

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals

## We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year

As we reach the end of another year, Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals (WHH) would like to thank our Experts by Experience (EbyEs) for your support, collaboration and engagement. We wish you a peaceful festive season and a hopeful start to 2026.

This newsletter showcases your fantastic contributions over the past 12 months and highlights how EbyE involvement supports WHH in our mission to be outstanding for our patients, our communities and each other.



## Facts and figures - 2026

Thank you for supporting a productive year of engagement and involvement. This year we:

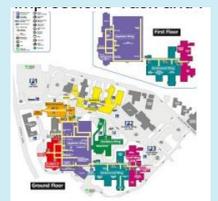
- recruited an additional **56** EbyE volunteers – we now have **217** EbyEs in total
- supported the involvement of **194** EbyEs across **26** different projects
- hosted **18** stands at community events across both Warrington and Halton (including Chinese Lunar New Year, International Clinical Trials Day, Disability Awareness Day, Warrington Armed Forces Day, Warrington Pride, Warrington Mela and more).

## Working with People and Communities Strategy review

This year our Working with People and Communities Strategy, which guides WHH's patient and public involvement, has been reviewed and refreshed to extend its lifespan to 2026, reflecting the ongoing integration with Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust (BCH). The refresh includes updated branding and minor objective / success measure revisions, ensuring the strategy remains relevant, aligned and consistent with the Trust's corporate strategy timeframe. [Read more.](#)

## Map improvements – Warrington Hospital

During March 2025, five EbyEs and governors took part in map and location finding tasks at Warrington Hospital, to evaluate our existing site map and inform future improvements. The group's feedback on map placement, orientation, label duplication, map accessibility and directional signage was shared with our Estates and Facilities Team and will be used to develop future map updates.



Working Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals



## Better Care Together Integrating community and hospital services

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are joining forces and integrating our community and hospital services, working towards becoming one single organisation (subject to all necessary approvals) in April 2026.

By coming together, we will deliver new models of care, with the continued involvement of a wide range of partners and voices, including primary care, local authorities and people with lived experience. We want to provide care as close to home as feasibly possible and focus significantly on improving population health and reducing health inequalities. Through shared leadership, we will co-design our clinical strategy and integrate our services, making greater use of technology, enabling us to deliver care differently. Healthcare needs have changed, and so we must continue to change and evolve in providing the best care possible to meet people's needs.

Until we become one organisation we have a temporary partnership name, North Cheshire and Mersey Healthcare Partnership (NCMHP), to show how we are working more closely together. The NCMHP website, launched on in October 2025, provides an online space for members of the public, partner organisations and stakeholders to keep up to date with the integration of our Trusts. The site hosts a short animation which shares more about the benefits of bringing our hospital and community services together, as well as information on the Better Care Together programme and frequently asked questions. For more details, [visit the NCMHP website](#).



Working Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals

## WHH joins international norovirus vaccine trial

Norovirus is one of the most common causes of stomach bugs in the UK – it can spread quickly and poses a greater risk of serious symptoms for children, adults over 60 and people with underlying health conditions. Symptoms can include sudden nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach pain, muscle pains and fever. There is currently no vaccine to protect against norovirus infection.



During 2025, Halton Clinical Research Unit recruited participants for a global clinical trial for norovirus, to evaluate the safety, effectiveness, and immune response of an investigational vaccine, aimed at preventing norovirus in adults.

Trial participant and Expert by Experience, Janice Howe, shared her views on being involved: "I joined the Norovirus clinical trial at Halton one year ago. Since then, I've had regular follow-up tests, questionnaires, phone calls and have completed a weekly diary. It's not been a large time commitment and has been well organised and supported. I'm delighted to be able to help develop a vaccine and make a difference. I plan to volunteer for more trials in future!"



For more information on the trial or to get involved, please [visit our website](#).

## Hospital associated deconditioning

During March 2025 WHH's Therapies Team recruited EbyEs for interviews about patient and carer experiences of deconditioning during a hospital stay and / or following discharge. Two EbyEs volunteered to be involved, with both invited to take part in interviews via recordings, animations and written feedback. The interviews will be used to develop Trust training programmes and will help raise awareness of patient / carer voices within hospital associated deconditioning.

## Chronic respiratory conditions patient forum

During April 2025 we supported our Respiratory Therapy Team to develop a patient forum for those affected by chronic respiratory conditions, to use patient and carer insight to shape service pathways and increase attendance and access to pulmonary rehabilitation services. We recruited seven EbyEs and two representatives from Warrington Disability Partnership, with our Engagement and Involvement Officer now helping the service to establish and structure the group.



Working Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals

## WHH Charity website user testing [www.whhcharity.org.uk](http://www.whhcharity.org.uk)

During June we asked for EbyEs to take part in user testing and information finding tasks on the newly redeveloped WHH Charity website. Nine EbyEs took part in testing tasks and shared their experience of the site's refreshed design and layout. Overall, all EbyEs shared positive feedback of the new website. 44% of testers found the site 'very easy' to use, with 56% saying they found the site 'fairly easy' to use. EbyE feedback suggested minor amends, such as including the acronym 'FAQs' alongside the title 'Frequently Asked Questions' and increasing promotion of the Charity newsletter across the site. Since going live in July 2025, it has been overwhelmingly well received.



"Excellent work and improvements" said Karen Mynett, Expert by Experience. "The website is in nice bright colours and attractive to use." Helen Bennett, Expert by Experience shared the sentiment, saying: "it's a nice, fresh website that's not as cluttered as it used to be. Overall, it was very easy to use."

## Health literacy – appointment letters and digital apps review

Many UK adults have low health literacy skills and so struggle to read and understand health information. A person with low health literacy will generally find it difficult to read / understand health information and will struggle to know which health services to use and when. To help patients to access, understand and use information and services, we are applying health literacy approaches to messages and information as part of a NW health literacy pilot scheme and have recruited six EbyEs to take part in reviewing appointment letters and digital apps (within the ORCHA health app library). "It's been great welcoming Experts by Experience to the group – they bring a wealth of knowledge" said Thara Raj, Director of Population Health and Inequalities.

## Patient letters - AI / 'Lyrebird Health' demonstration

In November we hosted a virtual session to demonstrate how the Trust is using AI to support patient letters, through the 'Lyrebird Health' system which securely transcribes consultations into structured notes. Led by Simon Jesson, Chief Nursing Medical Officer, nine EbyEs and five governors joined, to understand the trial background, system features and a live demo. Using 'Lyrebird', backlogs have already reduced in seven services including ENT, Urology and Women's Services, with WHH aiming for Trust-wide adoption by 2026.



Working Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

## Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals

### Patient communication skills workshop – Physiotherapy

In September 2025, four EbyEs shared care experiences at a communications workshop with our MSc Pre-registration Physiotherapy students, to help students improve their patient and carer interactions. "All the students asked sensible, feet-on-the-floor questions with care, sensitivity and empathy" said Expert by Experience, Jim Sinnott. "It was great to see how enthusiastic they were about their degree course and future in the care profession."

Session host, Jo Thomas, Senior Clinical Tutor in Physiotherapy and Clinical Specialist in Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy said "the students really enjoyed the session, with their reflective pieces showing real insight. I look forward to working with the EbyEs again!"

### Ward A8 redevelopment engagement

In May 2025 we hosted an online EbyE session to discuss the redevelopment of Ward A8 at Warrington Hospital, with proposals aiming to upgrade the ward's mechanical and electrical infrastructure (e.g. heating, ventilation, lighting) and finishes / sanitary layouts, to ensure compliant, wheelchair-friendly spaces for showers and toilets.

Led by Lee Bushell, Head of Capital Projects, seven EbyEs and Governors joined the session, with feedback also collected remotely via email. Generally, the group supported the proposed upgrades to the space which would maintain the 34 beds on the ward while enhancing facilities for both patients and staff. Planned improvements discussed and supported by the group included; ward access with a reception base via one entrance at the front of the department (by Ward A9), a reconfiguration of toilet and bathing facilities (to be more accessible and inclusive), improved ventilation and heating systems, enhanced electrical points around patient beds and sliding bay doors (to improve patient privacy and dignity within bays).

Session attendees raised points around noise and what might be done to reduce it on the ward – with Lee suggesting that it may be possible to use sound absorbing ceiling tiles, sound block boards (rather than traditional wall boards) and new floor vinyl to reduce noise levels.

"I found EbyE involvement very useful" said Lee Bushell, Head of Capital Projects. "There were some helpful comments and nice points raised that we had not considered. I'd certainly welcome EbyE involvement in future patient projects."



Working  
Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing  
Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

## Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals

### Outpatients outreach – estates development

Between February and March 2025, we carried out engagement in Warrington Outpatients to support the work being undertaken on the WHH Estate Strategy and the integration Estates workstream, focused on modernising ageing facilities and delivering care closer to patients' homes. Patients and carers took part in face-to-face and online surveys to explore barriers, preferences and priorities when booking and attending appointments. With support from seven EbyEs, volunteers and governors, the team gathered 143 responses.

Overall, feedback showed a preference for face-to-face appointments at Warrington Hospital (51%), closely followed by accessing face-to-face appointments in community venues (50%). The survey showed limited patient support for digital appointments (37%) e.g. video consultations, while highlighting the importance of nearby parking and proximity to home when choosing an appointment venue. Feedback has been used to inform next steps of the Estates Strategy and the wider aim of moving more care from hospital to communities, which is part of the Better Care Together approach.

### Trust website accessibility improvements

Since relaunching our website ([www.whh.nhs.uk](http://www.whh.nhs.uk)) in September 2024, we've continued to improve the site's accessibility and content through insights from Silktide, a web governance platform that monitors and helps improve the quality, accessibility and performance of websites.

Initially, Silktide showed the WHH website as achieving 64% accessibility, rated 'Good' and ranking us 210<sup>th</sup> place in the NHS. Following ongoing improvements, the latest Silktide assessment (November 2025) shows the site achieving 96% accessibility, rated 'Excellent' and ranking us 24<sup>th</sup> place nationally with high compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2).

#### Previous website



#### Relaunched website



#### Current website



*\*Comparison of Silktide accessibility report on 11 August 2024, 11 April 2025 and 11 November 2025*



Working Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals



## Change NHS Public engagement

Change NHS, launched in late 2024, was a national conversation on the future of the NHS, gathering public and staff views on three major shifts: better use of technology, moving care into communities, and prioritising prevention as part of the new 10-Year Health Plan.

The Trust held public engagement sessions from 14 to 20 January 2025 at the Living Well Hub, Halton Education Centre and online, to gather feedback, with 37 individuals joining the sessions. Participants included EbyEs, Foundation Trust members, governors and community sector partners; Warrington Voluntary Action, Deafness Resource Centre, Warrington Moving On Stroke Group, Warrington Disability Partnership, Halton Haven Hospice, MS Society, NW Stroke Voices, Healthwatch Halton, Healthwatch Warrington, Northwest HIV Support CIC, St Rocco's Hospice and Down Syndrome Cheshire.

Session feedback showed a desire for faster, easier access to care, clearer communication and more joined-up services, with strong support for the NHS staff alongside concerns of workforce capacity, pressures and retention. Participants welcomed digital tools provided they remain accessible, optional and supportive of face-to-face care. There was clear support around the prevention agenda, with a focus on the need for earlier support and services designed around the needs of local communities. Feedback on behalf of the Trust was submitted to the Change NHS team to be incorporated with national feedback and programme results. To view the campaign and next steps, [visit the Gov.uk website](#).



Working  
Together



Excellence



Inclusive



Kind



Embracing  
Change

# Expert by Experience Newsletter

Engagement and involvement at Warrington and Halton Hospitals

## Thanks for a wonderful 2025!

