

Core brief

**Message from Jane Grant, Chief Executive
(17 July 2020, 10.15am)**

Things have had an air of slowly returning to normal this week and one of the most positive indications of this has been a relaxation in the visiting regulations.

Having spoken to staff, I appreciate that a lack of visitors has been one of the most difficult elements of the COVID situation, with our patients being unable, until now, to have the face-to-face contact with loved ones. While it has not brought hugs just yet, this week has brought reunions and I'm sure that for our clinical staff this has been a pleasure to witness.

Staff wellbeing is hugely important to us and throughout the pandemic we have gone to great lengths to make sure staff feel supported in both their physical and mental wellbeing.

As I have said before, this has been without question the most challenging period of our careers. That is why it is so important that the appropriate support has been in place and I was pleased to read some of the great feedback about our R&R Hubs this week.

One member of staff said: "It's a place to take a break from being a nurse and feel like a person again." This has never been so important.

The feedback also highlights that staff very much wish these Hubs to become an enduring feature and I am pleased that thanks to the Boards Endowments Management Committee, it will be possible to continue this support until the end of September.

This will give our teams time to develop a proposal for a sustainable model, taking on-board comments from the survey about what was most beneficial for you and what we need to think about differently. My thanks go to everyone who has made them such a resounding success.

As well as the Hubs, staff have also continued to get access to help via the Acute and Community Psychology teams, such as our helpline, personal confidential support and using the National Wellbeing Hub. Our Occupational Health team continue to provide counselling and clinical support. I am pleased that we now have a developed Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan to support you over the next 18 months and I will look forward to sharing with you further support programmes as they are introduced.

While I recognise that challenges remain, I want to assure you that staff health and wellbeing remains at the heart of everything that we do.