

HEALTH AND CARE INSIGHTS

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It has been a very challenging start to 2018 for the NHS across the whole country, with increased levels of flu and norovirus, staff shortages through recruitment challenges and sickness - and some people have not experienced the timely care we would want for them. We are experiencing the most severe level of operational pressures right across our health and care system. Services have been challenged and our staff are working in less than ideal conditions as they do their utmost to

deliver safe care. We really appreciate the efforts of all our staff, who are often working above and beyond their contracted hours to ensure safe handovers; prioritising their time by deferring training or meetings and even taking on different responsibilities to help support the frontline. We are sharing some of the positive feedback we receive from patients and service users on social media and via our website, using the campaign #ProudOfOurNHS.

Volunteers helping patients to lead healthy lives

Torbay Hospital now has lifestyles screening and advice volunteers working in its emergency assessment unit and pre assessment wards. Six volunteers visit people and talk to them about their health, wellbeing and lifestyle. They are trained to offer information and signposting for smoking, alcohol, physical activity, social isolation, debt, carers support and advice on nutrition. They can also refer patients who may need extra help and support directly into the correct service for more specialist advice. A further seven volunteers are now undertaking the two-day training course, and the Trust plans to roll out the programme more widely across its wards. Simon Acton, Volunteer Project Manager for Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust said: "People often come into hospital to be treated for a specific health needs and are discharged as soon as their physical needs have been resolved. However, we know that smoking, drinking alcohol and what we eat can have a dramatic impact on our long term health and likelihood of developing long term or life threatening conditions such as cancer, stroke or heart attack. By putting in place health prevention referrals in this way we may be able to prevent or reduce the need for people to be readmitted in the future.

Inspiration for 'Dry January': Leigh Scarff is a part-time Trainee Key Worker at the drug and alcohol service in Torbay. He is also studying in his own time for a Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. As a trainee Key Worker, he helps to support people on a 1-1 basis with abstinence from alcohol. Previously, Leigh was a volunteer, having battled his own addiction to alcohol. For Dry January, he has shared his story, to inspire others to take the leap and seek support. Leigh's inspiring video gives hope for anyone living with alcohol or substance misuse, you can watch a clip [here](#).



New HOPE for people coping with long-term conditions

A new programme to help people in Torbay and South Devon living with one or more long term conditions, has been launched this month. The programme called HOPE (Help Overcoming Problems Effectively) was created to help people manage their conditions better and improve their mental wellbeing by:

- supporting and sharing experiences with others, reducing isolation caused by illness
- recognising their own potential and enhancing their happiness and quality of life

HEALTH AND CARE INSIGHTS

- feeling more confident in dealing with emotional issues such as: anxiety, anger, depression and uncertainty.
- handling stressful situations.
- using relaxation techniques to refresh mind and body.
- making plans and achieve goals, helping to make changes for the better.

One of our Hope facilitators said: *"I have several long term conditions that seriously affect my daily life and wellbeing. I attended one of the pilot courses for HOPE and found it really positive. It helped me look at how I view myself and realise that I should not be defined by my condition, although my daily life revolves around it, but as the person I am inside."*

The course is open to people over 18, living in the Torbay and South Devon area. Each course takes between six and 12 people and participants have commit to attending the course for 2.5 hours each week, for a six week period. To find out more about the programme, or book a place by visiting the [Hope pages](#) on our website. Additionally, follow us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter for the latest information on courses.

Helping people avoid a hospital stay



Our specialist Medical Admissions Avoidance Team (MAAT) can administer treatments at home (or in another community care setting) which would normally require people to go to hospital. Treatments the MAAT nurses give include fluid infusions to prevent dehydration, intravenous antibiotics for a wide range of conditions, managing anti-clotting treatment for blood clots in the lungs and deep vein thrombosis, and pre-operative care. The nurses have all received specialist skills training to deliver and monitor these treatments

and they are supported by a Consultant Microbiologist. Now, these specialist nurses are sharing their skills and expertise with our community nurses, starting with our Intermediate Care nurses, training them to be able to administer some of the treatments that they give. The MAAT team maintains overall oversight and co-ordination of patients' care. Having more nurses able to support patients at home in this way should help prevent more hospital admissions.

Margaret is 75, a widow and lives alone. She saw her GP after she noticed a painful swelling and redness to the side of her face. *"I looked like I'd been in a car crash - my nose was twice the size and the redness was creeping up my face on my left cheek."* The GP diagnosed cellulitis and was concerned about potential spread to her eyes and brain, so he recommended she go straight to the Emergency Department of Torbay Hospital. Margaret couldn't face getting to hospital: she lives in a remote area of South Devon so it's not an easy journey, especially for someone who doesn't drive. So her GP telephoned Torbay Hospital and arranged for a MAAT nurse to visit her. The MAAT nurse arrived at Margaret's home that afternoon, and immediately gave her intravenous antibiotics along with a high dosage of oral antibiotics. MAAT nurses visited her every day for five days to administer the treatment. *"The nurses were absolutely wonderful," said Margaret, "What I had was really traumatic and they were so comforting. And I was in my own home! - the service was second to none."*

We hope you find this update useful and that you can see we are making real progress towards our aim of supporting more people to be well and independent. If you would like to receive future issues by email contact tsdft.communications@nhs.net