

Review of the Year 2019/20



Welcome from the Chairs and Chief Executive

This has been a significant year for reviewing and tightening our assurance, governance, processes and accountability. The decision-making processes and responsibilities have been embedded in our culture, as well as the reinforced will to make a difference to local people.

The demands and pressures on acute services have been as strong as ever. However, we have seen exceptional progress and results in our operational and financial performance and achievements against national standards. We have achieved our control total with a small surplus at the end of the year, which is well over and above what we could have hoped for a year ago.

The Countess of Chester Hospital has an excellent reputation for delivering high quality and safe patient care and is nationally accredited at the highest levels in many areas, in particular those relating to clinical outcomes and patient safety. We have continued to achieve our accreditations in spite of COVID-19 pressures, and this remains high on our agenda for 2020/21.

Being a clinically-led organisation, we work closely with senior clinicians to plan early for both the foreseen as well as unexpected challenges posed by the pandemic. We are proud of how our clinical and operational leaders recognised the severity of the situation and started preparations so promptly.

We have worked to ensure that all patients waiting for urgent operations or investigations continue to receive this service, and we are working closely with local private hospitals and our military colleagues to ensure that we can still safely provide essential surgical services to our patients.

To guide our work for the coming years, our Corporate and Clinical Strategies have both been shaped with the input of our staff and partners from across the local health and care system. The Clinical Strategy launched in September 2019 and although the development of our Corporate Strategy has been delayed due to COVID-19, it will be finalised as soon as possible.

Our Vision: Delivering NHS care locally that makes our staff and our community proud

The Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership has strengthened during the year. The new single Clinical Commissioning Group for the whole of Cheshire (from 1 April 2020) is supporting closer collaboration between local providers and ensuring services are designed and aligned to meet the needs of the population.

After seven years in the role of Chair, Sir Duncan Nichol retired on 31 March 2020. Chris Hannah is looking forward to continuing to play a full part in The Countess of Chester Hospital's lead role across the Cheshire West system in pursuing integration of health and care.

Susan Gilby
Chief Executive Officer

Sir Duncan Nichol
Chair to 31 March 2020

Chris Hannah
Chair from 1 April 2020

64 inpatient beds at Ellesmere Port Hospital

6,144 members

500,000+ attendances every year

5,000 staff

600 beds at Countess of Chester Hospital



How we did in 2019/20

Infection control targets

Reported cases of **Clostridium difficile**, (also known as **C. difficile** or **C. diff**, is bacteria that can infect the bowel and cause diarrhoea) and avoidable MRSA infections were similar to last year, but higher than our target.

Waiting time targets

A&E performance has remained below target all year. Along with other trusts nationally, we have found this a challenging time due to increasing demand and more complex needs.

To improve this target and therefore patient care, we have focused on a number of areas including:

- Redesigning and expanding A&E to improve dignity and care for patients and improve flow through the department
- Providing enhanced assessment areas to pull patients from A&E
- Improving workforce models to deliver seven-day services
- Developing same-day emergency care to avoid unnecessary overnight patient stays
- Remodelling bed capacity to provide improved access for patients requiring overnight stay.

Due to increases in demand and high bed occupancies, we did not achieve our target for 18 weeks referral to treatment (RTT) this year.

We have commissioned a full review of our RTT processes and performance to find ways to improve our position. Welsh patients are normally seen within the Welsh target of 26 days.

We did not achieve the target for diagnostic tests to be carried out within six weeks of the request being received during 2019/20. High demand continues to place pressure on these services, but we will continue to proactively manage capacity and demand within endoscopy and imaging services.

Cancer targets

Whilst we perform relatively well nationally, the 62-day cancer standard continues to be a challenge. We are working collaboratively with primary care to improve patient pathways. Certain specialities have been prioritised, and we are monitoring outcomes against agreed actions. Some in-year improvements have led to performance being more consistent, but further work is needed to deliver our target.



Table 1: Infection control targets

| | Target | Actual |
|--|--------|--------|
| Clostridium difficile | 36 | 42 |
| Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) | 0 | 3 |

Table 2: Waiting time targets

| | Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total time in A&E | 95% | 83.8% | 86.0% | 76.3% | 80.4% |
| Diagnostic six-week target | 99% | 96.5% | 92.5% | 92.1% | 80.8% |
| % referral to treatment incomplete pathway | 92% | 82.1% | 82.9% | 80.0% | 75.8% |

Table 3: Cancer targets

| | Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 14 days – all cancers | 93% | 97.7% | 97.4% | 97.7% | 95.88% |
| 14 days – breast symptomatic | 93% | 100% | 98.7% | 97.6% | 93.58% |
| 31 day – decision to treat to treatment | 96% | 98.9% | 93.7% | 91.5% | 96.11% |
| 31 days – subsequent surgical treatment | 94% | 86.1% | 90.6% | 94.3% | 96.3% |
| 31 days – subsequent non-surgical treatment | 98% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| 62 days – first treatment from urgent GP referral | 85% | 84.8% | 83.7% | 81.1% | 81.56% |
| 62 days – first treatment from screening referral | 90% | 95.5% | 88.9% | 98.2% | 94.44% |

What we spent in 2019/20

We reported a balanced financial position (before impairment) at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, after receipt in full of Provider Sustainability Funding (£8.04 million).

Our total income for 2019/20 was £271.9 million. The majority of our expenditure is on clinical care, with staff representing the largest proportion of spend at £187 million.

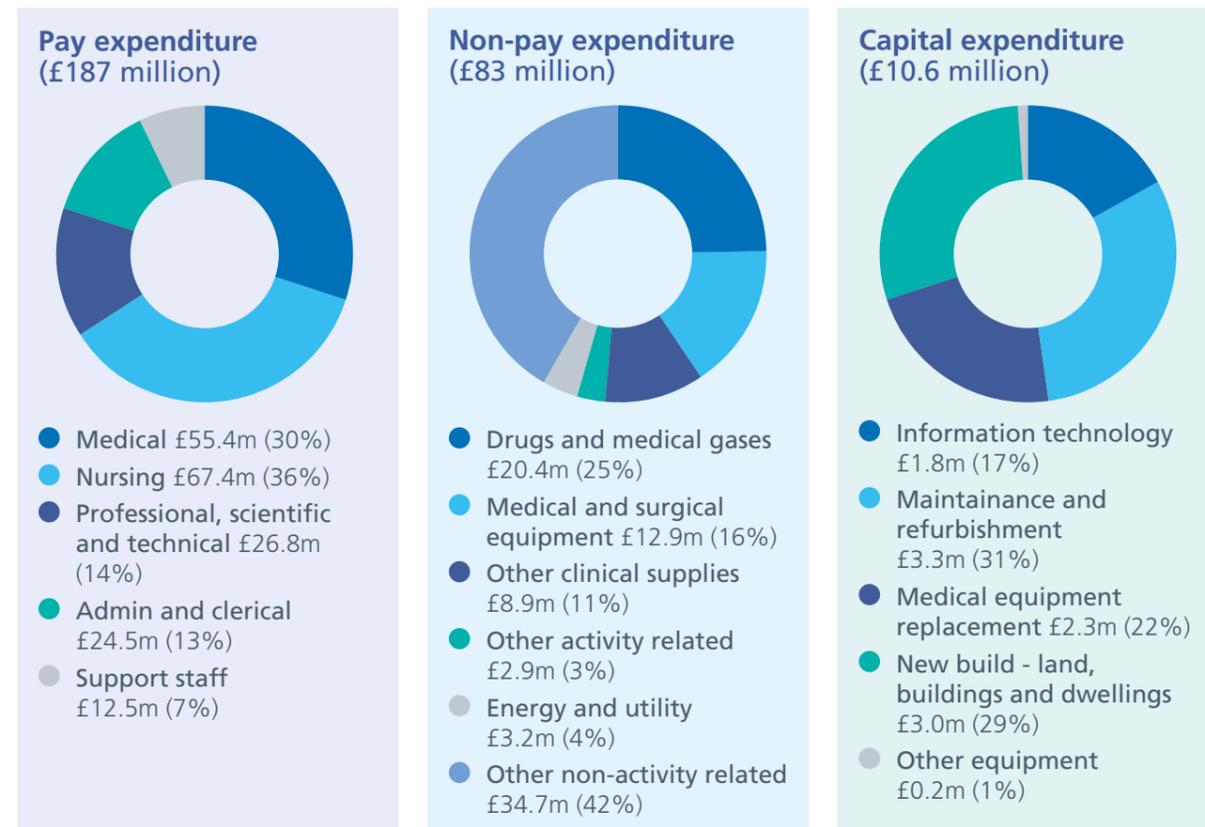
Cost reduction and efficiency

Our efficiency target for 2019/20 year was £9.4 million. However, only £9.0 million savings (96%) were achieved (56% on a recurrent basis), resulting in a financial pressure of £4.1 million being carried forward into 2020/21.

We will need to continue to deliver significant savings annually for the foreseeable future. This can no longer be achieved in isolation, and we will need the continued support of our commissioners, along with partnership working to continue to reconfigure and transform services within the local health system.

Capital expenditure

Being a Foundation Trust allows us to manage our finances so that we can invest in the infrastructure and estate of the hospital.



Accountability

Structures and processes are in place to enable the Board to assure the quality of care it provides. Maintaining an effective quality governance system supports our compliance against national standards.

We are committed to the continuous improvement of these systems and achieving compliance against NHS Improvement's Well-led Framework for governance.

The Board has an overarching responsibility to ensure and also be assured that we operate with openness, transparency and candour when it comes to our patients, colleagues and the wider community. The Board holds itself to account through a wide range of stakeholders for the overall effectiveness and performance of the organisation.

Robust quality governance includes our values and structures in conjunction with the supporting processes that enable the Board to discharge its responsibilities for quality. Our responsibilities include ensuring essential Care Quality Commission (CQC) Key Lines of Enquiry – based on their framework of Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led for quality and safety – are met.

We strive for continuous quality improvement and ensuring that the leadership, management and governance of the organisation contributes to the delivery of high-quality and person-centred care, supports learning and innovation, and promotes an open and fair culture by ensuring that every member of staff that has contact with patients is motivated and enabled to deliver safe, kind and effective care.



Throughout the year, there has been a focus on further implementation and sustained compliance against the outputs of the last CQC well-led inspection. Specific governance arrangements have been implemented to ensure both committee and Board oversight on progress against CQC 'Must Do' actions in particular. In the main, all have been achieved, however two have remained a challenge – nurse staffing levels regarding consistent compliance and safe management of medicines – although progress has been made with both during the year. Since the last inspection at the end of 2018, there have been no unannounced inspections or concerns raised.



- We have continued to implement the recommendations of the 2018/19 external Governance Review. The sub-committees have been reviewed in order to strengthen and support assurances provided to the Board in respect of quality, safety and patient experience, finance, performance and workforce
- Reporting to West Cheshire commissioners on quality standards such as Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUINs) and Clinical Audit is undertaken as a national requirement
- We seek and use feedback from patients via the Friends and Family Test along with national surveys and the outputs from our Patient Experience Operational Group
- To support staff engagement, formal and informal processes are in place including a programme of Executive walkabout sessions, and a weekly 'What's Brewing' question and answer briefing session
- A Director of Communication and Corporate Affairs was appointed during the year, providing an opportunity to refocus on both the patient/public and staff engagement agenda.

Communications both internally and externally has already improved, and we will further focus on strengthening those key relationships next year – at the same time raising the profile of the organisation in general.



Sustainability

We are mandated by NHS England to reduce our carbon emissions by 51% by 2025 as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. This is a fundamental part of our corporate and social responsibility. Our Sustainable Development Plan identifies the key targets and

milestones to help us achieve this mandate. Incorporating the principles of 'sustainability' at the heart of our whole business will ensure that we maintain the Carbon Reduction Strategy and conduct all future business in a sustainable way.

Our results so far

LED lighting has been installed throughout the hospital to reduce energy usage and save costs.

Combined Heating and Power unit upgraded to generate electrical and heat energy.

A dedicated bus route now runs through the site, and a Park and Ride service has been introduced.

Two electric vehicles in our fleet, with three more to be added in 2020.

Our plans for the future

All external lighting will be converted to LED.

Heat batteries will store any excess heat generation. Solar heat reflection will be implemented where appropriate. The feasibility of ground source heat pumps will be investigated.

Active promotion of alternative modes of transport to/from the site, including re-energising cycle to work schemes and improving facilities for cyclists.

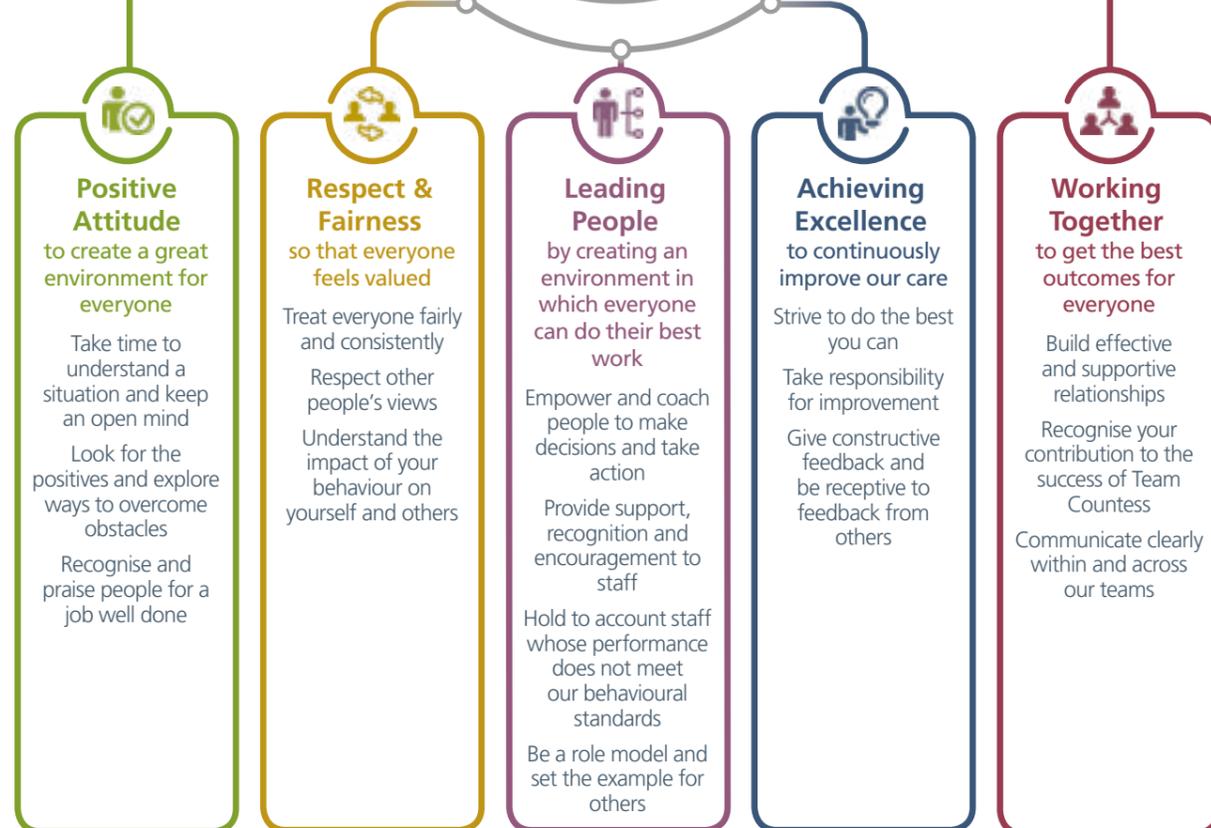
Continued investment in e-vehicles, working towards a fully e-vehicle fleet.



Staff



We aspire to be one of the most clinically-led and engaged organisations in the NHS. We have worked to re-define and re-energise the meaning and importance of our values and behaviours for all colleagues, and have also explored personal accountability in delivering change, helping to further embed our behavioural standards:



Highlights last year include:

- The Core Skills Training Framework has made it clearer and easier for staff to understand their mandatory and core skills training requirements, and new programmes will be implemented from autumn 2020
- Working with the University of Chester and other educational providers, we have created more apprenticeship opportunities at all levels
- The first cohort of Trainee Nursing Associates commenced at the hospital at the start of 2020
- To increase placement capacity, we will be implementing a version of the CLiP (Collaborative Learning in Practice) model over the next 12 months
- Our policies and procedures continue to be reviewed and developed, drawing on the feedback from our Staff Partnership Forum, and Local Negotiating Committee
- We have worked with NHS Improvement in Cohort Four of the Recruitment and Retention workstream to improve retention of staff. As a result, the turnover rate of our nursing and midwifery workforce fell from 14.33% in 2017/18 to 8.23% in 2019/20
- Over 83% of front-line workers were vaccinated, which exceeded the national target and meant we were once again recognised as one of the top 20 achieving trusts in the country
- We extended our contract to provide counselling and health, financial and legal advice to our staff
- Building on our regionally and nationally recognised programme of work to support Equality and Diversity, we are now recognised as an Equality and Diversity Alumni Partner by NHS Employers. We have also been successful in achieving number 20 in the Top 50 Most Inclusive Employers in 2019
- We attained recurrent high grading on the Equality Delivery System 2 (EDS2) framework, with 15 outcomes being rated as 'Achieving' and the remaining three outcomes being rated as 'Excelling' in 2019/20.

However, our ability to achieve the target for sickness absence continues to prove challenging. This has been further exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19, which impacted on our staffing absence rates from the beginning of March 2020.

This year, 29.7% of our staff responded to the annual NHS Staff Survey – a fall of 6.3% from last year. The feedback highlights areas where improvement is needed, particularly in the area of increasing engagement and motivation. More work and focus is also needed on our safety culture, the quality of our appraisals, the communication and involvement of colleagues, and to continue to create an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

It is also clear that we need to do more to encourage participation in the various opportunities to share feedback, in order to get a clearer understanding of the needs of staff across the whole organisation. Much has already been done to start to involve colleagues in those matters which affect them by encouraging their contribution in the development of our Clinical and Corporate Strategies.



Get involved

Become a member

The Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is an organisation that enables you to get more involved with the issues affecting your hospital. It is essential for us to ensure we are meeting the needs of the local community and by becoming a member you can give us feedback on the issues that are important to you.

You will be among the first to know of new developments and ideas within the hospital and have a chance to comment before we communicate our plans to the general population. You will also have the opportunity to take part in members' forums, committees and working groups.

It costs nothing to join and there is no minimum time commitment. You can get involved as little or as often as you choose. You may simply want to be the first to receive regular updates from us or you could stand as a member of the Board of Governors. To join, please request an application form via email from:

Coch.membershipenquiriescoch@nhs.net.

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The full Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 is available at:

www.coch.nhs.uk

