

yourtrust

Winter 2011

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Chairman's overview

Welcome to the winter 2011 edition of Your Trust. I have now completed my first year as Chairman and I am thoroughly enjoying the role.

I would like to start by thanking our Governors whose term of office has now finished. Many have been in post since we achieved Foundation Trust Status in 2008, with the majority of those in post much longer as Shadow Governors. Over the past three years they have provided challenge to the Board of Directors and have been tremendous ambassadors for our Trust.

The election process is underway to find members for our new Council of Governors and successful candidates will be announced during December. The new team will be critical in representing our patients and challenging the Trust to be the best that it can be. See page 3 for more detail on the changes to the Trust Constitution.

As I'm sure you are all aware, the NHS is in uncertain times with the health bill currently with the House of Lords. We need to be clear of the changes to the bill and understand the impact it will have on us.

The Board and I have sight of the critical issues



affecting us now and in the future. Patient experience, infection control and the delivery of care are just a few of our priorities as a Trust to ensure our patients are receiving the best service we can provide.

Finally I would just like to thank staff for all their hard work and to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Chairman
John Edwards CBE

Vote now for your new Governors

This is your chance to decide who is elected. You should have now received ballot packs for the candidates in your constituency. Voting closes Tuesday 13th December, so make sure your vote counts.

Candidates standing for election are:

Public Constituencies

• **Brierley Hill – two vacancies**

Robert Edwards, David William Stenson, Dirk Van-Den-Akker and Steve Waltho.

• **Dudley Central – one vacancy**

Bill Hazelton, Amjid Raza, Alexandra Sajnova and Mohammed Saqib.

• **Dudley North – one vacancy**

Brian Chappell, Subodh Jain, Bethany Parkes and Harvey Woolf.

• **Halesowen – two vacancies**

John Balmforth, David Beale, Jackie Cartledge and Rob Johnson.

• **South Staffs and Wyre Forest – one vacancy**

Dave Cox, Adrian Noel Hamlyn and Diane Jones.

• **Stourbridge – two vacancies**

Darren Anthony Adams, Jim Conway, Geoffrey Harold Downing, John Edward Franklin, Pauline Harris, Melanie Martinod, Alun R Nicholas, Major Robins, Roy William Savin and Ann Tee.

• **Tipton and Rowley Regis – one vacancy**

Stephanie Jane Pritchard and Jason Kenneth Whyley.

Check out our website www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk for more information on the candidates or contact Helen Board on (01384) 321124 or email helen.board@dgh.nhs.uk

Staff Constituencies

• **Nursing and Midwifery – three vacancies (uncontested)**

Joanne Grace Hamilton, Alison Macefield and Julie Walklate.

• **Allied Health Professionals and Health Care Scientists – one vacancy**

David Andrew Deeley, Anne Gregory and David Heath.

• **Non Clinical Staff – one vacancy**

Karen Jaunzems, David Ore and Andy Troth.

Council of Governors review

Over the past six months we have, in conjunction with our Council of Governors, reviewed the Trust Constitution and looked at the effectiveness of the Council. The work is a result of several factors including the transfer of community services, the planned health bill reform and the Trust having foundation trust status for three years.

We have refreshed several areas of our Constitution, it has two key changes: the Trust name, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, and the size and composition of the Council of Governors. We compared the size of our Council with 31 other trusts and we were the sixth largest. Most Council of Governors have a membership of 21 to 25. The Council at the time decided to go forward with a new and smaller composition at their

full Council of Governors meeting (public) held on 4th August 2011, it was felt the smaller size could assist in ensuring the most effective Council possible. Monitor (the Independent Regulator of Foundation Trusts) has approved our new Constitution and more details can be found on our website www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk

The size of the Council was not the only element reviewed and there is ongoing work being led by Governors to review and refresh the structure and working of its sub-committees. The Governor Development Group has set up three work groups:

- ❄ Strategy development and Governor engagement
- ❄ Primary and secondary governance roles
- ❄ Membership engagement

This work will give the Council of Governors greater clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Forthcoming membership events – dates for your diary

'Your care – joined up' health fair event: Come and see the links between our community and hospital based services on Wednesday 1st February 2012, 10am to 12.30pm in the Clinical Education Centre, Russells Hall Hospital. To reserve your place, contact Helen Board on (01384) 321124 or email foundationmembers@dgh.nhs.uk

'Behind the Scenes' tour: Looking ahead to the spring, we will once again be hosting a 'Behind the Scenes' tour at Russells Hall Hospital. More information will be included in the spring issue of Your Trust, out March 2012 and on our website www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk

Changes to GP blood test service

Our GP blood test service has changed to allow more home visits for patients who are unable to make the trip to their GP practice because of ill health.

The Trust is offering longer blood testing sessions, but at fewer surgeries, to reduce the time the blood testing team spends travelling between GP practices allowing more time for home visits.

Patients now also have the flexibility to book themselves in for a test at a time convenient to them.

"We would like to reassure all our patients that we are offering the same number of blood test appointments but in longer sessions at fewer surgeries and health centres." says Susan Rides, Head Biomedical Scientist.

Patients will need a phlebotomy request form (blood test form) from their GP to take to the clinic of their choice on the day of their appointment.

Home visit referrals still need to be made via GPs. You may also use the walk-in service at Russells Hall Hospital and Corbett Outpatient Centre. A list of clinic locations and times is available on our Trust website www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk

The Dudley Group 
NHS Foundation Trust

Blood test appointments

You can now book your own appointment for a blood test at any of the surgeries listed below.



Phlebotomy Clinics	
Clinics	Contact
Wychbury	01384 322300
Kingswinford Medical Practice	01384 271241
High Oak	01384 366155
Feldon Lane & Hawne Lane	0121 602 8805
The Limes	08444 771887
Moss Grove	01384 277377
Worcester Street	01384 371616
St Margaret's Well	0121 602 8805
Brierley Hill Health Centre	01384 456111 ext. 2619
Cross Street	01384 459500
Ladies Walk	01902 575957
Netherton Health Centre	01384 366500

You now have the flexibility to book for a test at a time more convenient to you.
Bring the blood test request form with you to your appointment.
Requests for a blood test in your home still need to be made by your doctor.

Blood tests are also taken at Russells Hall Hospital Outpatient Department and Corbett Hospital Outpatient Centre – no appointment necessary.



News from the Chief Executive

As we face up to the most challenging time of year, with the extra pressures that winter brings to our doors, I am thrilled to be reporting some real achievements for several members of staff. These include Consultant Breast Surgeon Amtul R Carmichael, Trauma and Orthopaedics Consultant Nurse Gail Parsons and Penny Deel-Smith.

We continue to face challenges for our clostridium difficile rates which have increased over

the last few months and I would like to reassure all our patients that we are doing everything in our power to ensure we get those figures back on target. We have invested in our infection control team, reviewed and refreshed our cleaning provision, we continually conduct walk rounds by senior nurses to check hand hygiene compliance and our environment audits show good results.

Chief Executive
Paula Clark

Consultant breast surgeon appointed Honorary Professor



Professor Carmichael – proud of her achievement

Consultant Breast Surgeon Amtul R Carmichael has been appointed Honorary Professor in the School of Life and Health Sciences at Aston University in recognition of her research work in the field of breast cancer.

“It goes without saying that Amtul deserves this greatly and we should all congratulate her for her achievements,” said Professor George Kitas who announced the appointment.

Mrs, now Professor, Carmichael has accepted the Honorary Chair with great pride and delight.

“I am most proud of this achievement of the Trust and Research and Development Department,” says Professor Carmichael.

“May I take the opportunity to thank the Trust and R and D department for their unrelenting support, guidance and encouragement.

“I am grateful that The Dudley Group has provided me with a perfect working environment where I was fortunate to combine two loves of my life: treating patients with breast disease and doing research to enhance their care.”

Consultant nurse receives doctorate

Trauma and Orthopaedics (T&O) Consultant Nurse Gail Parsons has been awarded a doctorate from the University of the West of England for her studies into the pain management of patients waiting for hip and knee replacement surgery.

Dr Parsons has spent six years completing her PhD exploring the experiences of hip and knee patients and seeing how their symptoms improve with advice on managing pain, giving up smoking, losing weight and drinking less alcohol.

Gail, who joined the Trust in 1979 as an orthopaedic nurse, was formally awarded her doctorate at a graduation ceremony at Bristol Cathedral.

“I feel elated and really proud that I’ve been able to make a real difference to our T&O patients,” says Dr Parsons.

“There’s a huge sense of personal satisfaction in completing a large piece of work,” she adds, “and it



Dr Gail Parsons with her doctorate

makes me especially happy to know the team who took part in the study can share the achievement with me.”

As part of her PhD studies, Dr Parsons set up the hip and knee clinic at Guest Hospital in 2009. It was renamed the Joint School earlier this year.

Clinical Nurse Specialist achieves master's degree

Clinical Nurse Specialist Penny Deel-Smith has completed a master's degree in clinical nutrition.

"This is a real achievement for me," says Penny.

"I am so happy to have finally completed my master's degree. It's been a hard six years with

many difficulties occurring while studying. I thought I was never going to reach the end," says Penny.

"I shall continue to use the knowledge from my degree to benefit patients who need nutritional support while in hospital and at home."

Choose Well this winter

If you catch or have caught a nasty cold that you just can't shake off this winter, will you know the best place to go for treatment?

To help you choose the best care in the coming months, follow the NHS Choose Well campaign.

The campaign uses a colour coded thermometer which is split into six colours, ranging from blue (least serious) to red (most serious).



Blue – Self-care

This is for very minor illnesses and injuries that can be treated at home simply by combining a well-stocked medicine cabinet with plenty of rest. Stock your cabinet with:

- Paracetamol
- Plasters and a thermometer
- Indigestion remedy
- Rehydration remedy
- Anti-diarrhoeal medicine

Dark Green – NHS Direct

You can check your symptoms, conditions and treatments and find telephone numbers and addresses for most NHS organisations, including hospitals and GPs. You can call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 for health advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or log on to www.nhs.uk

Light Green – Pharmacist

Visit your pharmacy when you are suffering from a common winter health problem. Your pharmacist can provide advice and the best medicines for treatment. To find your local pharmacy's opening hours, log on to www.dudley.nhs.uk

Yellow – GP

For illness and injury that will not go away, visit your local GP. When absolutely essential, GPs can also provide home visits out-of-hours. To find your local GP surgery, log on to www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories or call NHS Direct on 0845 4647. You can also visit www.dudley.nhs.uk or call NHS Dudley on (01384) 366066.

Orange – NHS Walk-in Centre

Walk-in centres treat minor illnesses and injuries that do not need a visit to A&E. The Dudley Borough Walk-In Centre is open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Sunday. You do not need an appointment and will be seen by an experienced nurse. For more information, log on to www.nhs.uk
The Dudley Borough Walk-In Centre is located at Holly Hall Clinic, Stourbridge Road, Dudley, DY1 2ER. For more information, call 0330 1239225 or log on to www.dudleyboroughwic.nhs.uk

Red – A&E or 999

A&E departments should only be used in a critical or life-threatening situation. Dialling 999 and stating a medical emergency will result in a response vehicle being sent to your location. Your local A&E department is situated at Russells Hall Hospital, Pensnett Road, Dudley, DY1 2HQ. The department is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, log on to www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk



Charity update



During December the Christmas tree in the main reception at Russells Hall Hospital will be shining with hundreds of lights, each one dedicated to someone special.

By dedicating a light to someone you love you will be helping to improve the comfort and care of local people using one of our hospitals.

Simply fill in the form and send it with your donation (made out to Dudley Group of Hospitals Charity) to: DGoH Charity, Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley, DY1 2HQ.

Over the last 12 months we have had so many generous donations from patients, their families and friends, local businesses and from our own staff. Here are just a few:

Mr Ken Bullock and his family kindly raised in excess of £1,500 for the Acute Stroke Unit. The unit cared for Ken's wife, Jean, and the family wanted to recognise and thank the team for the care Jean was given.

Mrs Holder, family, friends and local businesses, donated over £4,500 towards a day room for stroke rehabilitation. Michael Holder, a former police chief superintendent, suffered a stroke in 2008. Mrs Holder wanted to donate the money to create a day room that will help benefit other stroke survivors.

The bus drivers from National Express walked the eight mile 246 bus route from Pensnett to Stourbridge and raised over £1,000 for the Children's Unit.

For more information about the Dudley Group of Hospitals Charity contact our Fundraising Co-ordinator Karen Phillips on (01384) 456111 ext 3349, email karen.phillips@dgh.nhs.uk or log on to www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk/our-charity

Tree of Light

Donate a light to a loved one and enter their name in the DGoH Charity Book of Hearts

Name

Address

.....

.....

..... Postcode

..... Tel

Email

I would like my heart dedicated to :

.....

Message (this will be entered in the Book of Hearts and also hand written on a heart to be displayed in the main reception of Russells Hall Hospital)

.....

.....

I enclose a donation of £

Anyone donating over £5 will be sent a festive memento.

Our local police have raised nearly £6,000 to help the Children's Unit by cycling from Land's End to John O'Groates.

Land Rover donated £1,000 in support of one of their employees who took part in a sponsored cycle.

The Book People donated £70 as a result of the sale of books in Russells Hall Hospital main reception.

Lyndon Flavell has donated over £2,000 for Breast Care in memory of his wife.

Trust breast cancer patients advised to exercise to improve chances of survival

More than 70 breast cancer patients have joined a physical exercise programme at Russells Hall Hospital to improve their health during treatment and to increase their chances of surviving the illness.

The Trust has seconded the services of a dedicated physiotherapist, funded by the Greater West Midlands Cancer Network, to encourage patients to walk or take moderate exercise up to half an hour a day for five days a week.

"Data from studies around the world suggests women who do additional activity can reduce their risk of dying from breast cancer by 50 per cent," says Professor Amtul R Carmichael, Consultant

Breast Surgeon.

"We know from our own studies that exercise improves patients' quality of life, it makes them fitter and feel better," she adds.

The exercise programme is proving to be very popular with breast cancer patients and our future plan is to expand the service to patients across the West Midlands.

"Our patients tell us this service has changed their lives and allowed them to turn the corner in their breast cancer care and treatment," says Sarah Williams, Senior Physiotherapist, who runs the exercise programme.

Dignity boxes make outpatient visits more comfortable

Two clinical support workers (CSW) have devised a 'dignity box' for incontinent and immobile patients who visit Russells Hall Hospital outpatients by ambulance.

The dignity box contains everything a patient with continence problems might need to make their hospital visit more comfortable, including body care wipes, pyjamas, a night gown, slippers and incontinence pads.

The dignity box has been produced by Katie Wood and Beverley Clarke as part of their NVQ level three qualification in health and social care.

"The box contains everything the patient might need and it's kept all together in one place," says Katie.

"Before, we didn't have a central place to store clothes and equipment and it could be a bit embarrassing for patients who had to wait while we collected everything we needed.

"The dignity box makes life easier for them and preserves their dignity when they visit outpatients."

The dignity box is due to be rolled out to Corbett and Guest hospitals.



CSWs Katie Wood (right) and Beverley Clarke hope the dignity box will make life easier for outpatients

Meet the Team...virtual ward



The case managers leading virtual ward

Virtual ward sounds almost futuristic but that is the name of the team out in the community caring for patients in their own home rather than in a hospital.

If you are on a virtual ward, this means you will receive your care in the comfort of your own home – or residential/nursing home – in the same way as you would if you were admitted to hospital.

The team, made up of case managers, community staff nurses and virtual ward admin

clerks, works in the same way as a hospital ward does but gives you more independence. Although you are not in a hospital bed, you are still receiving intensive levels of care.

You may be admitted to virtual ward if you have a long term condition or are a frequent visitor to hospital. For example, if you need renal care you may be able to have that care at home rather than having to be regularly admitted and discharged from hospital.

"Virtual ward has proven to be a great success and popular with our patients," says Cath Brown, Clinical Services Manager.

"Some patients don't like going into hospital and it's not always necessary that they do. Virtual ward provides the care they need in an environment in which they prefer to be in.

"If patients are on a virtual ward and they need to be admitted to hospital, the team will work closely with the hospital staff in caring for them to ensure their care is continuous and to help get them back home more quickly."

The virtual ward service works in partnership with the patient, the GP, Thunderburds and hospitals to ensure the patient receives the right health care appropriate to their needs. It was piloted with one team 12 months ago and because it proved to be such a success eight teams were established.





From drain pipes to artificial limbs

A trauma and orthopaedic specialist has designed an artificial limb from plastic drain pipes to help earthquake survivors in Pakistan.

Mr Viquar Qurashi designed the plastic limbs for people in his home country after finding the limbs from the UK were not suitable for their needs.

The drain pipes are melted down at high heats and moulded against a cast of the amputated leg and then fitted into place with leather straps.

Mr Qurashi, who sits on the Associate Parliamentary Limb Loss Group, said: "People who

need these limbs need them to bend to 90 degree angles as they spend a lot of time sitting on their haunches and endure hours standing in knee deep water.

"The limbs have given people back their mobility and ability to take back their respective jobs.

"All of the materials used to make these limbs are sourced locally in Pakistan and I train people on how to make them so they are self sufficient."

Mr Qurashi has set up the Naya Qadam Trust which helps fund the artificial limb materials. He hopes to take the limbs to other countries such as Haiti, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Check out our progress

Below shows how we are doing against our quality account priorities and some of our performance targets.

Quality Accounts		
Priority	Target	The Dudley group progress as at 30th Sept 2011
Patient experience (Priority 1)	Hospital – increase the number of patients who rate their overall care highly from 89.3% to 91%	
	Community – increase the number of patients who rate their overall care satisfaction from 94% to 96%	
Pressure ulcers (Priority 2)	Hospital – reduce avoidable stage 3 and 4 pressure ulcers by 50% from 23	(16)
	Community – reduce avoidable stage 3 and 4 pressure ulcers through the year	
Infection control (Priority 3)	MRSA – no more than 2 post – 48 hours	(2)
	C. diff – no more than 77 post – 48 hours	(75)
Hip fracture (Priority 4)	Increase the number of hip fracture patients who undergo hip fracture surgery within 36 hours from admission to the emergency department	88.6%

Access		
Performance	Target	The Dudley group progress as at 30th Sept 2011
Cancer waiting times	All patients referred urgently by their GP with suspected cancer will be seen within 14 days	
	Patients to wait no more than 31 days from diagnosis to treatment of all cancers	
	Patients are treated within a maximum of 62 days from urgent suspected cancer referral to treatment	
Patient waits in A&E	Target is no more than 95% of patients to wait longer than 4 hours to be seen, treated and admitted or discharged	
18 weeks from referral to treatment	The referral to treatment target is set as the maximum time it should take from the GP referring a patient from treatment to the time that treatment starts. Within that 18 week period all diagnostic tests and outpatient visits for tests should have taken place	

Help us set our quality priorities for 2012/13. Email foundationmembers@dgh.nhs.uk to find out more.

Trust plans to accept private patients

You will soon be able to come to our hospitals for an outpatient appointment or day case operation as a private patient at competitive prices.

The services we plan to offer private patients will include cardiology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics and plastic surgery as well as gynaecology, dermatology and sports therapy.

“We are keen to ensure our patients receive the best possible experience, and patients who pay would receive a complete package of care delivered by a consultant,” says Paula Clark, Chief Executive.

“We would offer competitive prices for self funding patients and those who have health insurance, and any profit we made would be reinvested back into NHS patient care.”

We are starting the private service from January 2012 with a private skin lesion clinic at Corbett Hospital.

Conditions we will treat privately will include benign tumours, for example moles, warts and cysts, and other skin damage such as tattoos, torn earlobes and scars. Some of the treatments on offer are no longer available through the NHS.



The skin lesion clinic will be held in the outpatient department of Corbett Hospital on Tuesday evenings between 5.00pm and 8.00pm.

If you are considering having a procedure done as a private patient, and would like to come to The Dudley Group, all you need to do is ask your GP to refer you.

Patient Panel – Inpatient mealtimes



The Dudley Group of Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Panels

Sharing your experiences to help improve our services

We are running some projects working with patients, carers and staff to help us design the best possible care experience.

Sign up NOW

to participate in a Patient Panel on one of the following topics:

- ~~Inpatient mealtimes~~ held 3rd November 2011
- Medications when leaving hospital
- Accessibility 5th January 2012
- Carers

It is important that the panels represent our local community and include patients (or carers) who have recently experienced the service being discussed.

**Contact Mandy Green on 01384 244404
mandy.green@dgh.nhs.uk**

Corbett Russells Hall Guest Community

Our first patient panel was held on Thursday 3rd November 2011 and gave patients and their carers/ family members the opportunity to have their say on hospital food.

During the event the participants shared their experiences of hospital food and let us know the areas where they are satisfied as well as where they felt improvements could be made.

Feedback from the event, as well as from emails and phone calls we have received, will be discussed by our nutrition team and an action plan for improvement will be drawn up.

We would like to thank all participants for taking the time to help us with this important project and we will be back in touch with them to let them know how we will be taking their suggestions forward.

Look out for the results in the spring edition of Your Trust magazine.

Our next patient panel, on accessibility, will take place on 5th January 2012 at 2pm. If you wish to attend and share your experiences, please contact Mandy Green on (01384) 244404 or mandy.green@dgh.nhs.uk



Sexual health clinics now open on a Saturday

New sexual health clinics are now open on a Saturday morning for people who do not have time to attend during the week.

Specialist nurses run the clinics between 10.00am and 1.00pm (doors close at 12.30pm) and are available to carry out a number of common tests for sexually transmitted infections.

The drop-in clinics are for people of any age or gender who are sexually active and who are:

- ❄ Starting or ending a relationship
- ❄ Exposed to infection
- ❄ Worried about sexually transmitted infections
- ❄ Free of symptoms but want peace of mind

The clinics are run by our new Dudley Group Sexual Health Service in the Genito-Urinary Medicine Department located in North Wing at Russells Hall Hospital.

Patients who need a follow up are guaranteed an appointment the following Monday morning.

If people already have symptoms, they should attend the clinic during the week. Clinic times are advertised on our website www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk

Carer coordinator appointed

A new carer coordinator has been appointed to help raise awareness of carers' needs and offer support and signposting to services that may be available to them.

Sharon McGlynn will be on hand at Russells Hall Hospital Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm to provide information and support to both staff and carers.

Sharon can be contacted on (01384) 456111 ext 1568, (01384) 573381, 07435 754386 or Sharon.McGlynn@dgh.nhs.uk or carers@dudleycvs.org.uk and can offer help and advice to existing carers and well as new carers.

Man travels from Ireland for an artificial eye

Kevin Murray from the Irish Republic made the trip to Dudley to have an artificial eye fitted after finding the Trust's eye surgeon Dr David Cheung on the web.



People cannot tell which is Kevin's artificial eye

Kevin, 50, from Enniscorthy, County Wexford, lost his eye after a bonfire accident was he was 12 years old.

He was referred by Mr Cheung to the Maxillofacial Department for prosthetic eye replacement.

During the course of a week, an impression of the eye socket was taken and a wax mould created to allow for a perfect fit for Kevin's false eye.

"My mum and brother were amazed at the result and how realistic the new eye is," said Kevin.

"I work on a public counter and to my delight nobody noticed I had an artificial eye. Even my work colleagues, who know about my situation, were in awe of the realism of the new eye.

"I can't thank the team enough for their kindness, patience and professionalism during my stay. The whole set up at Russells Hall strikes me as being an excellent modern facility which would be the envy of many larger cities and towns in Ireland."

In Profile

Nina Pearson, Community Health Care Assistant, Community District Nursing Team.

What books have you read lately?

The Boxer Rescue Story – very interesting but sad at the same time.

What CD have you got in your car?

Hairspray.

What is your favourite food?

Indian.

What do you do to unwind?

I enjoy going for long walks with my two lovely boxer dogs, even if it is cold and raining.

Where were you born?

Wordsley.

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

In my work I get very involved with continence assessments, as I appreciate I could be that person too. I also get very passionate about palliative care and the support that I and others give to these patients and their families. I feel for the patient and their relatives.

I started with the NHS at Russells Hall Hospital in 1990. In 2005, I started working for community services as a band 4 community healthcare assistant. I have my own patients to visit in their own homes all requiring different treatments such as venepuncture, palliative care, continence assessments, changing dressings, to name just a few.

The team that I belong to is called 'AW Surgeries'. It is very busy, with heavy caseloads.



Nina attending to one of her patients

There are 10 district nurses who are all different grades and I feel very privileged to be involved with this hard working team as the caseload requires everyone to pull together.

I love this job – each day is challenging and I enjoy visiting the patients in their own homes.

Tell us something surprising and unexpected about yourself?

I belong to Brierley Hill Musical Society. I have been a member for several years, and last March I sang my first ever solo. I was so nervous but so proud, not only for being in the society, but also for myself.

I am also an avid fan of motocross. I marshall for any of the riders that need me to. I get extremely dirty in the winter and covered in dust in the summer but I love it.

Gastric balloon used for life-saving surgery

For the first time in the Trust, a consultant gastroenterologist has inserted a gastric balloon to help a patient lose eight stone in weight to allow him to have life-saving heart surgery.

The Dudley patient who weighed 178.6kg (28 stone) was being prepared for a stomach by-pass operation to help him lose weight when a routine heart scan revealed he had a bulge in the wall of a blood vessel (an aneurysm) in the main artery from the heart (ascending aorta).

"What we found was a ticking time bomb and we referred him to the Queen Elizabeth in Birmingham to have it repaired," says Consultant Chemical

Pathologist Dr Mourad Labib, who runs the Trust's weight management clinic.

"Surgeons at the QE felt the risk to our patient was too high unless he reduced his weight."

Consultant Gastroenterologist Dr Saudid Ishaq inserted the balloon, which helped the patient to lose 53kg (8 stone) in six months. Once the balloon was removed, the operation was successfully done.

Inserting a gastric balloon is not a long-term solution to weight loss but it can be used to facilitate short-term weight loss to enable patients to have life-saving surgery adds Dr Labib.



