

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid opens new A&E

- Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid thanks NHS staff across the North West and West Midlands for their unwavering work during the pandemic.
- He opened a new £15 million A&E department at Leighton Hospital, Crewe
- Visits are part of a week-long national tour reinforcing government commitment to reform, integrate and fund the NHS and social care and level up health across the country.

NHS staff across the North West and West Midlands were today (Wednesday 16 February) thanked for their tireless efforts to provide care over the course of the pandemic by the Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid.

Marking day three of his 'Road to Recovery' tour across England, he visited three sites across the region:

- Deeplish Community Centre, Rochdale
- Leighton Hospital, Crewe
- Birmingham Heartlands hospital

Staff shared their experiences of working under immense pressure during the pandemic and discussed the government's plans to reform, integrate and fund the NHS and social care, in a drive to build back better.

The Health and Social Care Secretary saw first-hand how key sites in the North West and West Midlands are improving patient care and set out how a more joined up health and care system will mean better care for everyone and help tackle disparities.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid said:

It's been fantastic to visit the health services in the North West and West Midlands to thank staff for their efforts throughout the pandemic and outline our commitment to reform, recovery and funding for our NHS and social care.

We are committed to tackling the COVID-19 backlog and building a health and social care system for the long term that works for everyone.

Our recent Elective Recovery Plan is a vital step in rethinking how our health and care services deliver operations, treatment and checks as we level-up services up and down the country.

As part of his commitment to levelling up healthcare across the country, the Health and Social Care Secretary joined staff at Deeplish Community Centre in Rochdale for their quarterly equalities team coffee morning, to learn about the issues facing ethnic minority communities in the area. These included language skills, funding for pharmacies, nurse pay and hours and access to face-to-face GP appointments.

He discussed the importance of the centre's upcoming "cancer awareness campaign" to build awareness of screening services to support early diagnosis within the community and urged the team to respond to the ongoing call for evidence to help shape the government's 10-Year Cancer Plan for England.

The Health and Social Care Secretary then travelled to Leighton Hospital in Crewe where he met staff and officially opened their new £15 million A&E department.

The Trust secured funding as part of the government's ongoing commitment to investing in modern facilities, and the A&E began taking patients yesterday (Tuesday 15 February).

These new facilities will help staff continue to provide world class care and enable the hospital to better meet the needs of the people of Cheshire. With a dedicated paediatric unit, more resuscitation bays and more mental health assessment rooms, patients will be seen quicker, in a larger and safer environment.

Moving to the Birmingham Heartlands hospital, the Health and Social Care Secretary met with participants in the cutting-edge PANORAMIC antivirals trial. As part of the trial, patients with pre-existing conditions can benefit from new antiviral treatments for COVID-19 to reduce the need for hospital admission and help them recover quickly.

He also visited the site of the new Heartlands Treatment Centre due to open later this year. Backed by £97.1 million of government funding, the centre will provide a modern, spacious environment for patients to receive non-emergency procedures and treatments including diagnostics, day surgery and outpatient appointments that will help tackle the COVID-19 backlog by treating 5000,000 patients.

Staff across all sites emphasized the need to look beyond the pandemic and reform health and social care to ensure services can continue to meet the needs of the population. The Health and Social Care Secretary discussed initiatives including the delivery plan to tackle the COVID-19 backlog of elective care, Integration White Paper and his personal mission to eradicate health disparities, which will include the publication of a Health Disparities White Paper later this year.

James Sumner, Chief Executive of the Mid Cheshire Trust, said:

"We were delighted to welcome the Secretary of State to Leighton today, at a time when we are investing in enhanced hospital services for our local community. The purpose-built A&E ensures a bigger, better and safer

environment for both patients and staff. A&E attendance has increased across the country in recent years, so this provides an excellent opportunity to meet the needs of our growing population of 300,000.”

Dr David Matthews, Clinical Director of Emergency Care at Mid Cheshire Trust, added:

The NHS has been tested to the maximum by a combination of higher patient attendances, the Coronavirus pandemic and the annual winter pressures.

This facility is really exciting for the Trust – it has been carefully designed to allow for the clear separation of children and adults in a modern, welcoming environment that will greatly improve the patient experience.

University Hospitals Birmingham Chief Executive, Prof David Rosser said:

We’re proud to have the opportunity to highlight the progress made on the Heartlands Treatment Centre to the Health Secretary today. We are grateful that he also took the time to listen to the experiences of my tremendous colleagues who have been on the front line of the pandemic.

Heartlands Treatment Centre will provide a modern environment for our clinicians to give exceptional standards of care, state-of-the-art diagnostics, and more non-emergency day-case surgery for up to half a million people in our communities – vitally supporting our ability to get back on track and improve waiting lists for patients in the wake of COVID-19.

This new facility is on time and on budget, and it will also bring huge potential for staff development and excellent career opportunities for local people.