

the free

A newsletter for foundation trust members

Summer 2008 Issue 3

Royal Free Hampstead 
NHS Trust



Prompt care for heart attacks

Heart attack patients receive faster treatment at the Royal Free than at most other UK hospitals.

The latest Myocardial Infarction National Audit Project Report for 2007/08, which details how the NHS manages heart attacks, shows that 90% of patients receive a primary angioplasty within 90 minutes of arriving at the Royal Free. This compares with a national average of 79% of patients.

Out of 54 hospitals performing primary angioplasty, the Royal Free had the third best time in the country – at 41 minutes – for “door to balloon time” (the time taken from the ambulance stopping outside the hospital to the first balloon inflation inside the coronary artery, restoring the blood flow. The national average is 56 minutes.

Since the report was compiled, the Royal Free has introduced direct access for heart attack patients, which means our results are now even better. Patients bypass A&E and are received from the ambulance via a dedicated entrance

at the heart attack and stroke centre (HASC) on the ground floor. This change has reduced the door to balloon time to just 30 minutes.

Dr Roby Rakhit, lead consultant cardiologist, said: “This report shows that we are continuing to offer heart attack patients the best possible care to ensure that they make a full recovery.

“Time is muscle. Every minute that goes by when there’s a clot in an artery supplying the heart, that heart muscle irreversibly dies. That is why speed of treatment is so important.”

“At the Royal Free’s heart attack and stroke centre, heart attack patients are taken straight to the centre for a primary angioplasty and this saves crucial minutes.”

Dr Rakhit also thanked the cardiac team for all their hard work in helping to achieve such excellent results.

members' matters



Message from Pam Chesters

chair of the members' council and trust board

The trust board and the members' council have agreed that although we are not yet an authorised foundation trust we will, as much as possible, operate as if the council had been formally established.

Our first formal meeting is being held as this newsletter goes to press. In addition to the board's request for the views of the members' council on a range of issues from improving the patient experience to participation in an academic health science system, the council itself has asked for a briefing on polyclinics which is an issue which has generated considerable public interest. I very much welcome this first formal step to bringing the views of the wider community into our governance structures.

Our mission to improve life for patients has taken several steps forward in the past few weeks. You will find in this issue of The Free stories about the Department of Health figures which have showed that our out-patients get their treatment faster than any other trust in London; a report which shows we treat heart attacks faster than most other hospitals; and how we are heading for a major milestone in our prevention of infections.

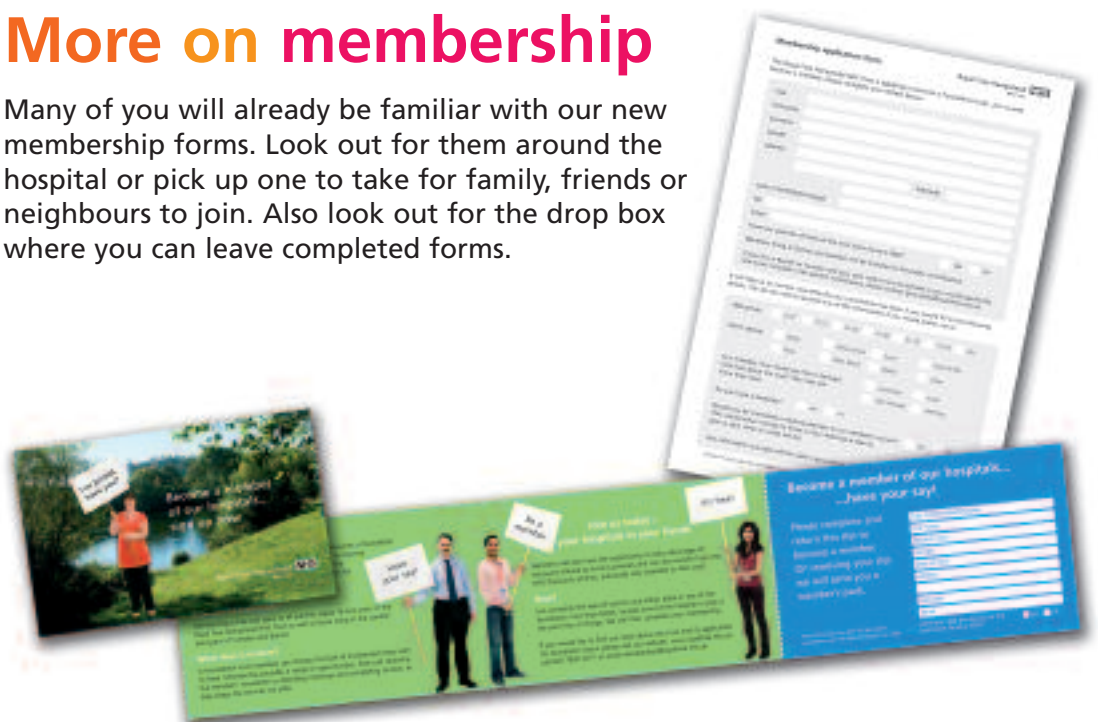
You can help!

We would like to start a member-get-member campaign and would urge all existing members to recruit at least one other member, be it a family member, neighbour, friend or work colleague to join the trust. If you put your name at the top of the application form, we will enter you into a prize draw.

Membership is free and open to all patients (aged 16 and over) who have used the trust's services as well as anyone living in the London boroughs of Camden and Barnet.

More on membership

Many of you will already be familiar with our new membership forms. Look out for them around the hospital or pick up one to take for family, friends or neighbours to join. Also look out for the drop box where you can leave completed forms.



How to join?

- Online at www.royalfree.nhs.uk and click on the 'become a member' link
- At our interactive kiosk in the main reception of the Royal Free Hospital
- Pick up a leaflet in the hospital
- Call the Gary White at the foundation trust office on 020 7830 2071

Membership number

We have recruited **900** new members since our last newsletter, bringing our **current membership** to more than **4,000** patients and public and **more than 9,000** members including our staff. We are particularly keen to **recruit members** from areas not well represented so far and this recently led to more than **400** people in the **Barnet area** joining us.

Meeting matters

Since the last newsletter the shadow members' council has had two further sessions to prepare themselves for their responsibilities as a members' council.

In May, the council heard about risk management from Therese Davies, director of nursing, and Lorna Squires, head of risk, safety and patient affairs. This was followed by a session by Adrian Tookman, medical director, on infection control.

In June, members had a session on the financial and audit processes at the trust, led by Mary Leadbeater, director of finance.

The members' council held its first ordinary meeting on 10 July. The next ordinary meeting will be on 17 December at 7pm in the Sir William Wells Atrium, Royal Free Hospital. All members welcome.

You can now view your members' council online at www.royalfree.nhs.uk, click on the member link and then meet the members' council. On this note, we would like to welcome Don Williams who has taken up the final seat as the appointed member for the London borough of Camden.

Councillor Don Williams

A long-time Camden resident and a councillor since 2002, Don is committed to meeting the needs of Camden residents across the board.

He currently sits on various panels including Camden's carers liaison group and the children, schools and families scrutiny committee. Don is a member of the Securities and Investment Institute and a manager at Westdeutsche Landesbank.



Catering for all tastes

The Royal Free's new restaurant will open in August, offering a much wider range of options catering for the health conscious, those on a budget and those who want something a bit special.

OCS Healthcare is aiming to transform the entire food service offered in the trust and has already improved patient satisfaction with the changes it has made to patient meals.

Visitors to the new restaurant will find 160 new menus, including a range of healthy eating options, bistro-style fresh food cooked-to-order options and other options at the more economical end of the range.

Angela Bartley, public health lead, has worked with the health promotion working group to help develop the new menus. "This has been a terrifically exciting programme and we are confident the various healthy options will complement customer choice and provide something which appeals to everyone.

"Both OCS and the group have been keen to make sure there is a range of food, which people can choose from which matches their lifestyle."

The new restaurant will also have a Just Deli coffee shop, providing a premium Costa Coffee service and serving a quality breakfast during the weekend, as well as the fresh deli sandwich service from the restaurant during weekdays.

Therese Davis, nurse director, said: "We need to recruit and retain high calibre staff in order to provide services patients will choose. Providing a quality restaurant where our staff and visitors can relax and enjoy good food in a pleasant environment, is key."

obesity: the big picture

“The National Audit Office estimates the cost of treating obesity and associated disease as £0.5 billion to the NHS and up to £2 billion to the wider economy”

National Audit Office

“Obesity causes about 18 million sick days and 30,000 deaths a year in England alone”

National Audit Office

“The incidence of obesity is rising rapidly and is expected to include 150 million adults and 15 million children by 2010”

NHS Information Centre survey

A new series looking at public health issues



“Good health doesn’t just mean the absence of disease, it’s also about promoting wellbeing on physical, mental and social levels,” said Angela Bartley, explaining her role as the new public health lead.

We are one of only a handful of trusts to have a public health post. We recognise that we have an important part to play in improving the health of the local community – including our staff, patients and visitors.

Key concerns facing our local population are increasing levels of alcohol consumption, decreases in the number of children being immunised and a rise in obesity levels.

“The prevalence of obesity in the population has risen rapidly in the past 5-10 years and one in five adults is now classed as obese. The reasons are complex – we have a more sedentary lifestyle, we use the car more, we’re less physically active, there’s ready availability of high calorie, cheap fast food, children play outside less,” said Angela.

Overweight and obesity carry serious health risks. They are responsible for about 80% of cases of type 2 diabetes, 35% of ischaemic heart disease and 55% of hypertensive disease among adults in the region.

It starts young. “Obesity levels among children are increasing. A study in Camden schools found that 13 per cent of children in Year 6 (aged 11-12) were overweight and 17 per cent were obese, so we know it’s going to be a continuing health problem into the next generation.”

Acute trusts have a role to play in helping to prevent obesity. We’ve started by creating a health promoting environment. For example, we have:

- dramatically increased the range and availability of healthier options and fruit and vegetables in all our food outlets, including vending machines.
- produced walking and cycling maps, and are launching a reduced cost bicycle scheme for staff.
- encouraging staff and visitors to use the stairs instead of lifts.

The trust recently held an obesity event for staff, to look at how we could support patients better. It was clear that staff found obesity a sensitive subject which can be difficult to raise with patients. There are particular issues in relation to patients’ dignity and ensuring we have the right equipment available for very overweight patients.

“While patients are here, we need to do a lot more to support and guide them about the importance of weight loss for their general health and faster recovery. We are including local PCTs in this work to make sure we link up with community services.”

Infection milestone reached

The critical care team at The Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust is celebrating after meeting an important infection control target.

On 17 July a year had passed since any of their patients had contracted a central line catheter-related bloodstream infection.

The target, which is a project goal adopted as part of the Safer Patients' Initiative (SPI), has been achieved through the combined efforts of everyone in the intensive care units who have been rigorous about implementing hand hygiene and other preventative measures.

"It shows that by applying simple measures and attention to detail, we can achieve great success. Some of the things we address can seem mediocre but they do have a huge impact, said Dr Steve Shaw, lead consultant in critical care at the trust. "We cannot thank our staff enough for their dedication and their achievement."

Both staff and the public have played a large part in the success. All are encouraged to challenge anyone they spot breaking hygiene policy and are given the full support of senior staff in the unit.

Andrew Way, chief executive at the trust, said: "All of us at the trust are delighted at the efforts of Dr Shaw, matron Pat Chew and all the rest of the team, which prove that putting in a little bit of extra effort and care can have dramatic results."



SPI sets out a number of simple practical guidelines called bundles which when properly adhered to have been shown to result in impressive improvements in patient safety.

The central line catheter care bundle includes putting on sterile gowns when inserting the catheter. Central line catheters are used in veins close to the heart and are often used when a patient needs fluid or drugs frequently. Because they are often in place for a period of time, they are particularly vulnerable to infection.

The trust is one of 20 in the country which has been chosen to pioneer the SPI practices, which are backed by the national charity, the Health Foundation.



Teddy bear care

Broken bones, burns and upset tummies from too many sweets were just some of the 'injuries' recently being treated for at the Royal Free's annual Teddy Bear Hospital.

So successful was last year's event that the Royal Free and University College Medical students decided to run it again.

The aim of the event is to help alleviate children's fears of the hospital environment and doctors.

The children, three to seven, were asked to bring in their 'sick' teddy who then had a 'check-up' by the doctor. They got to see x-rays of the teddies, took the teddy's blood pressure and helped to 'diagnose and treat' him.

Jo Fawcett, a medical student who helped to organise the event, said: "This was good experience for medical students. Using the teddies helped us to communicate more effectively with the children and we made them feel less scared in what can often be a very daunting experience for a child.

"Ultimately all the children and medical students went home having learned something and I hope the children are now well equipped to cope better if they are ever faced with a hospital environment or with anyone in the medical profession. It has been a fantastic day for everyone, we all had lots of fun and I am really pleased it went well."

Family buy kit in memory of their son



A donation of £10,000 in memory of a two-year-old boy who died after a wall fell on him as he walked home from playgroup in January has bought new equipment for the Royal Free's A&E department.

Saurav Ghai, who was born at the Royal Free, died of multiple injuries. The donation was raised by his family, friends and BlueBay Asset Management. It has provided two pieces of equipment: a Dash Monitor, which measures crucial signs in a seriously injured patient such as heart rate, blood pressure and blood oxygen level; and a Megacode Kid, a state-of-the-art mannequin which allows medical staff to learn vital skills and practise them safely.

The mannequin is the size of an average six-year-old and has many features to help medical staff learn advanced life-saving techniques, including resuscitation, IV cannulation (allowing drugs and fluids to enter the body quickly) and intubation (a procedure that helps breathing). The mannequin is connected to a computer, allowing a number of scenarios to be programmed.

Saurav's parents visited the A&E department last month with Saurav's six-year-old brother, to see the equipment, which was demonstrated by Dr Kerrie Whitwell, consultant in emergency medicine.

Dr Whitwell said: "The hi-tech mannequin is used for training purposes, enabling our doctors and nurses to manage seriously injured and unwell children. The monitor has enabled us to upgrade one of our paediatric cubicles to a high dependency area where sick children can be monitored closely."

Mr and Mrs Ghai also met Andrew Way, chief executive, Pam Chesters, chairman, and staff from the emergency department.

Mr Way said: "We are very grateful for this gift. Although the trust has a turnover of £450 million a year, we can never buy everything we'd like to have. Thanks to this donation, this equipment will help us to treat seriously ill children now and for the future."

Free for all - 25 September

Ever wondered about the germs you have living on your hands? Or how doctors check for broken bones? Thought an ultrasound was just to check for babies? Wrong! Ultrasounds are also used to check vital organs and muscles.

Come to our open day and speak to our experts on all the above and a whole lot more.

Waitrose has kindly donated some prizes for a draw and will also have a stall full of delicious, healthy organic foods to tantalise your taste buds.

Thursday, 25 September,
Atrium, 3-5pm

A date for your diary!

Kidney patients bid doctor farewell

More than 200 kidney patients and their families attended a retirement party for Dr Paul Sweny, who has seen

major changes in the almost 30 years since he started his pioneering career as a renal physician at the Royal Free Hospital.

"In the 1970s, transplantation was a hazardous business, with less than a 50% chance of success and some of our patients would survive only a few months," said Dr Sweny. "Both dialysis and transplantation have changed beyond recognition and it's wonderful to have been part of that. I have seen younger people have successful transplants, return to work and have families."



Congratulations all round

Two of our doctors and a senior manager have hit the headlines.



Prof Owen Epstein, professor of gastroenterology and consultant gastroenterologist at the Royal Free, has won the UCL Business Award for 2007 for a software innovation that has helped the NHS provide better care to millions of patients.

Prof Owen conceived the concept of Medic-to-Medic, a software application that gives every clinician access to the vast resources of medical knowledge in the NHS at the click of a button.

Now available in the NHS as the Map of Medicine, it was developed over four years and involved more than 200 doctors and nurses at the Royal Free Hospital. It provides information on more than 300 different patient journeys and aims to improve administrative processes, empower GPs to manage patients and avoid unnecessary referrals.

Prof Epstein said: "Medic-to-Medic was a powerful idea and this allowed me, together with Tim Rayne, the project manager, and a small group of developers, to engage more than 200 doctors and nurses at the Royal Free in developing the ideal of a 'hospital without walls'."

The UCL Business Award for 2007 is part of the UCL Enterprise Awards which recognise academics and students who are active in the development of businesses based on research carried out at the Royal Free and University College Medical School.



Professor Mark Pepys delivered the Royal Society GlaxoSmithKline Prize Lecture on his research in the use of proteins in diagnosis and treatment of various diseases at the Royal Society in April.

The prestigious award is the third in a recent series of honours for Professor Pepys, who is head of medicine at the Royal Free and University College Medical School, Hampstead. He established the UK NHS National Amyloidosis Centre at the Royal Free in 1999.

The centre, which sees about 2,000 patients a year, is world famous for its treatment of patients with amyloidosis, which is caused by an accumulation of abnormal protein fibres in the tissues of the body. It can affect any part of the body, leads to organ failure and is often fatal, though early diagnosis gives sufferers a better chance of survival.

Last month, Professor Pepys was awarded the 2008 Ernst Chain prize for medical discovery and in October 2007 he was the Harveian Orator of the Royal College of Physicians, recognising his career achievements in clinical science.



And **Nigel Turner**, director of human resources, was awarded the OBE in the Queen's birthday honours.

"It's a fantastic send-off," added Mr Turner who retires from the Royal Free next month when he turns 60.

"I feel it is in recognition of my work at the Royal Free, supported by my team, for my role as joint chair of the NHS Staff Council, and also for my roles outside the NHS."

Mr Turner has contributed to race equality for 25 years – he was vice-chair of Redbridge Race Equality Council from 1990-2000 and is a member of its executive. He was a school governor for 20 years and is vice-chair of Westminster Kingsway College in central London.

Shortest waits at the Royal Free

"Fantastic news for patients and their GPs," is how **Andrew Way**, chief executive, described the news that out-patients at the Royal Free get their treatment faster than any other trust in London, with over 98% of patients being treated within 18 weeks.

Department of Health statistics issued at the end of May show that we exceeded tough government milestones not only on out-patients but also with patients requiring an admission, with 90% completing their treatment within 18 weeks from the date they were referred.

This puts us top of the class in London and in the top 10% of trusts in England for out-patient referral to treatment waiting times and in the upper third of trusts in England for patients requiring an admission.

Andrew added: "This is a remarkable achievement and I would like to thank all staff for their hard work over the past three years.

"This level of performance has been built on successfully redesigning patient pathways, removing in-built delays and inefficiencies, providing clinically effective and timely care for patients and ensuring more efficient use of resources."



The Free – what you think

We recently asked for your views on the current and future content of this newsletter and received more than 100 responses.

All your ideas will be fed into the planning process for the newsletter so please keep them coming: gary.white@royalfree.nhs.uk or call or write to Foundation trust office, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London, NW3 2QG 020 7830 2071.

Keep us posted

Please let us know if your contact details have changed so we can keep you informed and you can continue to have your say.

Open day – all members welcome

The Royal Free Hospital is holding an open event on 25 September from 3pm, to be followed by our annual meeting. Come and see and hear about the work of our hospitals.

Test your wits!

Settle down and have a go at our Sudoku puzzle. To solve it, you need to make sure that every row across, every vertical column and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the numbers 1-9.

	2	3	5	9				
	7				1	6		
1	9		8					
9	8	1				7		
		7				1	9	6
				5		7	1	
		8	7				5	
				2	8	3	6	

The Times/NI Syndication

From patient notes to musical notes

Some of the Royal Free's best singers performed popular classics at St Mark's Church in Regent's Park last month.



They included soloist Dr Anthony Ordman, a pain management consultant at the Royal Free, who sang Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs with the choir and organ.

As a medical student in the 1970s, Dr Ordman helped to re-launch the Royal Free Music Society with the late Prof Peter Scheuer as president. He said he started out playing the viola but gave it up "to everyone's great relief" to sing in the society's choir as a bass-baritone.

Dr Ordman also praised his colleagues, Dr Andrew Rochford, a gastroenterologist, and his wife, Sally Dootson, for helping to re-establish the music society in 1999. It performs four concerts a year in association with the Hampstead Sinfonietta under the musical directorship of Dr Rochford. The choir consists of 35 people, including hospital staff such as doctors, nurses, and medical secretaries, staff who trained at the Royal Free, and their friends.

Dr Ordman added: "It's interesting how many doctors and others who care for people love music and making music; music and the healing arts do seem to go together. Music can also be very therapeutic for people who are in physical or mental pain."

- The choir rehearses in the Peter Samuel Hall at the Royal Free Hospital on Thursday evenings. For more details, visit www.rfms.org

Plastic surgeon announces centre of excellence

Leading plastic surgeon Peter Butler announced on 7 July the establishment of a centre of excellence for plastic and reconstructive surgery at the Royal Free in memory of those who died or were maimed in the 7/7 bombings in London.

Prof Butler, joint head of surgery, anaesthesia and critical care at the hospital, heads our world-renowned plastics and reconstruction unit which treated some of those badly disfigured by the bombings.

Prof Butler said: "Plastic and reconstructive surgery is increasingly important in a world when the risks of modern life, whether from accident or terrorism, is ever present."



For further information on membership, the members' council or the foundation trust, please contact Gary White, corporate affairs officer, on 020 7830 2071 or at gary.white@royalfree.nhs.uk

We'd like to know your views on this newsletter. If you have any thoughts, comments or ideas please send letters or emails marked 'the Free', to Communications, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG; e-mail Philippa.Hutchinson@royalfree.nhs.uk