

## HR COVID 19 Response – Trust Board Update 7 MAY 2020

The HR Directorate continues to support the Trust across a range of activities as follows:

### 1. Resourcing

The **HSC Workforce Campaign** has now closed. There are currently **1608 applications** being processed by the Trust across a range of staff groups including medical, nursing and support roles.

**21 retirees have now returned** to the Trust across a range of staff groups. In addition to this a further **13 Trust staff who were due to retire in the next 4 months** have delayed their retirement date to support the Trust's COVID response.

**Students from a range of professions** have come onto the Trust's payroll: -

**25 Student Social Workers** commenced employment in April.

**39 Medical Students** started as Medical Student Technicians on **16 April 2020**

**144 Student Nurses** from a range of specialties from University of Ulster and Queens University Belfast also commenced work during the month of April. .

**40 Final year medical students** are expected to commence work with the Trust at the beginning of May as a result of a voluntary opt-in scheme. They will be employed as Foundation Interim Year 1 Doctors.

### 2. COVID Staff Wellbeing Response Plan

HR staff have been involved in the development and promotion of **#WeAreWithYOU** staff wellbeing programme for staff through the TWIST West wellbeing hub [www.twistwest.org](http://www.twistwest.org)

A significant range of resources have been developed/sourced and added to this site and staff are strongly encouraged to avail of these. They include:

- information for staff to support them to manage their emotional and mental health and wellbeing at this time.
- **Anxiety Management Resources** for Staff, Managers and Occupational Health have been developed and are also being promoted.
- Applicable emotional **health and wellbeing messages** have been rolled out to the wider public through social media.
- Links to external support mechanisms.

In addition to the normal Friday Focus email to all Trust staff, we issue an **additional weekly newsletter on Tuesdays** dedicated to looking after health and wellbeing

during COVID. It has been reported via a Website Analytic exercise that there has been a rise in the numbers of staff who visit the TwistWest website – there were **1,502 new users** recorded during January/February 2020 and **3,181 new users** recorded during March/April 2020.

A **draft Framework for Managing a Death in Service** has been developed and we await the Northern Ireland position in relation to financial support for Health Care workers.

Distribution points have been established for **donations of food and resources** on the Gransha site, Omagh Centre and Drumcoo Centre - coordinated by the Health Improvement team.

**Chaplaincy** - A **Chaplain tile** has been created on TWIST west to hold all resources including, video messages from each chaplain and prayers of all denominations. Chaplains can refer people to this resource and it is updated on a regular basis. 50 chaplains' packs have been developed for the chaplaincy boxes. This includes laminated A3 and A4 copies of all denominational prayers, God of Love and Light Prayer and end stage of life resources for every denomination. Chaplains will begin attending patients again, based on risk assessment.

A **dedicated Psychological Support Helpline** has been established to support staff through the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to this service is through contacting Occupational Health Helpline: 02871 611281 and pressing Option 3. Availability is from **Monday to Friday 9.00am to 9.00pm and Saturday and Sunday 2.00pm to 6.00pm.**

Accessibility has been extended to include all HSC staff including those within the Western Trust, local GP Practices, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and the Independent Sector Care Homes.

<https://twistwest.org/news/staff-psychological-support-line>

### **3. Occupational Health**

Occupational Health continues to provide advice to staff and managers via the **COVID 19 Helpline**, with approximately **1200 queries** dealt with to date. Further advice is provided to managers, regarding staff with underlying health conditions, via the OH Advice Form.

Occupational Health is now recording **COVID test results for staff**, and has commenced follow-up **surveillance in areas where a cluster of cases** has been identified. To date there have been **4** cluster areas identified – ED Altnagelvin, Ward 2 Waterside Hospital, Grangewood and Occupational Health Admin team. Learning about Social Distancing in the workplace and Infection Prevention Control advice is being reinforced.

**Face Fit Testing (FFT)** – As a result of a regional shortage in supply of the 8833+ face masks, testing on the 1863V and 1873V masks commenced on 5 April 2020 in both Altnagelvin and SWAH, and on 9 April 2020 in OHPCC. On the basis that the vast majority of ICU and Theatre staff were previously tested on the 8833+ mask, it was agreed that the remaining supply of this mask would be ring fenced for this group of staff to continue to use.

The 1863V and 1873V masks are being tested on all other staff carrying out, or working in an environment involving ‘Aerosol Generating Procedures’ Trust wide with priority given to those working in the identified priority areas, i.e. COVID Wards, ICU, ED, Theatre, HDU, Paediatrics, ENT (only those working with Tracheostomies), Physiotherapy (only those working in COVID Wards), Doctors, Dentistry, Stroke Unit, Foyle Hospice and AMH Units.

The numbers of staff who have been successfully tested on each of these 3 masks since from 5 April 2020 are as follows: (as at 22/04/20)

<b>Mode of Mask</b>	<b>Number of staff successfully tested on this mask from 5.4.20</b>
1863V	<b>872</b>
1873V	<b>126</b>
8833+	<b>515</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,513</b>

Testing across the Trust’s three main hospitals (Altnagelvin, SWAH and OHPCC) is now at full capacity with testing running 7 days a week, mainly between **8.00am – 10.00pm, although sessions are available from 6.00am to 2.00am when needed.** In addition to the Trust’s internally trained face fit testers, two private testing companies, namely MDAL Solutions and Healthcare Essentials are continuing to support with the FFT provision, which enables approximately 150 staff to be tested per day.

#### **4. Childcare Provision**

**Advice for key worker parents** was circulated via Trust Communication on 17/4/20. The guidance was developed by the Department of Health and advises key worker parents on the childcare available to them and how they can access it.

**Financial Support for Key Workers** – A Survey Monkey questionnaire for staff to identify their childcare needs has been extended and was re-issued via Trust Communication on 17/4/2020. The Trust Early Years team has completed scoping of the number of vacancies across their childcare providers and is working with staff to

match them to appropriate providers to meet their needs. This is under continuous review by the Early Years team.

The Department of Health has indicated that there will be financial support for key worker parents to assist with excess childcare costs resulting from COVID-19, however the detail of this has not yet been released.

## 5. Staff Deployment

**Trust Facilities** - staff working within services which have been scaled back have been identified for temporary deployment to essential services to support hospital and community surge planning and resilience. HR is working closely with each bronze control group to identify priority areas and respond to staffing requests through a newly established HR Staff Allocation Team. In order to ensure timely response to staffing requests, an amended redeployment process was developed and agreed with local Trades Unions.

As part of surge planning the Trust is increasing bed capacity in community facilities that will support hospital discharges, Covid recovery and palliative care. HR is working closely with senior managers to appoint additional staff and/or redeploy internal staff to a number of these identified facilities

**Independent Sector (IS) Facilities** - the Trust has a duty to support the Independent Sector to maintain safe staffing levels. A task and finish group has been established to identify staff available for deployment to IS facilities. Department of Health Guidance outlines the deployment process and the group is actively developing a workforce model to respond to those facilities identified within this guidance. In addition, a communication has been issued calling for internal volunteers to work in local Care Homes.

**Trade Union Engagement** - local engagement with Trades Unions is continuous with a weekly conference meeting which is well attended by local Trade Union representatives.

## 6. Support for Managers

Easily accessible **guides** have been developed to assist managers to work through the challenging workforce issues they have and continue to encounter during the pandemic period. These include **a one-page flowchart** to include the scenarios included in the **FAQ document**, **Pregnant Workers Guidelines** and **Risk Assessment Flowchart** to reflect the Royal College of Obstetrician and Gynaecology advice and guidelines. Guidelines are reviewed and updated regularly.

## **7. International Workers' Memorial Day 2020 (IWMD)**

**One-Minute Silence** - we have liaised with our Trades Union colleagues to ask staff to observe one-minute of silence to pay tribute to the sacrifice made by so many NHS staff during the pandemic. Trust Communication was issued on 24/4/20 to ask staff to observe the one-minute silence and the event was also profiled on Facebook and Twitter.

The Chair and CMT joined Trade Union colleagues at eight locations across the Trust to lead the remembrance.

## **8. Absence**

4.69 % of staff are absent due to COVID symptoms, self-isolation, shielding or carrying out caring duties, not working.

Those shielding but not working are being reviewed to identify work they can do at home.