

Stakeholder NEWSLETTER

The latest news from...



**Better
Together**
for people in our care

Wirral Community Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust

Wirral University Teaching Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to welcome you to the first edition of our joint stakeholder newsletter.

This edition marks the launch of our *Better Together for People in Our Care* document, developed to provide system partners and commissioners with an overview of our strategic intentions for integration and the benefits it will bring.



Sir David Henshaw
Chair



Janelle Holmes
Chief Executive

This newsletter also features a range of articles highlighting the work of both Trusts including the collaborative work already underway across both organisations. These include examples of integrated projects that are already improving patient outcomes and staff experience and demonstrate how teams from WCHC and WUTH are working side by side with a shared purpose and commitment to better care.

We are committed to co-designing our strategy with input from staff, partners, and those with lived experience. Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey to shape the future of care, together.

In this issue

1. Virtual Frailty Ward
2. Improving patient flow through effective streaming in urgent care services
3. Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Move
4. International Nurses Day
5. World Hand Hygiene Day: All Clean Together
6. Capital Projects Update

7. Supporting Apprenticeships and Care Leavers
8. Research and Innovation
9. Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) for Frailty Patients
10. CICC Achieves Outstanding Results in 2024 PLACE Assessment
11. Improvements in Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy waiting times
12. WCHC Launches Co-Produced Sexual Health Service for Young People

Better Together – news on our integration progress

1. Virtual Frailty Ward

The Frailty Virtual Ward, jointly delivered by WCHC and WUTH, is transforming in care for frail patients across Wirral.

The previous model faced limitations such as restricted referral criteria, workforce duplication, and low occupancy rates (20–40%). In response, WCHC and WUTH introduced an integrated approach aligned with national requirements. Referral pathways and admission criteria were revised, introducing more effective 'step-up' options and a stronger interface with other community services.

The new nurse-led model supports patients at home through a multi-disciplinary team comprising urgent community response (UCR) nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, paramedics, and co-located social care professionals. Strong links with community paramedics via the Call Before Convey service has further boosted referrals.

With a single leadership structure and defined quality metrics, the service now targets 80% bed occupancy and length of stay under 14 days. Ongoing priorities include workforce sustainability, improved digital integration, point-of-care testing (POCT), and reducing health inequalities.

This integrated model delivers high-quality, responsive care, enabling frail individuals to remain safely at home for longer.

2. Improving patient flow through effective streaming in urgent care services

Urgent care services play a vital role in supporting patients who need medical attention for non-life-threatening issues, helping to ease pressure on the Emergency Department (ED).

A key area of focus has been the improvement of the patient streaming process between the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) and ED. Streaming helps the clinical team ensure that patients are assessed promptly and receive the right care at the right time, helping to alleviate pressure on ED.

Via the streaming process people are directed to the most appropriate service or hospital area based on their clinical triage assessment. Outcomes of the streaming process include:

- Referral to the UTC
- Referral to other services eg specialty assessment units - medical, surgical, gynaecology, paediatrics

- Referral to off-site services

From April 2024 to March 2025, 15,892 patients were streamed from ED to UTC - an increase of 7.5% from the previous year.

3. Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Move

Adult Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services at WUTH are moving from Arrowe Park Hospital to St Catherine's Health Centre from Monday, 2nd June.

This relocation will accommodate space for the development of the urgent and emergency care facility at Arrowe Park Hospital. The new location will be within the Musculoskeletal Department at St Catherine's Health Centre.

The integration between WUTH and WCHC will enable better use of estates across the sites. This is one of the first services to move location as part of the integration work between both organisations.

It will offer easier access to parking, an improved patient experience and will be in a setting away from the busy acute hospital site.



4. International Nurses Day

This year's International Nurses Day was a special celebration, as WCHC joined forces with WUTH to recognise the extraordinary contribution of our nursing teams across Wirral.

Centred around the 2025 theme, Caring for Nurses, the day served as a powerful reminder of the importance of supporting those who care for others.

Caring for nurses...

“It takes many different types of nurses to keep a Trust running smoothly, but what unites them all is their compassion and shared drive to provide the very best care.”

Kara Dulong,
Estates, Facilities & Capitals Planning Matron

INTERNATIONAL
Nurses Day 2025

OUR NURSES
OUR FUTURE



Across our sites, heartfelt moments of appreciation took place, from a joint video pledge by Chief Nurses Paula Simpson and Sam Westwell, to sweet treats kindly donated by Costco and Bake Mark. WUTH's Chief Nurse and Deputy Chief Nurse visited wards to personally thank teams and hand out chocolates, while Sing Me Merseyside, led by Billy Hui, lifted spirits with a live performance at Arrowe Park Hospital. Staff stories and quotes from across both trusts featured on entrance screens and social media, celebrating the pride and passion of our nurses. The day also shone a light on specialist roles, such as Professional Nurse Advocates.

5. World Hand Hygiene Day 2025: Celebrating All Clean Together

On Monday 5 May, WCHC and WUTH came together to mark the World Health Organization's 17th annual World Hand Hygiene Day.

This year's global campaign, themed *All Clean Together*, reminds everyone, regardless of our role or setting, that effective hand hygiene is one of the most important actions we can take to protect ourselves, our colleagues, and those in our care.

Colleagues from both organisations actively took part in promoting the campaign with photographs of staff published across both Trusts' social media platforms and websites, demonstrating our shared commitment to infection prevention and control. [Read more about our campaign.](#)



News from Wirral University Teaching Hospital

6. Capital Projects Update

Work will be commencing in the coming weeks on the refurbishment of the Neonatal Unit at Wirral Women and Children's Hospital, following a successful Tiny Stars Appeal by WUTH Charity and community fundraising, including support from the charity IncuBabies.

The designated Level 3 Neonatal Unit on the Arrowe Park Hospital site cares for some of the tiniest and most poorly babies. This estates work will include expansion of the neonatal intensive care unit, enhancing parent and staff experience. Thanks to the huge fundraising efforts, the work will improve facilities for the Trust's smallest patients and their families.



Also at the Arrowe Park Hospital site, the transformation of the Urgent and Emergency Care Facility is progressing well, with the current phase expected to be completed at the end of June, when the project will move into its final phase. On completion of the latest phase, the hospital will have a purpose-built ambulance arrivals zone, new majors cubicles, new mental health rooms providing a calming space for patients in crisis and an additional point of care room, ensuring more timely access to diagnostics and treatment.

Sustainability is at the heart of the new urgent and emergency care facility. Designed with efficiency in mind, the building features low-carbon technologies, such as air source heat pumps, to minimise energy consumption. A large attenuation tank beneath the hospital site will also help manage rainwater, reducing flood risks and supporting local water systems.

7. Supporting Apprenticeships and Care Leavers

Partnership work between WUTH and Wirral Met College resulted in a successful apprenticeship campaign. This scheme, which aimed to secure 100 apprenticeship pledges within 100 days, exceeded its goal by achieving a total of 110 pledges. This success underscores the commitment of both organisations to enhancing vocational training and educational opportunities across the Liverpool City Region.

The campaign involved collaboration with 50 small to medium-sized enterprises across diverse sectors, including health and social care, construction, engineering, hospitality, and science. It not only provided direct support to apprentices but also offered essential financial assistance to local small and medium-sized enterprises, enabling them to recruit apprentices and train existing staff.

WUTH also supported a programme to offer work experience to young people in the process of leaving the care system and who are embarking on their first steps into a career. A group of inspiring young people immersed themselves in various departments across the Trust, gaining practical experience and invaluable insights into NHS careers. They had support from WUTH staff and mentors throughout their work experience. This initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting care leavers, providing them with opportunities to build brighter futures and explore rewarding careers.

8. Research and Innovation

Research and Innovation is at the forefront at WUTH with many teams leading on research to improve patient care and outcomes.

A new Wirral Research and Innovation Centre opened at Clatterbridge last year with the aim of advancing medical research at WUTH for the benefit patients. To mark the recent Clinical Trials Day, a showcase event was held at the centre to shine a light on the life-changing power of medical research.

WUTH's Wirral Academic Surgical Programme has also been shortlisted for a Capacity Building in Research Award in the NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research) West Coast Awards. The awards honour individuals and organisations that have made the greatest impact in the development and delivery of innovation and research in Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire and South Cumbria.



The Critical Care Team at WUTH achieved a significant milestone by recruiting the UK's first participant to the national RELEASE trial, comparing ventilation methods for patients with moderate to severe respiratory failure, which is especially important to those in critical care. Teams in surgery, respiratory, haematology, stroke, neonatal and gynaecology services have also been successful in recruiting patients to important research trials.

9. Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) for Frailty Patients

Incredible progress being made with Acute Frailty Services at WUTH, which are transforming how the Trust cares for older, more vulnerable patients.

Between 5% and 10% of patients that attend an Emergency Department, and up to 30% in Acute Medical Units, are older and frail. These patients are more likely to experience falls, delirium, disability, and readmission. Responding to these needs early is vital to improving patient outcomes and reducing unnecessary hospital stays.



The Acute Frailty Unit brings together same day emergency care (SDEC), frailty admissions, inpatient beds and the older person rapid assessment clinic.

Since launching on 24th March, the unit has been providing rapid, tailored assessments for patients aged over 65, supported by a fully co-located multidisciplinary team. This means that all the different healthcare professionals needed to care for a patient - nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and others - are based in the same place and work closely together as one team, instead of being spread out across different parts of the hospital.

In just a few weeks, 196 patients have been seen through Frailty SDEC and 129 patients were able to return home on the same day. That's a 66% same-day discharge rate. Patient feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the division is now looking to expand Frailty SDEC pathways and develop SDEC services in other areas such as respiratory and cardiology.

News from Wirral Community Health and Care

10. CICC Achieves Outstanding Results in 2024 PLACE Assessment

The Community Intermediate Care Centre (CICC) has once again demonstrated its commitment to high-quality, patient-focused care through its exceptional results in the 2024 PLACE (Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment) assessment.

Following reviews in both 2023 and late last year, CICC has achieved near-perfect scores across all assessment areas. Notably, the unit scored 100% in cleanliness, ward food, dementia care, and condition and maintenance, while other categories such as privacy,

disability access, and patient food services also received high marks. These results rank CICC third nationally, an outstanding achievement.

Feedback from PLACE assessors was overwhelmingly positive. Both confirmed they would be happy for loved ones to receive care at CICC, praising the friendly, professional staff and the warm welcomes they received on all three wards.

This success reflects the dedication of the entire team, including estates colleagues, the CICC leadership and ward managers and infection prevention and control. Their guidance ensures that nurses, therapists, health care assistants and domestics continue to provide compassionate, high-standard care that patients regularly commend.

11.Improvements in Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy waiting times

In 2024-25, the team from the Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service implemented a focused recovery plan to tackle long waiting times, successfully reducing the average wait from 29 weeks to just 15. Innovative approaches and initiatives, supported by fixed-term funding from NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB), brought the service closer to national targets.

A key initiative was the use of remote clinical monitoring, allowing parents and carers to submit videos of their child communicating at home. This approach provided clinicians with rich, contextual information as part of the child's assessment, often removing the need for in-person assessments and significantly speeding up the process.

The team also refined the triage system, using pre-assessment questionnaires to direct families to the most suitable appointment types. Outreach initiatives included collaborative work with local Family Hubs and the facilitation of support groups, creating peer networks while increasing efficiency. Digital content and referral guides were also updated to better inform service users and colleagues before the point of referral. Capacity within the service was also increased through recruitment and targeted training.

The results speak for themselves: by March 2025, the waiting list had fallen from 1,599 to 561, the longest wait time had dropped from 121 weeks to 50 and total case load had reduced from 4,478 to 3,612 - a significant step forward for Wirral's Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service.

12.WCHC Launches Co-Produced Sexual Health Service for Young People

In April 2024, WCHC launched *ourPlace*, a dedicated sexual health service for young people aged 13–19, and up to 25 for those with SEND. Commissioned by Wirral Council, this marks the first time the Trust has delivered a standalone youth-focused sexual health service, developed as part of Sexual Health Wirral (SHW).

Co-produced with young people from the outset, *ourPlace* was shaped through engagement sessions, outreach, and a survey reaching 100 diverse respondents. Insights from these consultations led to a service designed around young people's priorities: confidentiality, non-judgemental care, and a welcoming, non-clinical environment. Collaboration with local organisations such as The Hive Youth Zone was instrumental in gathering meaningful input and raising awareness.

The service name *ourPlace* reflects its community roots and youth-led design. Strategic communications, including social media campaigns and directional videos, have increased engagement. The team is now focused on expanding access to a broader demographic.

Strong partnerships with voluntary and community organisations, along with sustained trust-building efforts, have been key to success. Supported by the Trust's leadership, SHW continues to adapt and grow *ourPlace* in response to feedback, ensuring it remains a safe and trusted space for young people.



