

BLUEPRINT

NHS
West Hertfordshire
Hospitals
NHS Trust

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Welcome to your November edition of Blueprint

We hope this edition finds you well.

[Prime minister pressed for new hospital](#)

Our hospital redevelopment plans are often in the local news as was the case last week when the prime minister pledged that a meeting between Sajid Javid and Sir Mike Penning (MP for Hemel Hempstead) would ‘unblock things, one way or another’. Sir Mike had used the prime minister’s questions session to press his case for a new hospital in Hemel Hempstead.

In response to media enquiries following this exchange, our deputy chief executive Helen Brown said: “We share Sir Mike’s desire to see new hospital facilities for our patients and staff as soon as possible. However, our strongly held view is that the best route to achieving this is major redevelopment at Watford General Hospital and improvements to our hospitals in Hemel Hempstead and St Albans. We are excited about our plans which are fully backed by our clinical staff.”

Being part of the national New Hospital Programme (which sets out to deliver 48 new or rebuilt hospitals by 2030) offers the benefit of an agreed approach to design and to engaging contractors. It can also bring frustrations whilst the programme gears up to deliver a transformational renewal of hospital buildings up and down the country.

Our progress to secure funding for new buildings and refurbishments is moving at the same pace as the other seven trusts in the 'pathfinder' priority group. Any pause is related solely to the programme's approvals process and not our plans.

Please be reassured that we are committed to delivering new and better hospital buildings as soon as possible. We will set out a range of costed options in our outline business case for consideration next year by the New Hospital Programme, in line with national guidance from the Treasury.

Transforming hospital care - now

Hospital care is so much more than buildings and beds. Whilst we prepare our outline business case to secure funding for our physical hospital sites, we are continuing to transform how we deliver care.

Our one stop model of care is already being rolled out in many areas, providing prompt diagnosis, appropriate investigations and information to patients in a single (or the fewest possible) appointment/s. We will be able to increase the number of services that work along these lines when we make further investment to our diagnostic facilities.

An example is our fracture service where patients' follow up appointments include seeing the orthopaedic doctor, having their plaster changed or removed as well as repeat radiology and wound checks, if needed. Patients also receive exercise advice and education at the earliest opportunity instead of waiting 10 working days for their initial physiotherapy assessment. The appointment usually takes under an hour.

Another example is allergy clinics for children, who are now reviewed by a senior clinician and, if appropriate, have their allergy testing done on the same day. At the same time their family receives all the information and training needed to manage allergic reactions, use devices and techniques, and administer medications along with any dietary advice and support.

Watch our new film on [redesigning patient services](#) to find out more about how we are working hard to transform the way we deliver care.

Delivering digitally

In the previous edition of Blueprint we told you about the electronic patient record (EPR), which went live last weekend. The EPR provides consistent and instant access to patients' health data, saving staff time looking for information in paper records (or even looking for the records themselves) and avoiding the need for patients to give the same information numerous times.

It's a very different way of recording and managing information and so patients may find that some things, like booking or changing an appointment or checking into a clinic, take a little longer for now whilst we get used to the EPR.

You can find out more about EPR [here](#) and read about other ways in which technology is changing how we deliver care in our [digital vision and strategy](#). You can also watch our [short film](#) explaining digital transformation

Improving travel and access

Improving how people get to and around our hospitals goes hand in hand with our redevelopment and service transformation plans. This month we met with transport planners and the local authorities to further our plans to make travel and access as straightforward as possible. The new Arriva-click 'bus on demand' service in Watford and the 'travelWatford' app (which covers far wider than just Watford) are good steps forward.

We have also been learning more about the voluntary drivers who transport patients to hospital appointments across west Herts. We are keen to spread the word about this fantastic service. More on this in the next edition!

Thank you to those who provided lively debate in our travel and access patient reference group earlier this month. This was a valuable session, providing further insight into the issues for patients and visitors travelling to our sites. There were a number of tangible actions we will pursue. We heard about a reliance on car travel but a keenness to try other methods of transport such as train, Arriva-Click and even self-driving cars!

Our new multi-storey car park (at Watford General) will provide much easier access to the hospital with improved drop off and pick-up facilities, more disabled car parking, pay-on-exit technology and lifts so that patients no longer need to negotiate the hill. It is due to open in Spring 2022.

Like all NHS trusts, we are aiming to be carbon neutral by 2045 and so we are exploring ways for staff to get to work without driving and parking (where possible). This will free up spaces for patients and visitors. Our green plan will be developed for discussion early next year.

Fewer people to visit hospital

Reducing the overall visits to hospital in terms of non-emergency, planned attendance remains very much at the heart of our planning.

Ever-advancing models of healthcare enable more care to be delivered in community settings, over the phone or online. This is a constant factor in our planning for the redevelopment. Developing on virtual models of care such as our [award winning covid hospital](#) is an example of how patients receive hospital care whilst [remaining at home](#).

The majority of people's experience of hospital care is – thankfully – via outpatient appointments or for planned surgery. In a pre-Covid year we saw around 150,000 attendances at our urgent and emergency care services across our three hospitals. This is far lower than outpatient attendances which total around half a million. Converting these (where clinically appropriate) to 'one stop' or virtual appointments will dramatically reduce the hospital visits patients need to make.

The number of people attending emergency departments (ED) is increasing nationally at present. But providing more emergency capacity is not necessarily the answer as not everyone who attends our ED requires emergency care. We will continue to highlight NHS111 and the use of urgent care services, GP emergency appointments and advice from a pharmacist.

Please see our [A-Z information pack](#) for an interesting breakdown on which emergency departments are used by patients across west Hertfordshire (under Access on page 3).

Enjoy the festive season!

Thank you for reading our update this month. We hope you all keep healthy and happy this winter. Please do take a moment to read [this guide](#) to staying well and knowing where to go for the right support and medical advice.

Wishing you all a very happy festive season!

Catch up with redevelopment news

Blueprint - You can now read past editions of the Blueprint newsletter on our [website](#) under 'newsletters'. Share the news and get your colleagues and friends to subscribe by emailing westherts.redevelopment@nhs.net

A-Z information sheet - [This document](#) addresses frequently asked questions and the main themes from our engagement and redevelopment programme. It will be updated regularly.

Further information

Please contact us with any questions you may have about the outline business case and hospital redevelopment plans to westherts.redevelopment@nhs.net

Contact us via email on westherts.redevelopment@nhs.net

