

Latest news for our members and stakeholders

February 2025

This newsletter aims to keep you, our members and stakeholders, updated with the latest news from across the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

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Top stories



Her Majesty The Queen opens new Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Exeter

We were extremely pleased to have Her Majesty The Queen officially open our new Exeter Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) on Thursday 6 February, with the unveiling of a plaque.

SARCs support people who have been raped, sexually assaulted or abused at any time in their life, and Queen Camilla has worked in support of those who have experienced sexual violence for a number of years.

The Exeter centre offers expanded, state-of-the-art facilities and is one of the first SARCs in England to meet new exacting forensic examination standards. It also offers advanced medical services, as well as specially designed therapy suites, and is a paediatric centre of excellence.

Read the full news story on [our website here](#). For more insight into the work of our amazing SARC team, check out this month's 'behind the scenes' interview below with Lyndsay Howell, General Manager of Devon & Cornwall SARC.



Her Majesty The Queen meeting SARC colleagues and with Dame Shan Morgan, Chair of the Royal Devon

New children's ED and Paediatric Assessment Unit at RD&E opens to rave reviews

We have opened a new children's Emergency Department (ED) area and Paediatric Assessment Unit (PAU) at the RD&E (Wonford).

This provides a separate waiting area and dedicated clinical space for the assessment of young patients.

The ribbon was cut by 11-year-old patient and fundraiser Tim Harvey following a £200,000 fundraising appeal by the Royal Devon Hospitals Charity. This marks the final phase of an extensive transformation of the entire ED by the Royal Devon.

Tim said: “The new Children’s ED looks amazing and I especially like the games! I hope it makes patients like me have an easier time when they come to hospital.”

Find the full story, pictures and video here: www.royaldevoncharity.org.uk/childrens-ed-opening/



Tim cutting the ribbon at our opening event, and the new waiting area

Update on Our Future Hospital programme

Since the New Hospital Programme announcement in January confirmed North Devon District Hospital will not see building work start until between 2035 and 2039, we have been working to assess the full details of the review undertaken by the Government and have been engaging with NHS partners and politicians, both locally and nationally.

We have already undertaken a critical risk review and this will form the basis for identifying the essential work needed to de-risk the most fragile parts of the hospital's infrastructure as quickly as possible. Our immediate priority is to secure investments for those critical areas, including around £32 million to start immediate

maintenance improvements to the hospital's nine theatres and intensive care unit, in order to avoid any impact on waiting times for surgery.

However, this is only a 'make safe' solution and will not provide the modern standards expected by our clinical teams. Therefore, further investment will be needed over the next 10-15 years as a bridging solution towards a new hospital for North Devon and we continue to explore how we might implement a phased build programme that avoids the unnecessary costs to the taxpayer of continued short-term fixes.

Whilst we are deeply disappointed in the outcome of the New Hospital Programme review for the communities of North Devon, patients, and staff, we will, of course continue to work closely with the Government and NHP on both the short-term and longer term plans to ensure safe and efficient healthcare for the North Devon population.

Last chance to share your views and shape the future of the NHS

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in local engagement around the new 10-Year Health Plan for the NHS and contributed their thoughts and ideas. There is still time to join the 2,000 people who have already shared their views.

If you haven't already, please take the opportunity to share your insights, experiences and ideas for improving the NHS by completing the local survey [here](#) (even if you have already completed the national one), which closes at the end of today.

For people who are unable to submit their feedback online, Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are offering to collate feedback over the phone. You can access this support by calling 0800 520 0640.

10 public workshops have been held across Devon which over 100 people signed up to attend, gathering feedback on the three shifts included in the 10-Year Health Plan – moving care from hospitals to communities, making better use of technology, and preventing sickness, not just treating it.

We joined NHS colleagues to support engagement days and workshops in Exeter and Barnstaple. Take a look at [this video](#) from Healthwatch Devon to hear what it has meant to people to be involved and learn what your communities had to say about the 10-Year Health Plan. Click on the image below to find out more.



Other news



First patient in the South West receives artificial cornea

A patient at the Royal Devon has become the first person in the South West to receive an artificial cornea transplant.

The procedure was completed at the West of England Eye Unit based at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital (Wonford). It involves surgically attaching the artificial cornea to the eye by one or three stitches, held in place with a gas bubble, in a day case procedure which takes less than half an hour.

Patient Jason Maddocks who has suffered from glaucoma for over 30 years said: “To be the first in the South West to have this operation is a huge privilege, and I hope it will help many other people get their vision back like me.”

Find out more about this [ground-breaking procedure](#) here.



Patient Jason Maddocks

Innovative new service gives patients with suspected cancer answers more quickly

Our new innovative nurse-led trans-nasal endoscopy service at the Nightingale Hospital Exeter is getting patients with suspected cancer a diagnosis and treatment more quickly. The service has also increased the number of appointments available so that patients can be seen sooner.

Lisa Burrow, Nurse Endoscopist, said “The service has cut the time from referral to diagnosis from approximately three weeks to just one week. This is really important, because it means that patients start treatment more quickly if they have got cancer and for those patients who don’t have cancer it gives them that peace of mind more quickly as well.”

Read more [here](#).



Pictured is the Buttercup and Gastro team with first patient Tom Petfield

Four reasons why patients love MY CARE

Thousands of patients have told us that they love using [MY CARE](#).

MY CARE is our patient app and online service that gives patients access to their Royal Devon medical information.

In a recent survey of 1,611 patients who use MY CARE, 90% of patients said that they were very satisfied or satisfied with MY CARE.

Patients told us that the top four things they like about MY CARE are:

- Getting test results and tracking trends over time
- Access to appointment information
- Getting information more quickly
- It's easy to use

The feedback also gave us some helpful themes as we work to continuously improve how we are using MY CARE and communicating with patients. You can find out more [here](#).

“Being in my 90s, I often get muddled about medical appointments, but a check with MY CARE puts me right.”

Tim, Mid-Devon

MY CARE



Honiton Minor Injuries Unit and X-Ray services temporarily relocating to Ottery St Mary to allow for improvements

The Minor Injuries Unit and X-ray service at Honiton Hospital are temporarily closed to allow for the installation of new radiology equipment at Honiton. The service has moved temporarily to Ottery St Mary Hospital, where it is available 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm.

The MIU and X-ray service will return to Honiton Hospital once the improvement works are finished, expected in June 2025.

Phil Luke, Director of Operations (Eastern) says: “Upgrading our X-ray equipment is essential to ensure the continued MIU service to the people of Honiton and the surrounding area. We apologise for the temporary inconvenience this causes and look forward to getting the new and improved radiology service back in Honiton as soon as possible.”

Read more [here](#).

New video walks you through our South Molton Eye Centre

A [new video](#) walk through of the Eye Centre at South Molton Community Hospital is helping patients know what to expect before they visit and meet some of the staff.

The eye centre provides diagnostic services and treatments for people with new eye problems and people managing long-term conditions, such as glaucoma and medical retina conditions.

Choosing South Molton for your eye treatment can reduce the time you wait, and patients waiting to be seen for glaucoma or medical retina treatment will automatically be referred to the centre.

Please click on the image below to watch.



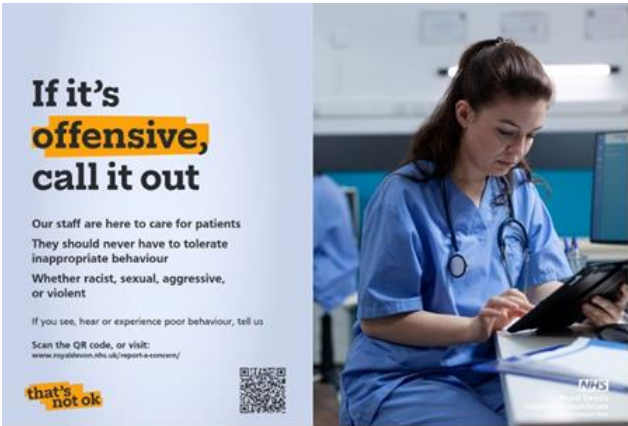
Introducing our 'that's not ok' campaign

Visitors to our hospitals may have spotted some bold new posters on the walls. Our 'that's not ok' campaign is an important part of the work we are doing to create a safe culture for our staff and patients and make sure our services are safe and welcoming for everyone.

We know that sometimes our staff experience casual racism, violence, aggression, inappropriate sexual behaviour and disrespect and feel that it's 'part of the job'. Our campaign aims to make it clear that those things are not acceptable so that everyone working in or using our services feel they can speak up and say 'that's not ok' when they witness poor behaviour.

We know talking about these things can be difficult and that behaviour is sometimes complicated by mental health and other considerations. But our message is that discrimination, disrespect, racism and abuse are not a price anyone should pay for working in or using the NHS.

We very much hope you don't – but if you do see, hear or experience poor behaviour, please let us know about it: [NHS Royal Devon - Report a concern](http://www.nhs.uk/royal-devon-report-a-concern)



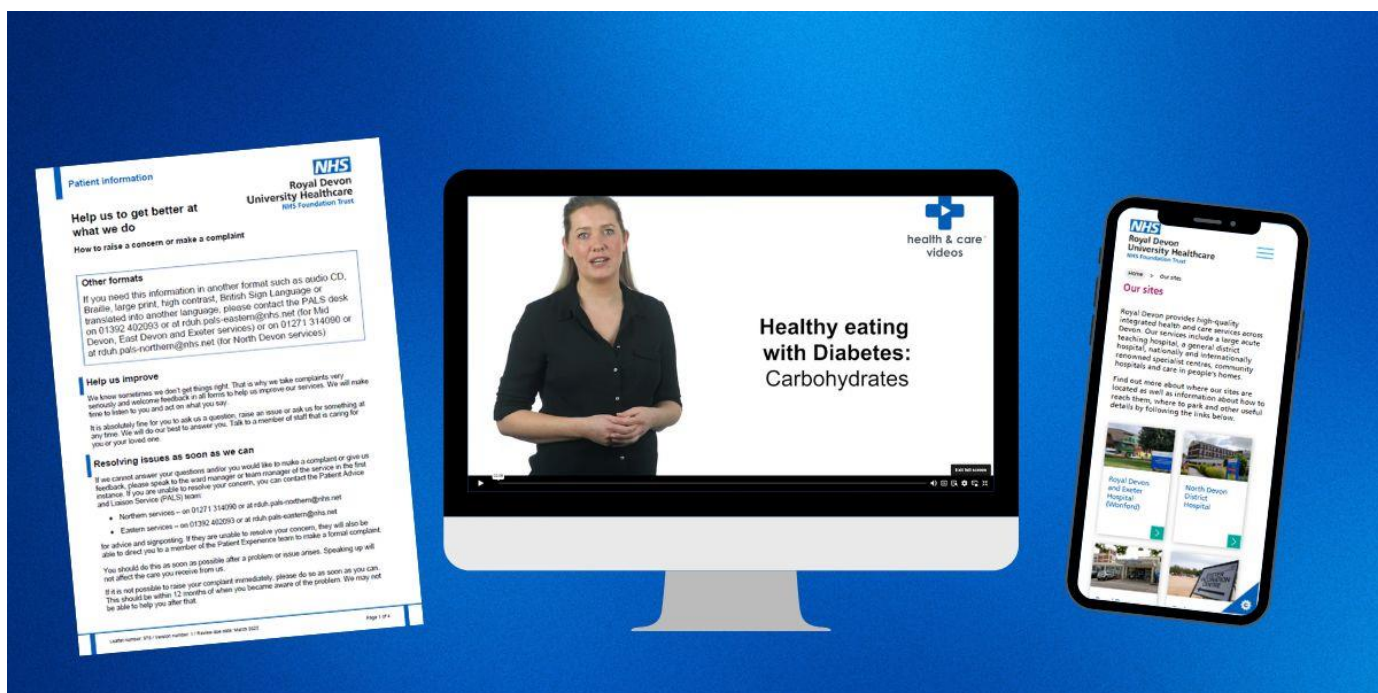
Tell us what you think about our patient information

We are asking for your feedback to help us create great patient information.

This includes our patient information leaflets, videos, website and information in waiting room/reception areas of our hospitals.

We will use your feedback to improve how we share patient information and make it as easy as possible to find the information you need.

Complete the survey [here](#).



Listening to your experiences through patient stories

Patient stories provide us with an opportunity to hear what it's like to receive care from us. These stories are heard and discussed at our Board of Directors meetings and shared with staff across the Trust.

In this [patient story](#) we hear from Penny, wife of Steve, who talks about her late husband's experience of End of Life Care which was supported by the Sidmouth Hospice at Home team who enabled Steve to be cared for in his last days at home.

The story is introduced by Emma Bagwell, Associate Director of Patient Care for Community Services, who highlights the important role community nurses have in talking with patients to agree an advance care plan, detailing their wishes.

You can watch the film by clicking on the image below:



This story highlighted to the Board the value of our partnership working with organisations such as Sidmouth Hospital at Home. The Board discussed the challenge of not all patients having access to the same level of support across the area covered by the Trust and will be looking at what actions we can take to support more people to die in their preferred place of death.

You'll see more stories in future issues of this newsletter and you can view other patient stories on our website [here](#).

Behind the scenes with...



Sexual Assault Referral Centre team

Our Sexual Assault Referral Centre provides practical, medical and emotional support to anyone who has experienced sexual assault or rape.

This month we sat down with Lyndsay Howell, who is General Manager of Devon & Cornwall SARC. Lyndsay tells us more about the important work of the SARC and how staff are providing specialist help and support to those who need it most.

Why are SARCs so important?

Our centres provide a much-needed service to our local communities. SARCs give people choice and control in a safe environment, where they are believed and listened to. SARCs are often the start of someone's recovery following significant harm.

In 2024, Devon & Cornwall SARC provided support to 1361 adults who had been raped or sexually assaulted. 347 of those adults attended SARCs for forensic medical examination. Over the same time period, the paediatric service also supported 1499 children, with 235 of those attending for examination.

Read the [full interview here](#).



Royal Devon Hospitals Charity news

Find out how you can support the Royal Devon Hospitals Charity [here](#).

Take a virtual tour of the new Super Theatre!

In just three months, we've raised an incredible 30% of our target for the [Super Theatre Appeal](#), and now we're delighted to be able to give you a [virtual tour](#) and show you how it will look.

The NHS is contributing £5.1m towards this ultra-modern theatre at the RD&E and the charity is raising £1.4m for the equipment that will make it truly SUPER!

This state-of-the-art operating theatre will enable the hospital to treat around 1,200 extra patients a year in Devon. It will do so much for our patients and their loved ones and we're determined to help make it happen.

Jazz musician Martin fundraises to thank ICU doctors and nurses

In July last year, Martin suffered a severe asthma attack which left him fighting for his life in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at North Devon District Hospital.

He spent eight days in an induced coma, and after recovering from his ordeal, decided to give something back to support the doctors and nurses who had 'brought him back from the dead'.

Martin organised a charity concert which rased over £500 towards a new outside space for ICU patients and staff.



News in brief



Big Brush Club expands to all primary schools in Devon

Our partners in Devon have [launched a scheme](#) to support three- to five-year-olds with cleaning their teeth. Known as the Big Brush Club, the scheme has now been expanded to all nursery, pre-school and reception settings at primary schools in Devon.

Young people urged to catch up on missed HPV vaccines

Young people in Devon are being urged to [take up their HPV vaccine](#) to guard against the virus that can lead to certain types of cancer. All children aged 12 to 13 (school Year 8) are offered the HPV vaccine. However, if they missed getting vaccinated when they were 12 or 13, the HPV vaccine is available for free on the NHS for all girls under 25 and boys born after 1 September 2006.

Psychedelic research offers new hope for PTSD and major depressive disorder

We are leading [ground-breaking clinical research](#) that has the potential to transform treatments for conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder (MDD).

Devon Sexual Health reaches 1,000 Care Opinion stories with 95% positive rating

Over [1,000 pieces of feedback have been published](#) through Care Opinion by users of Devon Sexual Health, a specialist service delivered through Royal Devon. As well as achieving an over 95% positive rating, they have used this feedback to make improvements to the service.

Royal Devon consultant wins national award for 25 years of world-leading stroke research

Find out more about Professor Martin James, a leading stroke specialist at the Royal Devon who has been honoured for his [outstanding contribution](#) to stroke research.

Follow the Trust on social media

Follow our Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and LinkedIn pages for all our latest updates as they happen!



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NHS and CARE working with communities and local organisations to improve people's lives

