

GPConnect

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Keeping GP Practices up-to-date with news from The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

Update from Alison Jones, GP Engagement

The Trust's AAA screening service has the best uptake in the country

More than 88% of men eligible to be screened for an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have been scanned – **the highest uptake in the country.**

That's all down to the efforts of the AAA screening team run by the Trust (*team members pictured right*). Over the past year they screened more than 2,500 men over the age of 65 for the aneurysm, which could be life threatening if not detected early enough.

An Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) is a swelling in the aorta which can enlarge over time and could burst, causing life-threatening bleeding. Men aged over 65 are at the most risk of AAAs, which is why they are invited to be screened.



The AAA screening team, based at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, scanned 2,589 men in 2017-2018, which is 88.4% of men eligible to be scanned at the time - the highest number nationally according to the NHS AAA Screening Programme (NAAASP) National Standards Report from Public Health England.

In Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, screening is delivered by SaTH's technicians in community settings such as GP practices, clinics and at both the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital. A simple ultrasound test is performed to detect AAA, which is quick, painless and non-invasive, and the results are provided straight away. It is part of a dedicated NHS programme to reduce the number of premature aneurysm-related deaths through early detection, monitoring and treatment.

Jessica Smith, AAA Programme Co-ordinator at the Trust, said: **"This is a fantastic achievement by the whole team who have worked incredibly hard to ensure that anyone eligible to have the scan was able to have it. They have telephoned patients to remind them about their appointments and the importance of attending, and GP surgeries have helped in sending text reminders. The team is absolutely committed to ensuring that those who are eligible to have the test know about it and come along to be scanned as it could save their life."**

Jessica added: **"We were also delighted to learn in the Annual Patient Survey that 100% of those who were scanned said they would recommend the service to their family and friends. They described the team as friendly, professional, helpful and informative as well as quick and efficient, which is a fantastic endorsement of the efforts of the whole team. I am so proud of them all."**

Men who have not already had a scan and who are over the age of 65, can call the team and self-refer. The team can be contacted on (01743) 261048 or e-mail sath.aaa@nhs.net

SaTH joins the £100K Club

The Trust has saved more than £100,000 by recycling surplus hospital equipment and furniture, it was reported at the end of February. SaTH has been using Warp-It to re-use surplus items – from paper clips and filing trays to cabinets, desks and chairs –



instead of sending them to landfill, and recently won a prestigious international environmental award for its work with Warp-It. The Trust has now been presented with a certificate for joining the organisation's £100K Club.

Alex Ford, SaTH's Sustainable Travel Plan Co-ordinator (*pictured in the centre, with the certificate*), said: **"This is a fantastic achievement and recognises the efforts that we are making to make the Trust more sustainable and reduce waste. Warp-it is an innovative idea that our staff have really embraced, and it is just one of the methods that we are using to reduce our environmental footprint. It also means that instead of spending money, we are saving it."**

GPConnect contact: Alison Jones, GP Engagement

Stretton House, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XQ

Telephone (01743) 492591

Email: alison.jones25@nhs.net

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk/gpconnect



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Behind-the-scenes scientific work means patients are being treated with specially-targeted antibiotics sooner than ever before

A team of white coats at Shropshire's two acute hospitals have streamlined their work to ensure patients are given the most effective antibiotics at the earliest opportunity. The behind-the-scenes work is proving particularly effective in the Trust's fight against sepsis as it is now possible for patients to receive specially-targeted antibiotics within as little as eight hours of the scientists receiving a blood culture.

Sepsis is the immune system's overreaction to an infection or injury. If not treated immediately, sepsis can result in organ failure and death, and yet with early diagnosis, it can be treated with antibiotics. Through its partnership with the Virginia Mason Institute the Trust is doing a major piece of work to increase awareness of sepsis amongst staff and ensure patients diagnosed with the infection are given a bundle of antibiotics within the all-important 'golden hour'.

Alan Jackson, Head Biomedical Scientist at the Trust, said: **"This 'scatter-gun' approach is vital as statistics show that 90% of patients given the bundle of antibiotics within one hour will survive, compared to 50% of patients who receive the antibiotics after a five hour delay. The introduction of new tools to help doctors and nurses diagnose sepsis earlier and administer antibiotics within an hour is brilliant and will save lives, so what we have been doing is looking at the next step. We want to get patients off their bundle of antibiotics as quickly as possible and onto just one targeted antibiotic. This is the most efficient way to stop the infection."**



Karen Gibson, Senior Specialist Biomedical Scientist (*pictured left*), has been leading the work within pathology, which has seen the introduction of new state-of-the-art machines in a partnership working approach between all grades of pathology staff. She said: **"We have changed the blood culture bottles to plastic so staff on the ward can use the air tube system at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital and get them delivered quickly to the laboratory. We've had a few issues with this system in the past but we have worked closely with the teams on the 'shop floor' to resolve these, meaning we are now getting more than 90% of the bottles onto a Blood Analyser Machine within the four-hour target."**

"The Blood Analyser is an incredible machine and we are fortunate enough to now have three of them, so we can look at 480 samples a day. The machines take a reading of a sample every 20 minutes and can detect growth after a minimum of 12 readings (so in four hours). When the machines flag a positive reading it sets off an alarm. The organisms in the blood culture are grown and the sample is then placed in another piece of equipment – a bacteria identification machine – which within 20 minutes tells us which organism is causing the infection. Our new Blood Analyser Machines are kept in the reception area of the Pathology Departments at RSH and PRH, making them easily accessible, cutting out delays and allowing our Blood Sciences team, who work 24 hours a day, to upload cultures for examination during traditional out-of-hours working time."

Alan Jackson added: **"We are extremely grateful to the Blood Sciences team for taking on this extra workload. It has had a hugely positive impact as it means we are able to get the right antibiotic administered into patients at the earliest opportunity."**

Senior front-line clinicians develop their skills using the Trust's new simulation suite

A team of front-line clinicians at Shropshire's two acute hospitals came together recently to enhance their life-saving skills, thanks to the new simulation training suite which was reported in February's GPConnect. A group of Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs), Physician Associates (PAs) and Physios went through a number of real-life scenarios that they could encounter within the Trust's A&E Departments, using real life manikins. The clinicians were put through their paces by A&E Consultant Dr Dodi Herman, who says the team-building in a challenging, but risk-free, simulated clinical environment is essential to SaTH in "growing its own workforce".

Dr Herman said: **"Practical education of this nature is vital, so we're hugely lucky to have a simulation suite for our healthcare professionals. We have a vision to train not just ACPs, but to roll out education to include the new nursing staff we recruit, junior doctors, healthcare assistants and medical students in an acute setting. In the future we will be able to run the suite like a ward to give our staff confidence and the requisite skills to work together effectively. The simulation suite will help us to retain brilliant people within our Trust, to make them feel valued, so we can educate them and empower them to really contribute to SaTH."**

Emma Jones, Lead Advanced Clinical Practitioner, said: **"The ACP programme started five years ago at SaTH and has been a huge success. We now have 25 ACPs, with hundreds of years' combined experience, working across both PRH and RSH, which allows us to deliver the very best patient care. ACP roles are used to enhance the medical workforce, and as they are trained to be able to see any patient in our hospitals, they can offer care that suits the needs of our patients."**

