

Media Release

Telford's Princess Royal Hospital Accident & Emergency Department to stay open

22 November 2018

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) has today secured the middle grade doctors and nurses needed to allow the A&E department at Princess Royal Hospital in Telford to stay open 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

A mixture of locum and agency middle grade doctors are now committed to rotas in the A&E until the end of March 2019.

The Trust has contracted more than the minimum of seven middle grade and 15 specialist nurses needed to keep both Accident & Emergency Departments open.

- With nine middle grade doctors arriving by December and a further two in January the trust will have more 20 middle grade doctors - more than at any time in the last seven years
- By mid-February there will be an extra three substantive A&E consultants bringing the total to seven – the highest number for many years

Simon Wright, Chief Executive at SaTH, said: "This is fantastic news. We had said all along that we didn't want to close either of our A&Es overnight, but that we simply couldn't keep both open because of the staff shortages in our Emergency Departments.

"The news of the £312 million investment for the reconfiguration of our two hospitals has allowed us to recruit more consultants, including in A&E.

"We have been working tirelessly behind the scenes, not just in the last few months but over the last few years to put together all the pieces of the "jigsaw" so that the trust has a compelling offer to attract staff and that hard work has paid off."

In recent years this improved package includes:

- A £3 million investment in Accident & Emergency facilities to provide extra space for "walk-in" patients and a better working environment, including urgent care facilities which opened this month
- Set up advanced nurse training qualifications taking 18 months which will see a further four Advanced Nurse Practitioners join the Emergency Department medical rota this winter
- Listened to and worked with our ED staff to find the solutions they have needed

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Consultant Kevin Eardley, Medical Director for Unscheduled Care, said: "It is great news that we have been successful in securing more doctors to keep both of our A&E departments open 24/7 and therefore prevent the need to inconvenience patients and relatives by diverting them to alternative providers. I hope this to be a springboard to further recruitment and building a more sustainable future."

Simon added: "I'd like to especially thank colleagues in the wider NHS, including my colleagues in the north west of England, for their support and sign-posting the trust to potential staff."

Simon also paid tribute to the support that has come from the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin "family" and NHS Improvement, for allowing the Trust to be flexible with the pay cap for middle grade A&E doctors, as it has with other specialities.

He said: "I've been genuinely moved by the offers of support the hospital has received through this difficult time and I know this has made a real difference to the morale of staff."

"From the canvassing of ministers and support for speedy visa application processing from Mark Pritchard MP; to the calls by Telford & Wrekin Council for the community to refurbish junior doctors accommodation with nearly £30,000 donated by parish councils and the support of local businesses."

"In addition, the meeting at the Indian consulate facilitated by Telford & Wrekin Council leader Shaun Davies and Mayor Raj Mehta looks to be helping with sourcing doctors from abroad."

Ben Reid, Chair of SaTH, said: "This is an outstanding result which few thought was possible. It's a real tribute to Simon, to the leadership team and especially to the staff already working in Emergency Departments who've done so much to keep the service running for the people of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Mid Wales."

"It really goes to show what can be achieved when local people rally round alongside national bodies and pull in the same direction. When that happens, this hospital trust is far greater than the sum of its parts."

The new A&E middle grade doctors come from a variety of sources including agencies and locums.

Work continues to recruit middle grade doctors into substantive permanent roles with a number of new starters expected to join the trust in March next year.

The trust is further improving its offer to emergency medicine doctors by developing a Fellowship Programme with Wolverhampton University and the CESR scheme with Royal Derby Hospital.

A long-term solution to SaTH's recruitment challenges is dependent upon the outcome of the NHS Future Fit consultation into the future configuration of acute health services in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Mid Wales.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

- The Clinical Fellowship Programme is being developed jointly with Wolverhampton University.
- The CESR (Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration) is a programme designed to gain and demonstrate experience to the level of recognition of being on the GMC Specialist Register. This is usually required to be able to be appointed as a Consultant.
- The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of acute hospital care for almost 500,000 people from Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales. Patients come to us from Telford, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch, Newtown and Welshpool in Powys.
- The Trust continues to work with its partners in health and social care in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales to develop patient-focused services that meet the needs of our communities.

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