

Message from the Chairman



As we approach the end of another busy year, I am delighted to reflect on some of the many successes we've seen at RJAH over recent months. Our strong performance in the latest Adult Inpatient Survey, including achieving the top spot for cleanliness, and our positive CQC report are all achievements we can be incredibly proud of.

We are also delighted to welcome the Headley Court Charity, which has relocated to RJAH. This marks the start of an exciting new chapter for both the charity and the Trust.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Council of Governors for their ongoing support throughout the year. We are grateful to four of Governors who have returned to the Council in the past 12 months, and we thank them for their continued dedication. We currently have a vacancy for a Governor representing Powys and would encourage anyone with an interest in helping to shape the future of our Trust to consider getting involved.

I must finish, as ever, by thanking our staff for their hard work and commitment, particularly as we head into what is sure to be another challenging winter for the NHS. We continue to work closely with our partners to ensure our patients continue to receive the high-quality care they deserve.

CQC Report hails 'Good' surgical and critical care

Surgical and Critical Care Services at RJAH have been rated as 'Good' overall by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The CQC rates services by classifying them as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate against five criteria to determine whether services are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

Inspectors took an in-depth look at the Trust's surgical and critical care services specifically, during the inspection in May of this year.

The report shines a specific spotlight on the care that was observed, noting that people were treated with kindness and compassion, and that staff protected patients' privacy and dignity.

You can read the report in full by visiting www.cqc.org.uk/directory/RL131



Governors Meetings

25 November 2025

12 March 2026

For more information, please email:
rjah.ft@nhs.net

Your elected Public Governors

Shropshire

Victoria Sugden (Lead) / Colin Chapman
Gill Pitcher

North Wales

Shelia Hughes / Jan Greasley

West Midlands

Tony Wright

Cheshire & Merseyside

Neil Turner

Powys

Vacant

Rest of England & Wales

Russell Luckock

Staff Governors

Joy Chowdhury / Kate Betts / Nicki Bellinger

Stakeholder Governors

(appointed by organisations that work closely with the Trust)

Peter David – RJAH Voluntary Services Committee

Councillor Craig Emery – Shropshire Council

Karina Wright – Keele University

Membership figures

At the end of October 2025, the membership figures were:

Staff	1,386
Volunteers	405
Public	5,291
Total	7,082

Governor Profile

Gill Pitcher

Public Governor for Shropshire



Having lived in Shropshire for 28 years, Gill brings a wealth of experience and a deep-rooted connection to the local community to their role as a Governor at RJAH.

A qualified physiotherapist since 1985, she worked within the NHS until 2011, including over 15 years at RJAH, where she held several roles within the Therapy Department and went on to become Therapy Manager. After leaving the NHS, Gill joined her husband in running the family business, where they continue to work part-time.

This is not Gill's first time serving as a Governor at the hospital. Reflecting on their return to the role, she said: *"I very much enjoyed my time as a Governor previously, and I'm pleased to have been re-elected. Having seen the hospital from many perspectives, as a staff member, a patient, and a family member, I feel I can help make a real difference."*

With personal and family experiences of care at RJAH, Gill is passionate about representing members in Shropshire and ensuring that the hospital continues to deliver the highest standards of care.

"The Orthopaedic is a special hospital with excellent staff," she added. "I want to work on behalf of our members to make sure the quality of care exceeds expectations, and that everyone continues to strive for the best possible outcomes."

Governors are always pleased to hear from our members and can be contacted by email on rjah.governors@nhs.net

Representing People

When Parliament created NHS foundation trusts, it provided them with independence from central government and a governance structure that ensured participation from within the local communities they serve.

NHS foundation trust governors are the direct representatives of local interests within foundation trusts. Governors do not undertake operational management of NHS foundation trusts; rather they challenge the board of directors and collectively hold them to account for the trust's performance. It is also the governors' responsibility to represent their members' interests, particularly in relation to the strategic direction of the trust.

Legislation provides governors with statutory responsibilities to help deliver these key objectives. The legislation is the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Please note that meetings of the Council of Governors are open to members of the public. The public are asked to notify the Trust of any matters they wish to raise in advance, as this will allow the Trust to be able to respond fully and will assist in the time management of the meeting.



If you would like to attend, please email: rjah.ft@nhs.net to confirm your attendance and also of any matters you wish to raise.

Charity update

Friends continue to make a positive impact at RJAH

The League of Friends have continued to demonstrate their commitment to enhancing patient experience and supporting staff at RJAH. Their recent projects highlight the wide-ranging impact of their work across the Trust.

A new mural has been installed in the X-Ray Department, designed to create a bright and welcoming environment for paediatric patients. The project was made possible thanks to funding from the charity, with the design brought to life by Shropshire Design and Print Solutions.

In addition, the League of Friends have funded three new ultrasound machines for the Anaesthetics Department. This £80,000 investment provides clinicians with access to the latest technology, helping to improve both the precision and efficiency of patient care.

Their support is not limited to financial contributions. Volunteer involvement continues to make a real difference across the hospital, including on the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries, where Melvin has been providing one to one digital assistance to patients, helping them become more confident with assistive technology. He is working closely with Jess Potts, Assistive Technologist from Aspire – a charity that supports people from injury to independence.



News from the Trust

Pre-Op screening pathway set to reduce cancellations and improve recovery

A new dedicated early health screening pathway has been introduced at RJAH to help adult patients prepare for surgery, reduce cancellations and improve recovery times.

The initiative, led by the Pre-Operative Assessment team, identifies and addresses potential health risks at the earliest stage of a patient's surgical journey. Patients listed for inpatient surgery at their outpatient appointment are invited to a health screening clinic, where their general health and fitness for surgery are assessed.

Using digital screening via iPads, staff can quickly capture key information before nurses and healthcare assistants carry out tests such as blood pressure, BMI, iron levels, and MRSA screening. Results are reviewed by the Optimisation Nurse, who can provide tailored advice on areas such as smoking cessation, nutrition or fitness.

By introducing screening earlier, RJAH can intervene sooner, reducing repeat appointments, theatre disruptions and improving overall patient outcomes.



Headley Court charity relocates to RJAH

The Headley Court Charity, who seek to support the needs of Armed Forces veterans, has formally relocated to RJAH.

Headley Court was previously a military rehabilitation centre in Surrey before closing in 2018, when services moved to Stanford Hall near Loughborough. Since then, the charity has focused on funding projects that honour the legacy of Headley Court, including awarding a £6 million grant to RJAH in 2020 to create the UK's first dedicated veterans' orthopaedic centre.

The centre opened in late 2021, and the charity's move to RJAH further strengthens this important partnership in veterans' healthcare.



Ask others to join

Over 6,500 people have chosen to become a member - anyone over 14 years of age can join and there are a number of benefits, including invitations to events.

As a member you:

- Become part of a wide network patients, carers, local community members and staff supporting RJAHS for the future.
- Have a say in how the hospital is run through voting for governors (or by being elected as a governor) and by sharing your views in our member surveys.
- Receive regular news from the hospital, invitations to our members' events and a copy of the Governors' annual report.
- Support the hospital as an NHS Foundation

Trust by encouraging friends, family, patients and carers to sign up as members too!

To join online please visit: www.rjah.nhs.uk
or for a membership form ring 01691 404394
or email: rjah.ft@nhs.net

Get Connected!

Join us on social media and keep up to date with the latest news and events going on across the Trust.

We have an active community on Facebook with over 13,000 followers.

If you've got anything you think we should be sharing on social media, why not let us know about it?



You can also find us on X and Instagram at @RJAHS_NHS



Feedback matters

Do you have any feedback on this bulletin?

Is there any other information you would like us to include in the next edition? Do you have any articles you would like to submit? By passing on ideas and suggestions about the report - or any other feedback - you can help us carry out our role more effectively.

Contact the editors – Katrina Morphet and Allen Edwards at: rjah.governors@nhs.net

Patients the winners as hospital programme smashes milestone

Back in June, clinicians were celebrating after discharging their 1,000th and 1,001st patients on the same day as receiving a new knee or hip.

Phil Holdcroft, 45, from Bulkeley, near Chester, was the landmark patient when he received a new hip from Professor Geraint Thomas. The following day Anne Long, 72, from Crewe, became the 1,001st patient to go home on the same day as surgery after receiving a new knee from Mr Niall Graham.

Both Phil and Anne were seen under the care of the Enhanced Recovery Programme, launched back in April 2023, which is a modern, surgically led and evidence-based approach that helps patients undergoing surgery get back to health as soon as possible following their operation.

It ensures that a patient's health is optimised prior to surgery, improved pain management is introduced during their hospital stay, and that post-operative mobilisation is achieved earlier.



RJAHS hailed as high performer in major national survey

RJAHS has again been singled out as one of the very best in the country following the results of a major national survey.

Patient feedback has seen the organisation named as one of just eight providers producing results "much better than expected" in the annual Adult Inpatient Survey.

The survey is produced by the CQC, who monitor, regulate and inspect health and social care services in England. It is based on feedback from more than 63,500 people who had a spell as a hospital inpatient during November 2024. More than 1,200 RJAHS patients were invited to take part in the survey, and the response rate of 70% was the best in the country and well above the national average of 41%.

RJAHS has been named by the CQC as one of eight organisations placed in the top band of Trusts delivering results that are considered "much better than expected", with patient experience that is substantially better than elsewhere.

Detailed analysis shows that its hospital wards and rooms are rated the cleanest for the fifth year in a row.

The survey also included questions on whether patients, as well as their family members and carers, had been involved by staff in decisions about their care and treatment – and RJAHS scored highest this year across this area for the second straight year.

Full details of the Adult Inpatient Survey 2024 can be found online here: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/surveys/adult-inpatient-survey>