the patient. Andy also returned to take Ed back across the water once he was finished.

"This was a testing night for so many people and I would like to publicly thank Andy for helping me, my patient, the care home and the NHS," said Ed. "His kindness and support was amazing."

## FINAL WORD from the Chair



WE continue to live in challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic is taking its toll on us all in different ways.

The impact of lockdown is affecting all sections of society and all age groups. It is hard not seeing loved ones and friends, and a return to our usual activities feels like a long way off.

Many of you will have been personally affected and perhaps contracted the coronavirus or someone close to you may have. We are learning more about the virus and that some continue to have health issues or a slow recovery. Some will have lost loved ones, and will not have been able to spend precious last moments together. Sadly, we have lost some members of staff too so many of us are dealing with bereavement and trying to keep going.

On behalf of the Trust Board and Council of Governors, I want to acknowledge the sad loss of life of friends, family, colleagues, loved ones, and the impact of this terrible tragedy on people's lives.

We will all hopefully find strategies to keep going, and be able to honour and pay tribute to the lives of those no longer here at a later point. In the meantime, we must try to support those affected, and give them time and space to grieve.

The rollout of the COVID vaccine is a key turning point in the trajectory of the pandemic. Although new variants have emerged, the vaccines represent hope that lockdown restrictions can be lifted to enable us to return to some normality.



I am pleased and relieved to have had my COVID vaccine. I know some from Black, Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups are unsure about having the vaccine but as someone from a BAME background, I chose to have the vaccination to protect my family, friends and colleagues, and out of love for them. The virus has highlighted inequalities and BAME communities have been among the hardest hit by it. The first dose of the COVID vaccine provides 76% protection which is substantial. The vaccine represents a real opportunity to halt the spread of the virus and enable us to rebuild our lives. I for one cannot wait to be able to meet with others and connect face-to-face. Hopefully, with the rollout of the national vaccine programme, that day may not be far off. Stay safe.

Mark Lam