

Summary Report 2006/07



	Better	
Stronger		Safer
		Faster

Transforming St George's

63,400

Inpatients admitted +3%

St George's Healthcare NHS Trust is one of the country's oldest, largest and busiest teaching hospitals with an international reputation for patient care, research and expertise. We provide everything you would expect from your local NHS hospital but also offer specialist services for trauma, neurology, cardiac care, cancer, renal transplantation and stroke.

This year we treated over 540,000 patients – 14,500 more than last year – whilst continuing to reduce our waiting times. But there is still more we can do to make every aspect of our care fit for the 21st century.

This summary shows just some ways in which we are delivering care that is better, safer and faster, which in turn makes St George's stronger.

"Since I was diagnosed with cancer, my treatment has moved so quickly that I cannot fault it. Staff have been so kind and informative. They were brilliant."

Valerie Brown
Patient (tended by nurse Sharon Abdulla below)



New leadership, new focus

28,700

Daycases +14%

In October, we welcomed David Astley as our new Chief Executive and alongside Chair Naaz Coker the Trust resolved to further reduce its deficit, improve patient care, and assert itself as one of the leading teaching hospitals in London.

What inspires at St George's is the quality of people who work here. With their drive and ability we have been able to achieve so much over the past twelve months.

Overall, the Trust was named as one of the country's top five teaching hospitals in the *Good Hospital Guide 2007* for our excellent performance in areas including emergency care, the satisfaction of patients, and our short waiting times. The *Guide* also underlined that St George's is one of the safest hospitals in which to have an operation.

In addition, our stroke unit was heralded as one of the UK's top ten in the National Sentinel Audit, and in 2007 we will become one of the first hospitals to offer 24-hour access to clot-busting drugs which can reduce the risk of paralysis and improve the recovery of stroke patients.

But there are areas where we must still do better. Over the past five years we made real progress in cutting our rates of hospital acquired infections, but there is no room for complacency. Our patients quite rightly have a zero tolerance when it comes to their own health. We must adopt a zero tolerance when it comes to infection.



Naaz Coker
Chair

David Astley
Chief Executive

Better

Emergency care

St George's sees over 300 patients a day in its A&E department, more than ever before. Throughout the year the Trust has successfully treated 98% of patients within four hours, but missed this target by 0.3% during the winter months. Nicola Shopland, Matron for A&E, explains why:

"Like many hospitals, St George's saw an increase in patients with the sickness bug *Norovirus* which reduced the bed space available to transfer patients from A&E."

We took action and agreed a framework to redirect patients who did not require A&E services back to primary care, giving A&E staff more time to care for the patients who needed their help the most.

"The dip in waiting times was short lived," adds Nicola. "A&E is now back delivering the same strong performance and treating above 98% of patients in less than four hours."

St George's is one of the UK's leading trauma and orthopaedic centres, which is able to offer specialist services not available elsewhere in the country.

"These are exciting times for the Trust," says Medical Director, Chris Streater. "Health Minister Ara Darzi proposes that a small number of real centres of excellence become designated trauma centres for London. While the outcome of these proposals is yet to be seen, St George's is in good stead to become one of these centres able to provide around-the-clock expert care."



"My treatment has been brilliant. The staff have been absolutely fantastic and my physiotherapist is awesome. They all have very demanding jobs, but they all do them incredibly well."

Gareth Hammett
Patient (above)

98,463

A&E attendances +0.5%

Safer

Maternity care



4,847

Babies delivered +6%

"The aim of the Carmen Suite, named after Carmen Brooks-Johnson, a midwife at St George's for more than 30 years, is to provide more choice for women who want a natural birth."

Rixa Van Den Bussche
Supervisor of Midwives
(with Carmen on left)

Almost 5,000 babies are born at St George's each year. We provide a regional service for complicated pregnancies, but the majority of women giving birth at St George's are local.

Our delivery suite has 13 beds and offers a wide range of pain relief, including 24-hour access to epidurals. From September 2007, an additional unit will open.

The Carmen Suite's three pleasantly decorated delivery rooms are equipped with birthing balls and mats to help women stay active during labour. It also has two birthing pools, a lounge area and kitchenette, and offers aromatherapy and reflexology.

In March 2007, maternity services at St George's were awarded Level Three status in the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts (CNST), one of only 16 maternity services in England to reach this top standard. The award was given in recognition of the robust systems we have in place to manage risks and promote the safety of our patients.

"Pregnancy and birth will always carry a risk," Rixa concludes. "That's one of the reasons the safe delivery of a healthy baby is a cause for celebration – but we are striving to make the process safer all the time."

Faster

Heart care



88,711

Diagnostic tests +8%

In October 2005, St George's launched its 24-hour emergency angioplasty service – a minimally invasive procedure to restore blood flow to the heart. Cardiologist Stephen Brecker says: "Extending this service has enabled us to carry out 250 of these procedures in 2006/07, compared to 180 the previous year."

Paul Brown, a secondary school teacher, is just one of those who says he wouldn't be here without this life-saving service.

He was woken one night with severe chest pains and called an ambulance. Paul, who lives in Carshalton, was initially taken to his nearest hospital, St Helier, but was then transferred to St George's so an emergency angioplasty could be carried out in one of our five catheter laboratories in the Atkinson Morley Wing in the early hours of the morning.

Heart attacks happen when the blood vessel to the heart becomes blocked by fatty deposits. Thrombolytic 'clot-busting' drugs can be given to restore blood flow and limit the damage to the heart.

Paul says: "From my own experience, and from what I saw in the Coronary Care Unit and on the ward, I can say the staff were wonderful."

In 2006, St George's was pronounced as one of the top four hospitals in London for heart surgery. Assessed by the Healthcare Commission, 97.6% of our heart patients survived this major operation.

Stronger

Finance

425,791

Outpatient appointments +1%

For the third year running, St George's has delivered on its promise to improve its financial position and better its services.

In 2004/05, the Trust had a year-end deficit of £21.7 million. But by 2005/06, this had been reduced to £11.6 million. Our target for 2006/07 was £4.4 million. The Trust actually closed the year with an in-year deficit of £2.9 million.

Colin Gentile, Executive Director of Finance and Turnaround, says: "To break even the Trust now has to save a further £25.7 million. This is no small amount, but it is significantly less because of our strong performance so far."

To reduce costs and improve efficiency the Trust has introduced the strictest of controls on recruitment, minimised the expensive use of bank and agency staff, and invested in 'spend to save' initiatives that aim to make the Trust work smarter, not harder to benefit both patients and staff.

"But, sustainable savings cannot be found through slicing services," Colin emphasises. "Throughout every step of our financial recovery, we have closely monitored the impact of our reforms to make sure that the quality or quantity of our patient care is not affected. If we find something is not working, we will stop and find an alternative solution that does."

"Next year we aim to become a Foundation Trust. This will give us the flexibility to respond more quickly to our patients' needs and the freedom to invest in the services they want to further improve our care."



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"Our continuing financial recovery is to everyone's credit. All have worked solidly to find ways to deliver a faster, high-quality service that is also more cost-efficient."

Colin Gentile
Executive Director of Finance and Turnaround

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Our promise

At St George's, our values underpin everything we do. We promise to:

- Treat all people with respect and dignity
 - Deliver care in partnership with others
 - Continually strive for excellence
 - Ensure probity and transparency in spending public money
 - Be an exemplary employer
 - Be committed to education, training and research
 - Be open and honest with each other
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St George's Hospital Charity (reg charity no 241527)

The Charity supports patients and staff of the Trust by awarding grants to enable improvements to buildings, facilities and equipment, for innovation and research, and for the direct benefit of patients and staff. To find out more please visit:

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/charity.asp

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Designed by the right stuff

Photography by Mark Evenden, Robert Harris, Andrew Rolland and Tim Rumble

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Communications

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