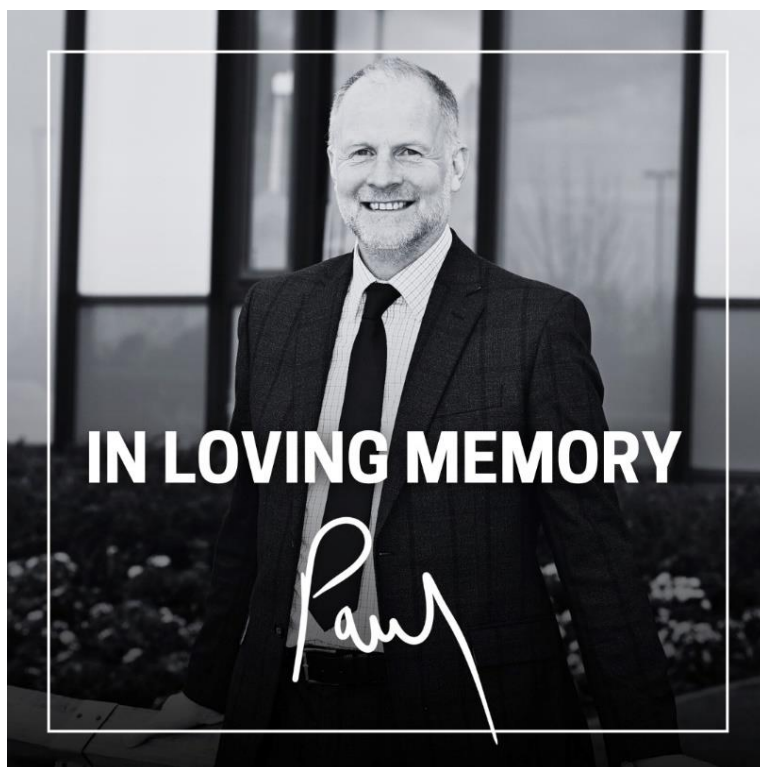


## **In loving memory of Paul Robinson**

This is the blog that was shared with colleagues across the Trust following the heartbreaking news that our Chief Executive, Paul Robinson had passed away following a year-long battle with severe illness.

We recognise the very significant impact that this news has had across Sherwood Forest Hospitals and our #TeamSFH family and we ensured that we highlighted information on emotional support available.

We also asked colleagues for their suggestions on how we might capture the memories of Paul and three other colleagues that we have lost in recent weeks.



## **Looking Forward blog published 21 February 2025**

Quite simply, this week has been one of the most difficult in my career as we were heartbroken to learn of the devastating news that our Trust Chief Executive, Paul Robinson, had passed away following a year-long battle with severe illness.

Paul had worked in the NHS for more than 30 years and had been a well-loved member of #TeamSFH since the moment he joined the Trust in May 2015. From there, he became a significant force behind helping Sherwood to exit special measures to making the enormous progress we have made together since.

As a Chief Executive, he was an outstandingly compassionate man, someone who always had time for colleagues, was a great listener and truly put patients at the centre of all of his thinking.

Paul's leadership has helped to cement the Trust's standing as one of the best NHS organisations in the country to work for, with the Trust also retaining its crown as the Midlands' best to work at for an incredible sixth year – something he was incredibly proud of.

But Paul was far more than a Chief Executive, a colleague and a boss to us all. He was also a husband to Clare, a father to his sons, and a mentor to countless others who he had offered advice, guidance and inspiration to over the years.

When I first met Paul, I was taken aback by how he approached his role as Finance Director. Instead of solely honing-in on the financial details of a business case, he prioritised what was best for patients and viewed finance as a tool to facilitate that goal. For me, it was a breath of fresh air at the time and a truly enlightening perspective.

Over time, we developed a close professional and personal bond, which has only deepened during the past nine months or so, as I've been his main point of contact with the organisation during his illness.

He will be missed immensely by all who knew him and he leaves a strong SFH legacy and memory. I will miss him.

Since the sad news was announced, we have received hundreds of messages of condolence across our Trust Facebook, X and LinkedIn pages and I have also been contacted by countless colleagues from across our country's NHS and beyond to express their sadness for our loss.

Thank you to all of you who have taken the time to leave a comment on social media, email me or reach-out to the colleagues who knew and loved Paul.

It has been of great comfort to me – just as I know it has to Paul's family, who are understandably devastated by their loss.

We are now working with Paul's family to agree how the Trust will recognise and celebrate Paul's life and legacy, which will include opening books of condolences for colleagues to record their thoughts across all our three sites.

We are also planning a celebration service over the coming weeks, with more details to be announced in Trust communications as soon as we have finalised the finer details.

If you would like a very practicable way to honour Paul's memory this week, Paul's sons are running the Sheffield Half Marathon on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 in loving memory of Paul and to raise money for the Weston Park Hospital Charity.

You can sponsor their efforts via this link <https://sheffield-half-marathon-2025.raiselysite.com/t/teamrlxconstruction>.

Losing Paul is hard enough in itself, but there is also a cruel 'second wave' of grief that hits many of us as it reminds us of others we have lost – including those in our home lives and colleagues we have lost from our work families like 'Dee' Kelsey, Katy Flint and Jill Rawlings.

This sad event is unfortunately not the only passing of a close colleague in recent weeks, which has also made us consider how we honour other Sherwood colleagues we have lost. I would welcome colleagues' thoughts on how we can best capture their memories. If you have any ideas, please let me know by emailing [david.selwyn@nhs.net](mailto:david.selwyn@nhs.net)



***'Dee' Kelsey***



***Katy Flint***



***Jill Rawlings***

If you have been affected by the passing of 'Dee', Katy, Jill, Paul or anyone else, we are proud to offer a wealth of emotional support to our Trust colleagues to call upon in times like these.

I have given and received many 'Sherwood hugs' over this past week, as well as shedding many tears. I have found talking to people to be an immense comfort this week and I would encourage anyone who feels they would benefit from more structured support to reach-out.

You can access a wealth of information on the Bereavement and Loss pages of our Trust website at [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk/for-health-professionals/looking-after-your-wellbeing/bereavement-and-loss](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk/for-health-professionals/looking-after-your-wellbeing/bereavement-and-loss), with further support also available – 24 hours a day, seven days a week – by calling our VIVUP confidential support line on freephone 0330 380 0658.

Thank you for your support over this incredibly difficult week – I hope you all manage to spend some time with your loved ones over the coming days.

Thank you,  
Dave

## Operational updates

### Overview of operational performance

We faced demand pressures across our urgent and emergency care services throughout 2024 at levels not previously seen. This theme of high patient demand has continued into 2025 where the number of patients conveyed by ambulance to King's Mill hospital remained high with an average of 106 arrivals per day in January (the third highest monthly level in the last three and a half years).

Newark Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) remained under pressure with on average 105 patients attending per day in January 2025. This is 13 more patients (or 14% increase) when compared to the same month in 2024. Newark UTC has consistently seen more than 100 patients per day since a step rise in demand in March 2024.

The acuity of patients presenting at our hospitals this winter has been higher than the previous winter in line with our experience of a more challenging influenza season. The peak of the seasonal influenza period passed in January and as we entered February 2025, we started to see the seasonal rise in patient acuity (measured by the National Early Warning Score) ease marginally.

With support from our system partners, we have maintained relatively low numbers of patients who no longer require our specialist care (referred to as patients that are medically safe for transfer) in our bed base over the winter period. We have also shortened the average time patients spend in hospital over the past year. This reduction in length of stay has enabled us to care for around 4,500 additional patients over the course of the year.

As we see across the NHS, our colleagues continue to work relentlessly in caring for our patients in as timely and dignified manner as possible in very challenging circumstances. Unfortunately, despite our efforts we have not been able to turn patients around as quickly as we would like in our urgent care settings and have seen patients spend more than 12 hours in our emergency department and we have not delivered the four-hour emergency access performance that we aspire to deliver for our patients. It is highly likely that there will be a national drive for rapid four-hour performance improvement in March like last year. The rationale for this is a post-winter reset in preparation for the rapidly approaching Easter holiday period.

In terms of planned care, we have continued to reduce the number of long wait patients, increased our performance against the (returning to prominence) incomplete 18-week RTT metric which is a constitutional standard to ensure patients receive non-emergency consultant-led treatment within 18-weeks of referral. We have made significant progress during 2024/25 improving our diagnostic waiting time (DM01) performance to be above our operational plan position. Our cancer performance remains strong for the 28-day faster diagnostic standard with our main area of focus being on the 62-day treatment standard with focus on tumour site recovery plans and histopathology reporting turnaround times.

A more comprehensive update on our operational performance will be presented in our Integrated Performance Report at the May 2025 Trust Board, where we are due to reflect on our quarter four 2024/25 performance.

## Partnership updates

### **New chair for place-based partnership**

Mid-Nottinghamshire Place-Based Partnership (MNPBP) recently announced the appointment of Theresa Hodgkinson, Chief Executive of Ashfield District Council, as its new Chair.

The Mid Notts Partnership brings together over 15 health and care organisations including local authority, community services, GPs and hospitals, as well as wider partners such as the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector.

Working in partnership with people within our communities, the organisations collaborate to deliver the MNPBP's shared ambition, which is: "Working Together to enable everyone across Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood to live healthier and happier lives, to prosper in their communities and remain independent throughout life."

Theresa's appointment comes after previous Chair Adam Hill, former Chief Executive at Mansfield District Council, announced his departure from the MNPBP to take on a new role at Rushcliffe Borough Council.

### **English Devolution White Paper**

I want to make Board aware of the English Devolution White Paper, which was published before Christmas, as it will affect all of us - both in our daily work and in our personal lives.

The White Paper sets out the government's plans to widen and deepen devolution across England, providing mayors with unprecedented powers and funding, and outlines how the government will rebuild and reform local government.

The leaders of all nine councils across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham have agreed to work together on a response to the Government's invitation for local government reorganisation. Council Leaders agreed that all options should be 'on the table' with only those proposals that deliver quality services for local people and create sustainable councils to be taken forward.

Detailed work will be undertaken by a joint team from across all councils to develop and test initial options, with initial responses submitted in March. Following the County Council elections in May, further work, including appropriate consultation will be carried out on preferred options before members consider proposals for reorganisation to submit to Government in the Autumn.

We look forward to seeing how this progresses.

You can read the White Paper at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth).

### **Sherwood Observatory visit**



Thank you to our Lead Governor Liz Barrett, Principal of ATTFE College, who kindly arranged for our February Council of Governors meeting to be held at the very impressive Sherwood Observatory, on Coxmoor Road, near Sutton-in-Ashfield. It is home to a brand new planetarium and science centre, providing a family-friendly visitor attraction that brings the wonder of the universe to life. Governors and colleagues attending were treated to a 'tour' and rapidly transported on a journey to the moon!

## **Other Trust updates**

### **Sustainability improvements**

Key success in our estates include a recent grant for around £3million to deliver a rapid change to LED lights throughout the Trust and improved energy management systems. This will deliver projected savings of about £1m per year. Work has already been completed at Newark Hospital.

Work is starting this month to install sensors in our operating theatres which will power down ventilation and lights when not in use. This can save up to £200,000 per year.

NHIS are currently rolling out the power down of computers and laptops when they are not in use. This has been shown to deliver significant electricity saving with no impact on staff or patients. Once completed at SFH, they plan to roll it out to other provider organisations, amplifying the financial and carbon savings across the system.

### **Success of walking aid reuse and recycle scheme**

Hundreds of unneeded walking aids have been returned to the Trust since we launched a reuse and recycling scheme at the start of February.



Members of the public can return metal crutches, sticks and frames to any of our three hospitals regardless of when and where they got them.

The equipment is safety checked, repaired, and reissued where appropriate, or recycled when not safe for reuse, reducing carbon emissions associated with manufacturing, and saving money.

### **Providing young people with opportunities**



Two West Nottinghamshire College students are putting their knowledge into practice thanks to industry placements working on Mansfield Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC).

Niall Clapperton, 17, from Sutton-in-Ashfield, and Liam Armstrong, also 17, from Ollerton, are four months into their placement. Both students bring enthusiasm and a keen interest in building a career in the construction industry.

Thanks to a partnership with building contractor Kier, project management company Pulse Management, and West Nottinghamshire College, these students are gaining hands-on experience in construction and project management within one of the most significant healthcare projects for the local community.

The CDC, which is Nottinghamshire's first, will provide tens of thousands of health checks. We were pleased to share an update and future plans with the CEO and Chair of NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB during a recent visit to SFH.



## **Celebrating success**



Ros Roddy, a Matron at Mansfield Community Hospital, has been presented with a prestigious DAISY award by Rob Simcox, Director of People and Phil Bolton, Chief Nurse.

Ros, who has worked for the Trust for 15 years in various roles describes her current role as 'a role I love, in a town where I feel at home.'

The nomination came from a colleague who had witnessed Ros provide outstanding care to a patient who had been in hospital for several months and consistently go above and beyond to ensure their needs were met.

They said 'Ros created a person-centred approach to the care and wellbeing of the patient' and catered for not only their medical needs but also went the extra mile to ensure home comforts were made available.

The nomination explained that these gestures were not a one-off and Ros was regularly supporting patients in this way. Congratulations, Ros!

## **National Apprenticeship Week**

We celebrated National Apprenticeship Week 2025 in February.

The Trust currently has 148 people on apprenticeships, and we have successfully recruited 21 individuals from outside of the Trust into apprenticeship roles.

By working in partnership with West Nottinghamshire College, Nottingham Trent University and other education providers we are helping to create entry level routes in the NHS for the local community.

Apprenticeships are a brilliant opportunity to work and study at the same time and a fantastic way to learn on the job and gain practical and specific workplace experience.

## **Step into the NHS**

On Tuesday we held our latest Step into the NHS event in partnership with Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and West Nottinghamshire College (WNC). It was a great



opportunity for people to get advice and guidance on pathways into non-clinical NHS careers including Finance, HR, IT and Estates and Facilities.

The event took place at Mansfield and Ashfield Sixth Form College, Chesterfield Road, Mansfield.

### **Trust risk ratings reviewed**

The Board Assurance Framework (BAF) Principal Risk 7 – ‘A major disruptive incident’ – for which the Risk Committee is the lead committee, has been scrutinised by the Trust’s Risk Committee.

Committee members discussed the risk scores and assurance ratings but decided that they should remain unchanged.

The full and updated Board Assurance Framework (BAF) is next due to be presented at the Public Meeting of the Trust’s Board of Directors in May 2025.