

Your hard work taking us in right direction

A message from Karen Johnson, Director of Finance

The finalists for this year's Staff Excellence Awards were announced last month.

If you're anything like me, you'll have enjoyed reading the fascinating stories behind each of the nominations.



The fact that such incredible achievements are taking place here and in the community each and every day is inspiring - especially since we have all had to adapt how we work and learn to be more efficient with what's available to us.

It was just two years ago that we were facing a deficit - the difference between what we were spending and what we were receiving - of nearly £20 million.

Since then, your hard work has helped us to save around £29 million and brought our deficit figure down to just over £7 million.

I know it's been difficult, especially when the savings can't be made at the expense of patient care, so I'd like to thank you for your continued efforts throughout this turnaround period.

Your contribution has helped accelerate our financial recovery and, although we're not out of the woods just yet, we should feel proud of how far we have come in what has been a relatively short space of time.

Putting the numbers into context

While it is definitely good news and a strong indication that our plans are taking us where we need to be, we can't afford to become complacent, fall back into bad habits by losing track of what we spend or take our foot off the pedal.

Although our true end-of-year position remains in deficit, the books show we are in surplus as our finances were supported throughout the year by a number of one-off payments from the Department of Health.

The funding, which came to just over £11 million for the year, arrived in three instalments and was given to us due to our strong performance in achieving our savings targets and performing better than expected in many clinical areas.

This is where your efficiency savings have really made a difference, as we would not have been considered for such support had we not already proved we were on a solid path to recovery.

However, this doesn't mean the Trust is now sitting on a pile of cash that can be spent on whatever we like.

Our reported surplus can, in fact, only be used to help pay off some of our outstanding debts, which is a bit like being given a helping hand to pay a credit card bill at home.

This sort of help is unlikely to be repeated, which means we still need to be prudent with our spending and, wherever possible, live within our means.

Light at the end of the tunnel

Having said that, there's still reason to feel positive.

Even if the Trust hadn't been given an extra penny, our finances at the end of the

year, although still in deficit, would have been £1 million better than we had originally expected.

And after the year we've just had - with demand rising like never before - that's quite an achievement, so thank you again for the part you have played.

We're well on our way to meeting our target of being financially stable by the end of 2018/19 but to get there we need to stay on the path we're on, which means further savings (around £14 million) have to be made over the next 12 months.

I appreciate that nobody enjoys being told to tighten their belt, but we've proven how resilient we can be when faced with difficult situations and I have every faith that together we can build a strong future for not just ourselves, but the people we care for every day.

If anyone has questions about anything mentioned above, please feel free to contact me by email at karen.johnson@gwh.nhs.uk or by calling my PA Alison Frisk on 01793 605574.

Thank you.

Karen Johnson,
Director of Finance

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Please pass this message on to your colleagues.

