



yourtrust

Autumn 2009

INCORPORATING **insideout** STAFF MAGAZINE

THE BULLETIN FOR STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE DUDLEY GROUP OF HOSPITALS



DGOH among leaders in Patient Safety campaign

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Welcome to your new-look Your Trust magazine which has been combined with the staff magazine InsideOut. Packed with news, features and pictures, the magazine will be published quarterly to keep staff and members up-to-date with what's going on around the Trust.

This is YOUR magazine and we'd love to hear from you about what you'd like to see in future editions. If you have any suggestions, let the Communications team know by calling (01384) 456111 ext. 1064 or emailing communications@dgoh.nhs.uk

Dudley Group of Hospitals named one of the leading Trusts in campaign to promote patient safety

The Trust has been named as one of the leading hospital trusts in the country which are spearheading a campaign to promote patient safety.

The Trust is one of 26 organisations which has been presented with a certificate as recognition for its work in promoting the nationwide Patient Safety First campaign.

More than 150 trusts have signed up to the campaign which was launched a year ago to improve patient safety at hospitals across England.

The Trust was awarded the certificate after consistently supplying data to demonstrate its progress against the core commitments it signed up to.

Since signing up to the campaign, the Trust has introduced a number

of initiatives, including progressing its Deteriorating Patient scheme to reduce the number of cardiac arrests suffered by patients by more than a third by June 2010.

To meet the target, the Trust has launched a trigger system to help nurses easily identify patients who need a visit from a newly-formed Medical Emergency Team to help stop their conditions deteriorating.

The Trust has also introduced regular Leadership Walkrounds where senior management members visit wards and departments to talk with staff and get feedback about how standards can be improved. Staff have reported finding the walkrounds very useful.

Derek Eaves, the Trust's clinical governance co-ordinator, said the Trust was delighted to receive the

award and would continue to strive for improvements.

"Patient safety is one of the Trust's top priorities and we are proud of the progress we have made in the past year," he said.

"Although we're delighted to receive the award, we must not rest on our laurels, but continue to improve standards across the Trust."



Staff nurse Liz Faux and senior sister Bev Porter are pictured with one of the new mobile computer trolleys – or 'cows' – which are aiding doctors on their ward rounds.

Computers on wheels help keep doctors mobile

A delivery of new mobile laptops and special trolleys are allowing doctors at Russells Hall Hospital to moo-ve freely about the wards on their daily rounds.

The wireless laptops, which have been affectionately dubbed 'cows' (Computers on Wheels) by staff, are housed in the lockable trolleys which makes them more manoeuvrable and more secure at the same time.

The height adjustable trolleys are made out of steel and can only be opened by key and, in the unlikely event of a laptop being stolen, the machines are encrypted.

The laptops are supplied with a mouse and keyboard which are made out of a special infection control material which means they can easily be cleaned and are virtually indestructible.

Doctors can use the laptops to access patient records and to email GPs with information.

Sarah Gibson-Jones, the Trust's clinical lead for Electronic Patient Records, said the new laptops were proving a hit with staff.

"The 'cows' are quicker to use, easier to clean and more secure," she said.

"Doctors are using them on their ward rounds and because they use wireless technology, they don't have to keep going back to deskbound computers.

"The keyboard and mouse are made out of a rubber-type material which, because it's seamless and there are no nooks and crannies, means they can be cleaned easily which helps to reduce the spread of infection."

Trust introduces new keyhole procedure to fight bowel cancer



Mr Anthony Kawesha and Mr Ed Leung are pictured with Gillian Hartland and Dorothy Alltree who have both undergone bowel cancer surgery this year.

The introduction of a new surgical technique at the Trust is helping bowel cancer patients get back on their feet within a few days by speeding up the recovery process.

The laparoscopic procedure uses keyhole technology to carry out colon surgery internally which gets rid of the need to make a large abdominal incision.

The new technique halves the average length of stay in hospital of between five and eight days and recovery at home of six weeks or more down to between two to four days in hospital and two to three weeks recovery at home.

The first patient to undergo the surgery was Dorothy Alltree, aged 74, from Sedgley Road, Dudley, who said she had the operation on a Thursday and was medically discharged on the following Monday.

"I first went to see my GP in April when I noticed something and things went very quickly from there. By 25th June I was having my operation at Russells Hall Hospital," she said.

"I'd never been to hospital before so I was a bit nervous, but it was all explained to me beforehand which put my mind at rest.

"The team were absolutely marvellous and I feel fine now. I've only got a tiny scar to show."

The procedure is being carried out at the Trust by consultant Anthony Kawesha with the assistance of registrar Ed Leung.

Mr Kawesha said the technique greatly improved the quality of life for patients undergoing bowel cancer surgery.

"The government is encouraging surgeons to carry out this operation because it reduces the length of stay in hospital and improves the recovery process," he said. "Although we can't offer every patient the procedure because it may be difficult to see or get to where we need to get to, most people will be able to undergo the surgery.

"The incision is about a thumb's breadth wide which gets rid of the need to make a large incision down the abdomen which can leave a nasty scar.

"The procedure takes a little while longer than the traditional 'open' surgery, but, because it uses a radio frequency energy source to remove the tumour, it means the surgeon's hands never have to enter the patients' abdomens.

"The minimal internal disruption means the bowel starts working again very quickly and patients can start to eat and walk again within 24 to 36 hours if they feel up to it."

Trust meets safeguarding children standards

The Trust is planning to declare compliance with the safeguarding children standards laid down the Care Quality Commission.

The Trust will declare compliance with the CQC's Core Standards for 2008/09 on its internet site on Friday 4th September after originally only being able to declare 'insufficient assurance' earlier this year because the board was not satisfied it was receiving regular reports on matters relating to safeguarding children.

The matter was resolved by ensuring the board now receives quarterly reports relating to safeguarding children.

To reinforce the message, the Trust also attached a leaflet entitled Safeguarding Children Everyone's Responsibility to every member of staff's payslip in July.

The leaflet contained key messages, including what is abuse, what you should do if you are

worried a child is being abused and how to recognise the signs of abuse.

The leaflet also included a flow chart of how abuse can be reported and a list of numbers for social services in Dudley.

Denise McMahon, the Trust's director of nursing, said: "The Trust has undertaken a high profile and intensive piece of work to review all of our policies and procedures on Child Safeguarding since the tragic case of Baby P.

"This piece of work has been audited by Deloitte, our external auditors, and we now meet the standards required by the Care Quality Commission which verifies the quality of care of our patients.

"We have a dedicated team in place which is made up of lead nurse Carol Weston, lead doctor Zala Ibrahim, matron Pam Smith, director of risk and patient safety Yvonne O'Connor and myself as executive board lead."

Trust has finger on pulse of pioneering cardiac technology

The Trust has been chosen as the first place in the UK to trial a revolutionary new live-saving device for people at risk of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

Russells Hall Hospital has become the first in the country to trial the use of the Subcutaneous Implantable Defibrillator (S-ICD) device which will prolong the lives of patients susceptible to sudden cardiac arrest.

Eight patients have recently had the operation to implant the technology, which, unlike previous devices, is implanted solely under the skin, rather than via a blood vessel directly into the heart chambers.

The operations were carried out by Dr Andrew Grace,



Dr Andrew Grace, Dr Craig Barr, lead nurse Sharley Ganesan and (background) senior registrar Pantelis Kourtellaris are pictured with a Subcutaneous Implantable Defibrillator which is being trialled for the first time in the UK at Russells Hall Hospital.

from Papworth Hospital, in Cambridgeshire, and local consultant cardiologist Dr Craig Barr.

The hospital was chosen as the site for the first trials in the UK because of Dr Barr's work with cardiac device therapies over the past decade.

Dr Barr hailed the device as the biggest development in ICD technology in the past 20 years.

"These devices reduce the risk of vascular and infective complications and will prolong the lives of patients at risk of sudden cardiac arrest," he said.

"For the first time in two decades we have a new form of device which can be implanted entirely below the skin.

"It's very exciting that Russells Hall Hospital has been selected as the first place to trial the devices in the UK, only weeks after the initial implants in New Zealand, Italy and the Netherlands."

Dr Grace, who flew back to the UK after showing doctors in the Netherlands how to carry out the procedure, said it was a great achievement for the hospital to be the first place in the country to trial the new technology.

"I think it's a tremendous piece of equipment and it really is a life changing device for people at risk of sudden cardiac arrest," he said.

"This new device will prolong the lives of people at risk of SCA and it's a great achievement for Russells Hall Hospital to be the first place in the UK to trial it."

The S-ICD is considered to be superior to the previous technology because it removes the need to insert any leads into the heart.

Older devices need at least one wire to be placed in or on the heart in order to detect the heart's rhythm and deliver a life-saving electric shock if a dangerous arrhythmia (abnormal rhythm) is detected.

The S-ICD is inserted into a pocket under the arm and an electrode threaded under the skin about an inch away from the breastbone.

The device received regulatory approval in the EU on 12th June as a result of the work undertaken in Dudley and centres in Europe and New Zealand.

VIP invitation – AGM and health fair

Members of the Public and Staff are invited to attend the Trust's third health fair which will incorporate this year's Annual General Meeting

Date: *Monday 28th September 2009*
Time: *6.00pm, refreshments included*
Venue: *The Copthorne Hotel, Earl's Suite,
 The Waterfront, Merry Hill,
 Brierley Hill*

The meeting will include:

- **Cardiology health fair**
- **Displays from services across the Trust**
- **An overview of 2008/09 from the Chief Executive**
- **Presentation of the Trust accounts for 2008/09**

The event is open to all members of the community.

Anyone wishing to attend should register by contacting the Communications team on **(01384) 244404** or by completing the online form at **www.dgoh.nhs.uk**

Cancer put under microscope at June health fair

Dozens of people braved rain and thunder to support the Trust's second health fair which put cancer under the spotlight.

Visitors packed the Lecture Theatre in the Trust's Clinical Education Centre (CEC) on 10th June to listen to experts talk about cancer prevention, early detection and screening.

Visitors also had the opportunity to talk to staff and other specialists about their health concerns and watch demonstrations of equipment used in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Guest speakers included Tracy Beese, clinical nurse specialist for skin oncology, Caroline Salt, clinical nurse specialist for urology, and Claire Rowley, senior dietician. Tracy Beese, who spoke about skin cancer prevention, was pleased with the enthusiastic turn out.

"I was very pleased to be able to inform people about the disease and about what we're doing here at the hospital. Interacting with the public in this way is the way forward," she said.

Tracy's husband, Phil, who also attended, found the health fair "very informative" and said men should wake up to the dangers of skin cancer.

"Men should stop being so macho and start taking skin cancer seriously," he said.

The visitors included Trust Governor and Wyre Forest District Councillor Anne Hingley who said the event was a beneficial way of putting over clinical knowledge to people who use the hospital.

"I was particularly interested in the presentation on prostate cancer because a very close friend was diagnosed with it and has gone through the treatment process," she said. "The event was a very good learning exercise."

Julia Yates, from Pensnett, Dudley, will be studying naturopathic nutrition at college in the autumn and

was particularly keen to hear Claire Rowley's talk on the link between diet and cancer prevention.

"I found it all very interesting and the speakers were good," she said. "The more I can learn the better."

There were also demonstration stands hosted by other cancer specialists, including experts from the Palliative Care Team, Healthy Eating Team and Cancer Support Team from the White House.

The event follows on from the success of the Trust's first health fair in March which focused on hip replacements, joint surgery, rheumatology and arthritis.

Director of Nursing Denise McMahon, who chaired the event, said it was held due to popular demand and called it "a tremendous success".

"I was really pleased with the numbers of people who came despite the awful weather," she said. "The presentations were very interesting, easy to understand and full of surprising facts."

"It was a great opportunity for members to hear about what we do at The Dudley Group of Hospitals and we also signed up twenty five new members on the night."



Tracy Beese, demonstrates mole scanner to a health fair visitor.



Members pose for the camera on one of the hospital tours.

Night owls descend on hospital for first-ever evening tour

Trust members swapped a night in front of the TV for a walk round Russells Hall Hospital on the first-ever evening tour of the hospital's facilities.

Twenty members visited the hospital and were able to choose between three different tours: C5 Respiratory and Lung Function Unit, B2 Trauma and Orthopaedics and A1 Rheumatology and C4 Oncology and C6 Plastics.

A further 13 members spent a Saturday morning visiting the Lung Function Unit and C5 Respiratory, Maternity Unit and A1 Rheumatology and C7 Gastrointestinal and B5 Gynaecology on 9th May.

Why not take a tour?

The next Trust tour will be held on Wednesday 14th October between 10.00am and 12.00pm.

Visitors will have a choice of three tours:

- Emergency Department and Emergency Assessment Unit
- Children's Ward and Neo-natal Unit
- C3 General Medicine and A4 Acute Stroke

If you would like to attend please contact the Foundation Trust office on (01384) 456111 ext. 1419 or email foundationmembers@dgon.nhs.uk

Do you know your NHS number?

Every person in the country who is registered with a GP has a unique 10-digit NHS number which can improve the safety of their healthcare, but would you know what yours is if you needed NHS treatment?

Patients do not need to know their number to receive care, however producing a valid number will help healthcare staff find your records more quickly and easily and share them safely with others who are caring for you.

If you are registered with a GP, you will already have an NHS number and you can find out what it is by calling the practice and asking them to look it up. To protect your privacy, they may ask you to show them a passport, driving licence or some other proof of identity.

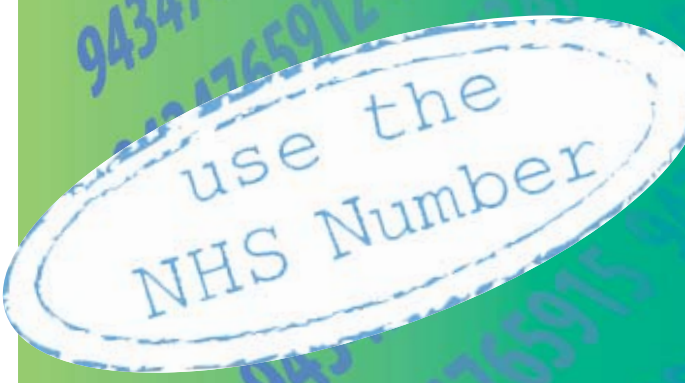
If you are not currently registered with a GP practice, you can find out your NHS number by contacting your local Primary Care Trust (PCT).

You can find out the number of your local PCT by:

- logging on to www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx
- calling NHS Direct 0845 4647

If you have never registered with a GP, you will not have an NHS number and will need to register before you can be allocated a number.

You can find your nearest GP by logging on to the above website or by calling NHS Direct.



use the
NHS Number

Regional Quality Observatory Service

A new one-stop service has been set up to provide clinical teams and organisations with information about quality of services.

The West Midlands QI has been established in response to the requirement in Lord Darzi's High Quality Care for All report that every region should have a quality observatory.

The purpose of the service is to enable the continuous improvement in the quality of care.

The service will be led by a practicing clinician and will be driven by feedback from clinical teams about what they need to know.

For more information, log on to www.wmqi.westmidlands.nhs.uk

Trekkers go the extra mile to raise money for new ventilator



The team are all smiles ahead of their fundraising climb of Mount Toubkal, the highest mountain in Morocco.

A team of medical workers who conquered a 13,500ft Moroccan mountain to raise money for a new ventilator have smashed their £15,000 target.

The group of seven staff had to contend with snow, driving winds, freezing temperatures and electrical storms during their ascent of Mount Toubkal in June.

Although dense cloud limited their visibility on the way up and deep snow and freezing temperatures at the summit meant they could only pose for a few hasty photographs before making their descent, their efforts were rewarded after they reached their fundraising target within weeks of returning home.

The band – charge nurses Richard Barker and Simon Gregory, sister Ros Anslow, specialist physiotherapist Kirsty Westwood and doctors Julian Sonksen, Mike Reay and Geoff Fisher – flew into Marrakech with its busy souks and twisting alleyways before setting off on the two-day walk to the top of the mountain which is the highest peak in Morocco.

The ventilator will help patients who have neuromuscular disorders and who are unable to take deep breaths or cough effectively to breathe. It will also help patients who have chronic chest problems.

Simon, who organised the trip with Richard, said thank you to everyone involved in the adventure.

"It's been really humbling to be involved with this as so many people have been involved and I'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated money or given us their time and effort," he said.

People can still make a donation by logging on to www.justgiving.com/dgoh-atlastrek or by emailing atlas.trek@hotmail.com

Help us beat the bugs

Wash your hands, wash away the bugs with our six step hand washing technique

Step 1



Palm to palm

Step 2



Right palm over back of left, fingers interlaced and then vice versa

Step 3



Palm to palm, fingers interlaced

Step 4



Back of fingers opposing palms with fingers interlaced

Step 5



Rotating rubbing of thumbs enclosed by palm

Step 6



Rotating rubbing backwards and forwards with fingertips of right hand in palm of left, and vice versa

Visitors and patients at Russells Hall Hospital are being challenged to help wash away infections and bugs by cleaning their hands regularly.

The Trust's Infection Prevention and Control team has thrown down the gauntlet as part of a five-point plan to help stop the spread of infections such as MRSA and C.difficile (C.diff).

The Trust's five-point plan is:

- Be aware of hand hygiene. You should be washing your hands on a regular basis throughout the day, particularly after 'unclean' procedures, such as going to the toilet
- Challenge staff. If you don't see staff using hand gel or washing their hands, ask them to do so before they see you
- How do you feel? If not 100 per cent, don't visit a sick friend or relative
- There may be restrictions in place on certain wards, such as some wards don't allow flowers or have restrictions on the number of people that can visit a patient. Speak to the ward clerk or lead nurse to find out
- If in doubt, ask!

The plan is the latest initiative to be introduced by the team as part of its drive to tackle MRSA and C.diff infection rates. It has already reduced infection rates in 2008/09.

The team, which is made up of a consultant nurse, clinical nurse specialists, infection control champions and surgical surveillance nurses, was launched in 2007 to support wards and departments with new initiatives that can help prevent the spread of infections and help clinically manage patients who may be unfortunate enough to have developed an infection.

In 2008, the Trust launched a Bare Below The Elbows policy for staff and introduced an antimicrobial pharmacist.

As part of the Trust's commitment to reducing infections, MRSA screening for elective patients before they come into hospital for their procedure has also recently been introduced.

The next area the team will be looking at is carrying out risk assessments to help predict patients who might be susceptible of contracting an infection.



Dawn Westmoreland has taken up the role of consultant nurse within the Infection Prevention and Control team following investment by the Trust in this high priority area.

Dawn, who hails from north-west Leicestershire has joined the Trust from Kettering General Hospital and has over 15 years experience in the field of infection prevention and control.

Dawn's role is to help improve the quality of healthcare for patients by leading the infection control nursing team, providing expert advice and clinical expertise for nurses, doctors, patients and visitors.

Dawn said: "Infection control is prominent across the NHS nationally and is important to our patients and visitors.

"I want to start looking at more effective practices of predicting patients who are susceptible so we can improve our prevention methods. Infection control is not just about controlling infections anymore, it is about preventing them from the word go.

"The team are all enthusiastic about continuing to prevent and control infections within our hospitals."

Meet your new Governors

We have recently needed new Governors due to resignations.



Nikky Gill, Appointed Youth Governor tells us more about herself and why she thinks having a young person on the Council of Governors is important.

How old are you?
16

What School/College do you go to?
I've just left The Dormston School and start at Halesowen College in September

What is your favourite subject at School/College?
English

What careers interest you?
Criminal Law

What are your hobbies/interests?
Modelling

Why did you join the Dudley Youth Council (DYC)? And how long have you been there?

I joined DYC because I felt that the young people of Dudley needed a voice and I wanted to be involved in something that would shape my own and other young people's lives for the future. I have been involved with DYC for a year and a half

What is your role at the Dudley Youth Council?

I am the Chairperson of Dudley Youth Council

Why did you become a Governor at the Trust?

I run a health awareness sub-group and I wanted to get involved and learn more about our local NHS establishments

What do you want to achieve from being a Governor?

I hope to have a positive input with views from young people around the borough

How are you planning to get young people interested in becoming a member of the Trust?

By showing how people like myself can get into a position like mine and actually make a difference



Jane Elvidge, Staff Elected Governor

I am a clinical pharmacist working within the pharmacy department at Russells Hall Hospital. I qualified in 1986 and following 13 years working in community pharmacy all over the Black Country, I moved over to hospital pharmacy starting as a basic grade pharmacist. I have held several posts over the past ten years including Medicines Information and Formulary roles and am currently the Principal Pharmacist for Medicines Management. I live in Kingswinford with my husband and two teenage daughters and my life revolves around them. Any spare time I have, I enjoy watching sport, walking and travel. I jumped at the opportunity to become a Governor as I wanted to be involved with my local hospital and am proud to represent the fantastic staff who work for The Dudley Group of Hospitals.



David Ward, Public Elected Governor

As your elected candidate as a member of the Governors Board, may I take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is David Ward, a resident of Tipton. I am

66-years-old and a semi-retired Safety Advisor. I have worked with the people of Tipton at all levels. I look forward to my new challenge and assure you of my full dedication to the task in hand. I hope you will attempt to contact me when my position is more defined. Your views, concerns and comments will be my challenge. Welcome to your voice for Tipton.

Brian Hanford, Appointed Governor

I am an Appointed Governor. Since January 2007, I have been Director of Finance, Information and Contracting at Worcestershire PCT. Previously, I held similar positions in Herefordshire and Leicester. Professionally, I am an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries. Outside of work, I am also a Trustee (non pecuniary) of a Social Enterprise called HALO which runs leisure services and centres in Herefordshire.



Dates for your diary

September

28th – AGM and health fair
6.00pm

Copthorne Hotel, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill

October

14th – Members Trust tour
10.00am to 12.00pm

Prayer Centre, Russells Hall Hospital

December

10th – Council of Governors meeting
6.00pm to 9.00pm

Clinical Education Centre, Russells Hall Hospital

All Council of Governors meetings are public.

Please let the Foundation Trust office know if you would like to reserve a place at any of the events so we can cater for numbers.

Pensioners find out about role of Trust Governor

Members of the Halesowen Pensioners Association found out about the role of a Trust Governor at a talk conducted by publicly elected Governors John Balmforth and Rob Johnson.

The pair spent 15 minutes telling the audience about the role and how they could become Trust members, before hosting a question and answer session.

Anyone who would like a member of the Foundation Trust team to come along and give their organisation a talk should call the Foundation Trust office on (01384) 456111 ext. 1419.



Russells Hall Hospital



Corbett Hospital Outpatient Centre



Guest Hospital Outpatient Centre

Review of the Year 2008/09

This review is designed to give all interested in The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust an overview of the past year and also a look forward to our plans for the future. The full Foundation Trust annual report and accounts (1st October 2008 – 31st March 2009) and the NHS Trust annual report and summary accounts (1st April 2008 – 30th September 2008) are available on our website at www.dgoh.nhs.uk or if you require a full copy of the accounts please contact Heather Taylor on 1040.

We have also for the first time this year produced a quality report which details our commitment to delivering a patient centred service that has high quality at its heart, underlined by the Trust's values. More details of the quality report are on page 11.

Care • Respect • Pride • Responsibility • Effectiveness • Partnership

Message from the chief executive and chairman

During 2008/09 the media once again ensured that the NHS remained at the forefront of the public's mind, most notably through publicising the difficulties faced by some trusts in achieving consistently high levels of quality and securing the safety of their patients.

We are delighted that The Dudley Group of Hospitals (DGoH) is once again able to demonstrate significant achievements in both areas, despite the continued challenge to achieve demanding financial and performance targets. This would not be possible without the dedicated team of staff who work for the Trust and we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every colleague for their personal contribution.

The year has highlighted how patients and the public are having a bigger say on how healthcare is delivered and reviewed. In response to various reports by its predecessor body the Healthcare Commission, the new Care Quality Commission has established a whole range of new safeguards for patient safety which we warmly welcome. We also have new public accountability, which we are working with our Council of Governors and our 13,500 strong membership base to ensure we listen to the views of our patients and the public.

Tell us what you think

We would appreciate your feedback on this review as it is the first of its kind. We would particularly like to know what you think of our quality priorities so we can use your feedback to help us formulate areas to focus on for setting next years key areas. To do this you can either call the Foundation Trust office on (01384) 456111 ext. 1419 or email foundationmembers@dgoh.nhs.uk



Alf Edwards, chairman and Paul Farenden, chief executive.

Review of the Year 2008/09

Some of the key highlights from 2008/09 include:

- We once again received a rating of 'good' for use of resources and 'good' for quality of care from the Healthcare Commission (now the Care Quality Commission)
- We achieved or exceeded virtually all of our operational targets
- We met and exceeded our infection control targets (see page 7 for more information on infection control)
- Over 91% of our patients who were surveyed said they would recommend The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to a friend or relative
- Two research and development projects won MidTech industry innovation awards
- 42 articles were published from researchers at DGOH, 18 papers in the fields of rheumatoid arthritis and cardiac risk
- We reached a total of over 13,500 members of our Foundation Trust
- Three Trust projects/teams were selected as finalists for the West Midlands Health and Social Care Awards, with one team winning in the category of Innovative Acute Care
- We signed up to the national 'Patient Safety First' campaign, receiving praise from the National Patient Safety Agency on our work so far in this area (see page 2)
- We met the new 18-week maximum wait time from GP referral to treatment target
- Monitor approved our application for NHS Foundation Trust status from October 2008
- Financial investment was made in front line clinical and support staff
- Investment of £6m in a new multi-tiered staff car park at Russells Hall Hospital
- We launched new patient surveys to get 'real time' feedback to help inform our improvements



Members of the Diabetes in Pregnancy Advisory Group Kate Morse, Lorna Meer, Tareq Faid, Margaret Jackson, Jane Dale and Sally Clifford celebrate winning the Innovative Acute Care award at the West Midlands Health and Social Care Awards 2009.

Review of the Year 2008/09

Some of the key areas we will continue to target for further improvement in 2009/10 are:

- We will continue our improvements to ensure we sustain the target to see, treat and admit or discharge patients in Accident and Emergency within four hours
- We will continue to strive to further reduce our infection rates
- We are reconfiguring our ward capacity to provide an emergency/elective (planned) split to improve the patient experience
- We will further improve our patient experience through listening to their feedback
- Our Governors play a major strategic role in our Trust, and we will continue to develop our relationship with our Council of Governors and the membership they represent to help develop plans for the future



This is the last time I will write as Chief Executive of The Dudley Group of Hospitals as I retire from my career in the NHS, spanning 41 years, in September 2009. I would like to take this opportunity to say a public thank you to my colleagues on the Board and to the staff at DGoH and all my friends and colleagues within the health economy for their valued support over the years. I wish you all the very best for the future of healthcare at The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Paul Farenden Alf Edwards

Looking to the future Our Commitment to Quality

The Trust Board are committed to embedding quality through everything we do and we want to stand out from other Trusts by striving to provide the best possible care.

We have used the three dimensions of quality: safety, effectiveness and experience to prioritise our quality measures and initiatives.

We have agreed four key priorities for 2009/10 which are:

Priority 1 – Care of the deteriorating patient. We are aiming to reduce the number of cardiac arrests from the January 2008 figure by 30% in June 2009, then further reduce from the June figure by 5% by June 2010

Priority 2 – To further reduce our MRSA rate

Priority 3 – To further reduce our Clostridium difficile rate

Priority 4 – Patient experience counts. We are aiming to increase the number of patients who rate their overall care highly from 92% in the national inpatient survey to 95%. Also to show an increase in patients that would recommend The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to a friend or relative

We have this year launched a system to measure the quality of care we provide called the Care Quality Indicators.

Each month a number of senior nurses, matrons and deputy matrons check standards of all wards against 7 core indicators, including pain management, falls management, tissue viability, nutrition, patient observations, medication and infection control.

All results are published to each ward on a trend basis and reported at Trust Board quarterly to help us monitor and action areas for improvement.



Review of the Year 2008/09

The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Forward Plan

Quality Strategy – differentiate in strategy

We will excel at delivering high quality through:

- Patient experience within a customer care culture
- Continue to roll out Patient Safety First campaign
- Utilise our network of Governors and members to understand patients preferences and learn from these
- Achieve a year on year continuous reduction in hospital acquired infections
- Our impressive facilities and environment
- Constructive and responsive relationships with commissioners
- Appropriately skilled and motivated workforce
- Investing our surplus to enhance service quality, improve patient outcomes, develop the workforce and acquire new technologies

The Dudley **NHS**
Group of Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

your
hospital
of choice

Financial Strategy – Deliver year on year surplus

- Building on our record of 14 years of financial stability
- Maintain at least a 30 day cash buffer
- Maintain a committed facility with a commercial bank
- Deliver a Cost Improvement Plan of £6m per year
- Achieve a minimum 5% financial surplus for investment in new services
- Introduce Service Line Reporting at the patient level

Market Strategy – collaborate, compete and secure

- We will build on our track record of growing our business
- Collaborate with our existing and develop new relationships with commissioners of services
- Compete with other providers to give best possible patient care
- Secure our boundaries

Check out our progress

Our financial performance is strong and is predicted to remain that way for the rest of the year. Below you will see how we are doing against some national performance targets as at the end of June 2009.

Infection Control Reported

MRSA

Our target for MRSA is agreed locally with our Primary Care Trust and is 12 cases per year.



C.diff

Government target is to achieve a continued reduction in healthcare associated infections.

Our target agreed locally with our Primary Care Trust is no more than 238 cases per year.



Access

Cancer waiting times

These ensure that patients are treated within a maximum of 62 days from referral to treatment including any diagnostic/outpatient appointments.



Patient waits in A&E

The target is no one to wait longer than 4 hours to be seen, treated, admitted or discharged.



18 weeks from referral to treatment

The 18-week national target is set as the total maximum time it should take from the GP referring a patient for treatment to the time that treatment starts. Within that 18 weeks, all diagnostic tests and outpatient visits for tests should have taken place.



Activity vs Plan

We are treating more patients than we had planned to.



Efficiency

Length of stay

We want to improve the efficiency of our services to ensure patients are not kept in hospital longer than necessary



Day surgery rate



Complaints and claims



Ward reshuffle to reduce infection risk

Plans to provide separate wards for elective (planned) and emergency inpatient admissions and treatment at Russells Hall Hospital have now been approved.

All patients coming into the hospital for elective (planned) surgery are pre-screened for MRSA. Under the ward reconfiguration plans elective patients would be treated in separate areas to patients who are admitted to the hospital in an emergency who have not been pre-screened, therefore lowering their risk of acquiring

an infection.

It is also hoped that the new scheme will result in a shorter stay in hospital for most elective patients in the future. Once the scheme is fully operational, patients generally won't have to go into hospital until the day of their surgery.

Changes are due to take place in October and if you are due to attend the hospital for an appointment you will be advised by letter where you need to come to.



Super cyclist saddles up for marathon ride

An intrepid member of staff is preparing to saddle up for a marathon charity bike ride which will see him cycle from one end of the country to the other.

Andy Troth, the Trust's deputy head of information, will cycle from Land's End to John o'Groats, to raise money for research into bowel cancer.

Andy, aged 47, will be joined on the ride by friend and long-time cycling partner Dave Jackson, 55.

The pair will set off from Land's End on Sunday 13th September and plan to arrive in John o'Groats on Tuesday 29th September after more than two weeks and 1,000 miles in the saddle.

The duo will avoid main roads along the way, opting instead for cycle trails and routes they have devised themselves from years of riding around the UK.

Their adventure will see them carrying all of their own gear and cycling up to 65 miles a day and staying in youth hostels and bed and breakfasts along the way.

Andy, who plans to keep an online diary of the ride so people can follow his progress, said he hoped to raise £1,000 for Lynn's Bowel Cancer Campaign, a charity started by former Watchdog presenter Lynn Faulds-Wood who was diagnosed with the disease in 1993.

To keep up with his progress online, log on to theoldbloggers.blogspot.com



Andy and cycling partner Dave Jackson take a breather on one of their training runs as they prepare for their marathon charity ride from Land's End to John o'Groats.



Community children's nurse Karl Jones shows off his painting skills after his appearance on the empty fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, in London.

Nurse's brush with fame in Trafalgar Square

A talented nurse from Russells Hall Hospital who enjoys painting in his spare time became part of the picture himself when he took part in the UK's strangest work of art.

Community children's nurse Karl Jones appeared on the empty fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, in London, on 28th August when he took part in the 'living statue' art project.

Karl, aged 44, was selected at random to take part in Antony Gormley's One and Other project after entering his name into an online lottery.

Keen artist Karl used the opportunity to paint a picture of his unique view, while curious onlookers gazed up at the strange scene above their heads.

His sixty minutes of fame was captured by cameramen from a temporary film studio which has been set up in the square to broadcast the project to a TV channel and website.

The event was screened at AA-Rt, in Market Street, Stourbridge, which is auctioning off his painting.

He is one of 2,400 members of the public who are getting the chance to spend an hour 25-foot above the crowds and traffic in one of the UK's busiest spaces.

Each individual is being fork-lifted up to spend an hour in full view of the crowds, with no banister or barrier to protect them other than a safety net skirting the plinth.

Sergeant Savage returns from frontline soldiering to frontline nursing



Anthony is pictured while on tour in Afghanistan.

Working in a busy A&E department can be challenging enough, but a nurse and part-time soldier from Russells Hall Hospital is pleased to be back after spending six months in the most challenging environment in the world.

Charge nurse Anthony Savage has just returned from a six-month tour of duty – codenamed Operation Herrick 9 – in Afghanistan with his Territorial Army regiment 131 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers.

The 37-year-old father-of-two from Wombourne served as a reconstruction and development liaison officer with the 24 Commando Engineer Regiment, as well as regularly volunteering to help out in the medical bay where he

tended to injured soldiers and Afghan civilians.

Sergeant Savage was responsible for overseeing a number of reconstruction projects and keeping an eye on the quality of building work and making sure contractors were sticking to the plans.

It is the second tour he has completed in Afghanistan after a three-and-a-half month mission in 2006/07.

Sergeant Savage said that although a lot of work was needed to rebuild the country, things were starting to improve.

“It’s a very beautiful country, but unfortunately a lot of it has been destroyed because of all the fighting in recent years,” he said. “My role was to ensure that when a contract was issued, the contractors were starting work on time, sticking to the plans and following quality guidelines.

“I’ve enjoyed my time over there, but I feel lucky to get back safely in one piece. It’s been sad, exhilarating, depressing and exciting and I’m grateful to the Trust

for letting me go and helping me make a contribution to the rebuilding of the country.”



Anthony Savage in his ‘civvies’ outside the Emergency Department at Russells Hall Hospital.

Pulse of staff to be taken online

Staff are being encouraged to complete the latest Pulse survey which will be available online in certain areas for the first time this quarter.

About 1,300 surveys, including 222 online versions, have been sent out and the information provided by staff will provide a snapshot of how staff feel about the Trust, their working environment, training opportunities and the Trust’s values.

There are four directorates taking part in the online pilot survey – Specialty Medicine and Cancer and Clinical and Specialist Support Services from the clinical area and Human Resources and Finance from the corporate area.

Staff in these directorates who have a Trust email address will be sent a message containing a link to take them to the survey.

Staff without a Trust email address will be sent a paper

survey, as will those who work in directorates invited to complete a paper survey.

Both the electronic and paper survey, which will only take about 10 minutes to complete, are confidential and the information provided by staff will be collated and analysed by an external company called VaLUENTiS.

Up to 1,000 surveys are sent out to staff every quarter and recipients are picked out at random to take part.

Chief executive Paul Farenden said it was important staff took part in the survey.

“As part of our commitment to making the Pulse survey easier to complete, we are conducting a trial for some departments to complete the survey online,” he said.

“Once this trial is complete, we will be able to assess how successful it has been and whether we will adopt this approach across the Trust.

“We are committed to becoming ‘Your Hospital of Choice’ and by understanding what we do well and what we can improve on and taking the appropriate actions we will be able to realise this ambition. Staff feedback is critical to this so please take part and let us know your views.”

Fab fundraiser breaks £45,000 barrier



Gwen Timmins, who has raised more than £45,000 for The Dudley Group of Hospitals, is pictured behind the weekly stall she runs in the reception area at Russells Hall Hospital.

A fab fundraiser who has raised thousands of pounds for The Dudley Group of Hospitals despite suffering from osteoarthritis is celebrating after breaking the £45,000 barrier.

Volunteer Gwen Timmins MBE, from Veronica Road, Kingswinford, has helped raise £45,500 for the Trust after starting fundraising more than 25 years ago.

Gwen, aged 66, has suffered from osteoarthritis for nearly 40 years and started raising money as a thank you to the staff who helped her manage her painful condition at the Trust's various hospital sites.

Over the years, Gwen has bought TVs, chairs, incubators and other specialist equipment for the Trust.

As well as raising the money by organising various events and manning stalls at local fairs, she also set up the Pain Relief Support Group in 2003 to support other people who suffer from the condition and to encourage them to get out and about and meet new people.

Her services to the NHS were recognised in 2007 when she was presented with an MBE by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace.

She can be found together with other volunteers from the group in the main reception area at Russells Hall Hospital every Tuesday manning a stall selling everything from books to toiletries.

Gwen said her fundraising efforts had kept her active and encouraged other sufferers to get in touch and join the group.

"I started suffering from osteoarthritis in my twenties and the pain can be so bad sometimes that it's a struggle to get out of bed," she said.



Gwen is pictured at Buckingham Palace with her MBE and husband William.

"I've always thought, that I can't let it get me down and I've got to keep on doing something good.

"It's nice to be able to give something back for all the wonderful work people at the Trust have done for me over the years.

"It's nice to be able to get out of

the house and get involved in the group. It keeps you active and you get the chance to meet so many lovely people.

"We're always looking for new members and people to help us man the stand."

If you are interested in helping out please call the Communications team on (01384) 456111 ext. 1064.

Keeping staff, patients, and visitors safe

The threat of assault is a very real danger for front-line medical staff and, unfortunately, the threat sometimes turns into something far more serious.

The job of protecting staff, patients and visitors – as well as investigating theft, implementing new security strategies and policies and liaising with police – is the responsibility of David Ore and John Marchant.

David is the Trust's local security management specialist, and John is the head of security for Interserve, the Trust's PFI partner which, among its many roles, is responsible for security.

David is responsible for formulating security strategies, policies and investigations and joined the Trust two years ago after a long and diverse career in the police.

He is currently working on the Trust's Safer Hospital Watch Scheme which he hopes to launch later this year with the aim of reducing and minimising risks by deterring offenders, controlling the hospital environment and preventing unlawful behaviour.

The primary objective of the scheme is to reassure patients that they will receive the best possible treatment and care and that staff feel as though they can do their job without feeling threatened.

John is responsible for front-line security and runs the team of security guards which is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and who can be at the scene of an emergency within minutes of receiving a call. John is also the point of contact for the local police.

In the event of an emergency situation, Trust staff should dial ext. 2222 and all available security officers will respond to the call immediately, together with any police that are on site.

While this is a matter of judgement, this would generally be in situations where there is a definite risk of someone being harmed or a crime is in progress.

An emergency situation could include:

- Behaviour which is threatening to the safety of staff or others, or is in any other way offensive and continuously abusive
- Someone who is at risk of causing harm to themselves or others
- Someone who is attempting to leave the ward and, because of being prevented, either of the first two examples apply
- Someone who is detained under the Mental Health Act and attempting to leave the ward

In other cases, if Trust staff require the presence of security for a situation which may be urgent, but not an emergency, they should dial ext. 1234.

A non-emergency situation could include:

- Someone who is interfering with equipment or other people's belongings
- Someone who is trying to leave the ward, but who is not acting aggressively
- Someone who is being verbally hostile, but who does not pose a risk to their own or other people's safety
- Someone who is becoming a problem to manage or who is causing difficulties in coping with their behaviour at ward level

Launch of rapid response hip fracture team to help patients get back on their feet



Head nurse Claire Sylvester, sisters Carol Shaw, Ann Allen and Amanda Rowley. Also pictured is deputy matron Steve Randle, who was instrumental in helping get the team off the ground.

Hip fracture patients are receiving treatment quicker than ever at Russells Hall Hospital following the introduction of a rapid response team.

The Hip Fracture Practitioner team has been launched to ensure patients are transferred from the Emergency Department (ED) to the hospital's 24-bed hip fracture suite as soon as possible.

The team, which is made up of lead nurse Claire Sylvester and sisters Ann Allen, Amanda Rowley and Carol Shaw, are alerted as soon as a patient with a suspected hip fracture is brought into the hospital and will assess them in ED before transferring them to the hip fracture suite.

It is hoped the launch of the team will significantly reduce the waiting time of patients.

Lead nurse Claire Sylvester said treating hip fracture patients quickly is vital in helping them make a swift recovery.

"The sooner we can get them onto the ward, the sooner we can operate on them and get them back on their feet," she said.

"As soon as a patient with a suspected hip fracture is brought into the hospital, the team will go straight down to the Emergency Department, treat them and get them into a bed as soon as possible.

"It's all about providing a high-quality service which makes it more comfortable for patients."

Log on to hospital comparison website

Patients can now rate and compare hospitals thanks to a new online service.

The web-based scorecard system, which can be accessed by logging on to www.nhs.uk, will help people choose when and where they receive treatment by giving them the information they need to make an informed choice of hospital.

The scorecard, which acts in a similar way to internet comparison websites, means patients will no longer have to search multiple sources to find key information.

The service will allow them to compare a range of hospitals and their ratings, as well as to read reviews on issues such as mortality rates, infection rates, cleanliness, staff performance and quality of food.

Health secretary Andy Burnham said the service would help people make the right choice of hospital for them.

"Going into hospital is one of the most important moments in anyone's life and yet we don't equip patients with anything like enough information to make informed decisions," he said.

"The new scorecard helps patients make the right choice of hospital for them by bringing together all the information in one place for the first time.

"The service also offers an unparalleled opportunity for hospitals to be made aware of any issues and act to improve their services, helping to drive up standards across the board and become more patient focused."



Construction work on the 691-space multi-tiered staff car park at Russells Hall Hospital is anticipated to begin at the end of October.

Delays have been experienced while the last few legal and contractual details are sorted out, but Digby Aston, the Trust's development and contractual manager, said he anticipated work would begin at the end of October.

"Work on the drainage system is now completed and we are just waiting to finalise the legal agreement between the respective parties involved in the project," he said.

"As we are a PFI trust, this agreement has to be in place before we can start work and this takes time to negotiate.

"We anticipate the project will soon be back on track and work will hopefully start at the end of October.

"I'd like to say thank you to everyone for their co-operation while this project takes place as once it is finalised it will be of real benefit."

Young artist's Trust poster design wins prestigious competition



Heart FM DJs Rachel New and Ed James with Trust Governor Diane Jones and Millie Evans holding her winning poster design.

An artistic young schoolgirl who won a competition to promote the Trust in South Staffordshire has also come first in a region-wide advertising contest.

Just weeks after her design was chosen to encourage people to sign up as Foundation Trust members, Millie Evans has been named as the winner of the advertising competition which is run every year by the Express & Star newspaper and sponsored by radio station Heart FM.

Nine-year-old Millie, who goes to Brindley Heath Junior School, in Kinver, was picked as the winner out of hundreds of entries from school children from round the region.

Millie, who won £500 for her school, was presented with her prize by Express & Star deputy editor Keith Harrison and Ed James and Rachel New from Heart FM.

The competition sees schools paired with public bodies, charities and businesses which give them a design brief for an advert. Children from each school then design an advert for their designated organisation and the winning entries are presented with an Express & Star goody bag full of arts and crafts materials and handy hints about staying safe on the roads.

Mr Harrison congratulated all of the youngsters who took part and said the standard of entries got better each year.

"The entries are absolutely fantastic and just get better and better each year," he said.

"It's not just the artwork that's impressive; it's the thinking behind it."

Trust trialling telephone confirmation service to cut down on missed appointments

A new telephone service which automatically reminds hospital patients of their appointments and admission dates a few days before is being trialled by the Trust.

The service, which was launched on Monday 7th September, reminds patients of their appointments via an automated telephone call a few days before they are due to visit the hospital.

The service is being trialled for a month in the orthopaedic outpatients department and, if successful, will be rolled out across all outpatient, inpatient and day case areas in the future.

The call will guide patients (or their parents if the patient is under 16) through an identification process and provide them with their appointment details before inviting them to either confirm, cancel or rearrange their appointment or admission.

Patients can expect to receive an automated call during the afternoon or evening approximately a week

before they are due to visit the hospital. Patients aged 65 and over will be telephoned in person.

Calls will be made six days a week, excluding Saturdays.

Jennie Muraszewski, general manager for Surgery and Orthopaedics, said the service would provide a useful reminder for patients.

"We would always ask patients to cancel appointments or admission dates if they were unwell, but this service will provide a reminder to those patients who may have overlooked the fact they have an appointment or admission date," she said.

"The Trust keeps a list of patients who can attend at short notice should a cancellation arise and this service will mean they will be able to be accommodated."

"By providing a reminder, we can help those patients who may have forgotten their appointment and also make it easier for patients who wish to cancel or rearrange their appointment to do so."

RCN branches set to be merged

If you are a member of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), you may be interested to know that the identity of the local branch that you are affiliated to is changing.

At the moment, RCN members who work for The Dudley Group of Hospitals are in the Dudley branch, but as part of a branch boundary review across the whole of the West Midlands, the Dudley branch will merge with the Walsall and Wolverhampton branches in October to create the Black Country branch.

As an RCN member you are invited to attend the closing meeting of the RCN Dudley branch. This will take place in the Clinical Education Centre, First Floor, C Block, Russells Hall Hospital on Thursday 24th September at 6.00pm.

You are also welcome to attend the opening AGM of the new Black Country branch at the same venue on the same date commencing at 7.00pm following the closure of the branch.

For more information, please call Lisa Evans Dimmock, Chair (currently) of the RCN Dudley Branch, on (01384) 456111 ext. 2807.

Thousands of NHS apprenticeships to be created

Thousands of new NHS apprenticeships are to be created following a £25 million cash injection by the government.

Up to 5,000 new apprenticeships will be created as part of a scheme to increase the number of youngsters joining the public sector.

Apprentices will get real 'on the job' experience, while improving their qualifications and contributing to the NHS workforce. The apprenticeships will include clinical support roles such as dental nurses and pharmacy support workers, as well as non-clinical roles such as IT support, estates and facilities management and catering.

The Dudley Group of Hospitals are finalising plans to introduce the scheme.

The funding forms part of Prime Minister Gordon Brown's commitment made earlier this year to increase the number of apprenticeships by 21,000 across the public sector.

Health secretary Andy Burnham said it was important to provide opportunities for youngsters during the current economic slump.

More information is available at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

Dean's African adventure

Swaziland is not on many people's list of places to spend a relaxing holiday.

The tiny landlocked country in southern Africa is crippled by poverty and about 40 per cent of its population of 1.1 million people is believed to be infected with HIV.

One of the results of this devastating epidemic is a generation of orphans who are tragically left infected with the disease themselves.

Fortunately, an army of volunteers from around the world help to look after the children at orphanages such as the one in western Swaziland where Dean Summlar recently spent some time.

Dean, the Trust's learning and development specialist, spent three weeks at the orphanage where he helped care for 46 children aged between four and 18.



Dean and one of the extended families that live in the orphanage.



Dean is pictured with one of the youngsters he helped care for during his three-week stay in Swaziland.

Dean, aged 25, visited the orphanage with three friends after hearing about it from a friend from the Birmingham Christian Centre who sold her house, gave up her job and moved there two years ago to dedicate herself to the children.

The group raised £8,000 to build a library for the children before their trip which they painted and filled with books during their time at the orphanage.

They also helped to rebuild a family's house that was falling down, taught the children about HIV, kept them entertained with games and even held an English tea party.

Dean described the trip as "emotional", but added he would like to go back in the future.

"You can't come back and live your life in the same way because the experience was such an eye-opener," he said.

"Nothing can prepare you for it, despite all the stories you see on the TV. One of the hardest things was coming back home and seeing just how much we've got here and how lucky we are in comparison.

"Although it was really emotionally draining, it was an amazing experience and I'd recommend it to anyone. You really feel as though you are doing something that makes a difference."

All in a day's work of...

Mark Stobert

Hospital Chaplain, The Dudley Group of Hospitals



SIX QUESTIONS:

What books have you read lately?

I'm reading Winnicott: Life and Work by FR Rodman. It's a biography of the psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott whose work has influenced a generation of psychotherapists. He was a great man! I've also just finished Death at La Fenice, a detective novel by Donna Leon. It's set in Venice. A cracking read, especially if you've been to Venice.

What CD have you got in your car?

I don't have a CD player in my car so I use my iPod through the radio. Careless Love by Madeline Peyroux has been listened to a lot lately.

What is your favourite food?

Risotto with roasted butter nut squash and docelate blue cheese. Mmmmm!

What do you do to unwind?

This weekend I will be with a group of friends camping on Skye and climbing all over the Cullin Mountains. I do the cooking so we will have the above risotto too! Cycling to and from work is always relaxing. Sometimes I write poetry. But I write to understand not to be understood.

Where were you born?

South Shields, Tyne and Wear.

Is there a special interest/function that particularly interests you in your work?

People! Which is very handy, really.

I am a Methodist minister and was stationed in Dudley after finishing university.

I fell into chaplaincy at the Guest Hospital when the previous chaplain left – he said I should take over because I lived the nearest. It was for half a day a week and the patients were stroke patients and from rheumatology and pain relief. I loved it from the start.

On 1st May 1995, I started as the first whole-time hospital chaplain to The Dudley Group of Hospitals. I still love it and the people, especially those I work alongside.

Much of my work is supporting those who have experienced the pain of shattering loss or those who have cared for them, those for whom the emotional and spiritual cost of caring is big.

A TYPICAL DAY WILL INCLUDE...

5.45am Called to the Emergency Department to be with the bereaved wife and family of an elderly man who died suddenly after being ill during the night. Spent a long time with them hearing their story before anointing and praying for him.

10.00am Had to take the car home for my wife to use, so I returned by bike. I sat down in main reception to chat with a lady who was waiting to be taken home having been discharged. She told me all about her treatment and how well she'd been looked after and how anxious she was about being on her own.

10.30am Now I'm in the Prayer Centre and go to get some milk from the restaurant. This can take up to 45 minutes depending who wants to talk to me in the queue. Today it takes 15 minutes. A patient wanted to tell me how their treatment was going in physio. (A chaplain's listening radar is always on!)

10.45am Back in the Prayer Centre where I put the kettle on and make tea. My colleague, Jayne, returns and we plan the day. She has just returned from supporting parents whose baby was born before 24 weeks.

12.45pm Quick lunch before leading a reflective practice group on a ward at Bushey Fields. The nurses on this ward are given time each month to come together and reflect on their caring interactions with patients. This is done confidentially and facilitated by me and another colleague. It's very demanding, but immensely rewarding.

2.30pm Visit ITU to see the staff and patients. I like to make time with each patient and if there are any relatives then to see how they are too. I follow this up with a visit to the Emergency Department to listen to staff and to see if there is anything I need to do to follow up the family from this morning.

4.00pm Tea time. Back in the Prayer Centre. As the kettle goes on I hear someone enter and notice that they look distressed. I give them a bit of space then I enquire whether it would help to talk. The visitor's nan is very ill and she has just been to see her on the ward. We talk about her nan and she tells me how special she is. We pray for her nan and she takes two pebbles from the bowl, one for her and one for her nan.

5.30pm Just got time to pop up to the ward to see 'nan'. She's holding her pebble in her hand!

5.45pm Write some notes and get changed to cycle home.