



## Epsom Hospital looks to 'terrible' Australian flu season

7 September 2022



Epsom and St Helier hospital staff will be encouraged to get their flu jab after a "terrible" Australian flu season which can be a sign of things to come in the UK. Among concerns that covid is now "old news" staff will also be encouraged to take their coronavirus booster in a campaign to encourage take-up in front-line staff. A board meeting of the Epsom and St Helier hospital trust on Friday (September 2) heard that Jacqueline Totterdell, group chief executive of the St George's and Epsom and St Helier hospitals group, had "nearly died" when she was admitted to hospital with flu a couple of years ago.

She said this experience gave her "a real passion" for making sure people took up the jab.

The chief executive added: "We always look towards Australia for what sort of flu season they've had, and they've had a pretty terrible one."

"That, for me, is a real driver about how we can encourage more of our staff to have the flu jab."

Non-executive director Peter Kane raised a concern that coronavirus may be "yesterday's news" and asked about how staff at the trust would be reminded of the importance of the coronavirus booster and the flu vaccination, which can be given at the same time.

Arlene Wellman, group chief nursing officer, said communications would begin going out to staff and that the best practices would be pulled from both St George's and Epsom and St Helier trusts.

The two trusts formed a hospital group last year with the aim of sharing and working together on services.

According to the NHS, more people are likely to get flu this winter as fewer people will have built up natural immunity to it during the pandemic.

It can be life-threatening for some people, particularly those with certain health conditions.

The chief executive also confirmed the next board meeting in November would be updated on the trusts' winter resilience programme, which is already being planned, and included looking at having the capacity to vaccinate all staff.

The coronavirus booster will be offered to certain groups including residents and staff in care homes and front line health and social care workers.

The meeting also heard about staff at St Helier "doing their absolute best" in a hospital building that was often not fit for purpose, with leaking roofs and lifts that were not big enough to fit hospital beds.

In July it was announced that a planned new hospital in Sutton has been delayed to 2027 at the earliest.

Board papers: <https://www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/board-papers-and-agendas>

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## Civilised protest to save civilisation?

7 September 2022



Sunday 4th Sept, Epsom & Ewell's climate action group put on a hard-hitting and thought-provoking street-theatre performance in Epsom centre. Right in the middle of town, on the big crossroads near the clock tower, a colourful backdrop had been erected, depicting landscapes ravaged by drought, forest fires and flooding. Against this backdrop, a dozen actors played out a silent lament, mourning the victims of climate disasters in the global South. The emotional impact of bodies on the ground being covered by shrouds was further amplified by a slow, powerful drumbeat and a bugle playing 'the last post' ...

Not surprisingly, this performance drew strong reactions from the public. Some felt greatly strengthened in their perception that a changing climate is a grave danger to us all, and the cause of worldwide injustice. However, there were also some who disapproved of the graphic nature of the performance and who felt that ordinary people were made to feel bad for things that are really the responsibility of governments and commerce?

As far as the local climate action group (Epsom & Ewell XR) is concerned, all views for-and against are welcomed, as they feel the gravest danger to us all will come from indifference to the issues.

Further actions and street-theatre are being planned.

Epsom & Ewell XR can be contacted at [epsomewellxr@gmail.com](mailto:epsomewellxr@gmail.com)

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## Local hospital's building woes

7 September 2022



Buildings "Absolutely not fit for purpose", a meeting has heard as staff at **St Helier hospital** are trying to provide care. NHS bosses were told about a labour ward with a leaking roof, an intensive care ward where temperatures reached 35 degrees and lifts that were too small for hospital beds.

There are also corridors "cluttered" with equipment and staff "doing their absolute best in circumstances they should probably shouldn't be asked to work in". The board meeting of the NHS trust which runs the site took place on Friday (September 2) after members had done a walk around of the hospital to inspect first-hand.

It followed the announcement that a new planned hospital in Sutton, which would see the **Epsom and St Helier** sites' services downgraded, will now not be ready until at least 2027. The trust formed a hospital group with St George's hospital last year, which it was stressed in the meeting was not a merger between the trusts but a way of working together on services.

**Jacqueline Totterdell**, group chief executive of the St George's and Epsom and St Helier hospitals group, had been on a visit to the St Helier site's gynaecology and maternity wards, including pre- and post-natal and labour wards. The hospital leader said that staff based at the site a pre-fabricated building staff "do pretty well", despite a lift that is 50 years old, regularly breaks down and "is a real risk".

Ms Totterdell added: "When it really rains they have buckets and pads down because it rains and there's not much else we can do with that roof." While she said there were some issues around staffing, and around sick leave, annual leave and maternity leave, those she spoke to said they worked in good teams and generally enjoyed working. She added: "That's just the context that they work in."

**Phil Wilbraham**, an associate non-executive director on the board, called the hospital's intensive therapy unit (ITU): "The good, the bad and the ugly". He said going from the old unit where the beds were too close together and there was little air conditioning and exchange of air was a "massive contrast" to the new area, completed in 2020. Mr Wilbraham said: "When you go to the new ITU, you see how it should be."

He also said he'd heard about patients being brought into the unit and put in rooms where it was 35 degrees in August, and said in this environment patients couldn't be expected to recover as quickly as they should. He added: "I would say the staff seemed to be extremely calm, organised and professional. It's the classic of people doing their absolute best in circumstances they should probably shouldn't be asked to work in."

The meeting also heard about "clutter" in corridors and the demands of trying to balance bed space with break rooms for staff and storage at the site. Group chairman **Gillian Norton** highlighted a lot of the "clutter" was actually essential equipment. She said: "The whole discussion just illustrated why we need our new hospital at St Helier. We're trying to provide outstanding care, which we largely do, but in buildings that absolutely are not fit for purpose."

The board also heard from **Derek Macallan**, a non-executive director, about a patient who had been in the hospital for six months and not yet been able to be discharged because he was waiting to get his home situation sorted out. Mr Macallan said as well as patients in the renal department not being able to be discharged because they did not have the necessary social care available on release, he too noticed the poor state of the buildings.

In reply, he heard that when discharging patients the hospital trust could be dealing with up to 17 separate district and borough councils because patients extend out into Hampshire and Berkshire.

On the paediatrics ward, **Andrew Grimshaw**, group chief finance officer, saw that specific beds had to be bought to get in the lift, because the generic hospital beds didn't fit. He said he'd heard from staff that the planned Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Sutton would solve a lot of those problems and challenges.

Managing director at the trust, **James Blythe**, told a Sutton Council meeting in July the trust was still "waiting for feedback" on the next steps and funding of the project from central government.

## Adviser to Pope blesses Epsom Heritage Project

7 September 2022



**Baroness Sheila Hollins** has joined Freemen of the Borough, the local MP and others in their Patronage of The **Friends of Horton Cemetery**. Baroness Hollins is a leading figure nationally and worldwide in the field of psychiatry. A former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the British Medical Association, she is an adviser to **The Pope** on the protection of minors and is a cross-bench member of the **House of Lords**.

The Charity's 50+ strong research team leader, **Kevin McDonnell**, said "We are truly honoured that the charity's objects have Baroness Hollin's endorsement. Especially as on 6th September we launch our project "**Out of Sight, Out of Mind**", supported by **Historic England** and **Kings College London**. The story of the Cemetery and the Stories of the lives of those buried there are becoming significant locally, nationally and internationally. We have researchers and followers here, across the United Kingdom and overseas. An extraordinary heritage putting Epsom on the world map."

**Dr Alana Harris**, Director of Kings College's Liberal Arts Department said "The project aims to restore dignity to the 9000 patients buried beside Epsom's Hook Road, in Europe's largest asylum cemetery. Our project seeks to recapture these stories and to create a crowd-sourced memorial, overcoming historical amnesia, neglect, and inaction. We are seeking volunteers (who will be trained, and work in pairs) to lead public engagement 'chat and craft' workshops, which will discuss the history of the 'Epsom Asylum' cluster and its cemetery."

You can find out more at an information session on Tuesday 6th September 4pm-6pm at St. Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom KT19 8HA and you can contact the Project via [www.hortoncemetery.org](http://www.hortoncemetery.org)



## Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Remembering Epsom's Forgotten Residents

**Did you know** that the largest cluster of psychiatric hospitals in Europe was in Epsom?

**And** that the unclaimed bodies of over 9000 psychiatric patients who died in these facilities were buried in the local graveyard, Horton Cemetery?

We want to restore dignity to the thousands of people buried in unmarked plots on this wasteland.



Our project, supported by **Historic England**, seeks to recapture these stories and to create a crowd-sourced memorial, overcoming historical amnesia, neglect, and inaction.

### We need your help!

We are seeking volunteers (who will be trained, and work in pairs) to lead public engagement 'chat and craft' workshops, which will discuss the history of the 'Epsom Asylum' cluster and its cemetery.

Come and find out more at our information session on

**Tuesday 6th September 4pm-6pm**

at St. Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom

KT19 8HA

For further information visit [linktr.ee/outofsightepsom](http://linktr.ee/outofsightepsom) or email [alana.harris@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:alana.harris@kcl.ac.uk)



## Foodbank feeding thoughts...

7 September 2022



**Gillian Nichols of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank** writes: What price do you put on mental health? Among the people that visit foodbanks, many have severe mental health issues due to traumatic experiences, poor circumstances, and often unaddressed medical issues they've faced in their lives. At Epsom Foodbank we have a higher motive than simply feeding the people who need us.



We want to help reduce the need for our Foodbank services through addressing the cause of the problem, not just the problem itself. And we are already doing this very successfully.

Our outstanding counselling service has been sitting alongside the foodbank, working with clients to help them move on from their problems towards independence and work.

It's hard for many of us to understand the plight of the people we help. It is best described in their own words which you can read at the end of this letter.

To have a qualified Counsellor available at our Foodbank is a huge asset which has changed lives. We really want to do more of this. But we need funding in order to do it. And it doesn't take a huge amount. In fact, just £50 per month would make all the difference.

A partnership or donation from your company can enable our Counsellor to keep working with people, building their confidence, and helping them escape from dependence by listening, offering therapy services, and having them know someone is there and looking out for them.

Everyone knows the importance of mental health, and how poor mental health lies at the root of so many social issues. If you can help support this incredible life-changing service, contact [gillianaudreynichols@gmail.com](mailto:gillianaudreynichols@gmail.com)





## Reaching recyclables others cannot reach .....

7 September 2022



**Ro Stretton** from **Epsom** has signed up to the **Baylis & Harding Free Recycling Programme** offered by recycling experts **TerraCycle**. By sending waste to TerraCycle, Ro also raises money for charities **Univida** and Christ Church Epsom. Ro also collects other items for recycling including Pringles tubes, cheese packaging, biscuit and snack wrappers and bread bags

Epsom resident, Ro Stretton, has signed up as one of the UK's first public collection points for recycling used Baylis & Harding products. The free recycling programme was created by Baylis & Harding in partnership with TerraCycle, the world leaders in recycling "hard-to-recycle" waste.

Ro has set up a publicly accessible drop-off location at her home at 233 The Greenway, Epsom, allowing the whole Epsom community to drop-off items including Baylis & Harding caps, hand and mist pumps, flexible plastic lotion tubes, screw tops and Goodness hand wash refill pouches to be sent to TerraCycle for recycling.

While most Baylis & Harding products can be recycled through traditional methods, unfortunately some products can end up in landfill as local councils simply don't have the infrastructure to recycle these materials. By taking their waste to Ro's location, members of the community can give their Baylis & Harding products a second life.

The collected waste Ro sends in to TerraCycle is recycled by shredding, cleaning and turning into a pellet format which can then be used by manufacturers to create new generic plastic products, reducing the need to extract new resources from the planet.

Ro commented: "Everyone is aware of how important it is to waste less and recycle more, but this can be a challenge when kerbside recycling collections are limited to certain items. TerraCycle's free programmes are great because they allow whole communities to give a second life to the waste that's usually destined for landfill or incineration."

As well as recycling the waste they receive, TerraCycle awards points for each parcel of waste Ro sends in, which can be redeemed as a monetary donation to the causes of their choice - Univida and Christ Church Epsom.

Ro continued: "So far we've raised more than £1,500 for charity by sending this waste to TerraCycle. We donate the funds to Univida, which provides education, support, and food to children in Brazilian Favelas, and Christ Church Epsom which provides support to local people in need. The more we collect, the more we can donate, so I'd encourage everyone in the community to get involved."

As well as collecting Baylis & Harding products, Ro also collects on the Cathedral City Cheese Packaging, pladis (the company behind McVitie's and Jacob's Biscuits and Snacks, Marigold Gloves, Philips Dental Care and Babybel Free Recycling Programmes, among others, enabling the people of Epsom to recycle waste including cheese packaging, biscuit and snack wrappers, dental care products and packaging and more. For a full list of what Ro can accept, visit <https://www.facebook.com/greenwayterracycle/>.

There are other similar drop off addresses and Epsom and Ewell including one at 72 **Hookfield, Epsom** and **Rymans in Epsom High Street**. Go to TerraCycle for details and search locations

### About TerraCycle

TerraCycle is an international leader in innovative sustainability solutions, creating and operating first-of-their-kind platforms in recycling, recycled materials, and reuse. Across 21 countries, TerraCycle is on a mission to rethink waste and develop practical solutions for today's complex waste challenges. The company engages an expansive multi-stakeholder community across a wide range of accessible programs, from Fortune 500 companies to schools and individuals. An estimated 6.9 million people across the UK have helped us to divert more than 231 million items of packaging waste from landfill while earning over £2,000,000 for schools, charities and non-profit organisations. To learn more about TerraCycle and join them on their journey to move the world from a linear economy to a circular one, please visit [www.terracycle.co.uk](http://www.terracycle.co.uk).

## Queen fit hats raise £9K for brain charity

7 September 2022



An online auction of a collection of 15 hats created for the Platinum Jubilee by some of the UK's leading milliners has raised close to £9,000 for **Brain Tumour Research**. The collection of hats was inspired by the seven decades of The Queen's reign and entitled "Hats Fit For A Queen".

Pieces by Royal milliner **Rachel Trevor-Morgan** and milliner to the stars **Stephen Jones OBE** formed part of the collection, which was displayed in the **Queen Elizabeth II Stand at Epsom Downs Racecourse** on both days of **The Cazoo Derby** (June 3 rd & 4 th ), before subsequently being auctioned online.

The Cazoo Derby formed part of the official celebrations for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The project formed part of **Go Epsom's** wider Platinum Jubilee festivities across the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, which celebrate The Queen's lasting association with hats and their continued importance as a quintessential piece of raceday style.



The initiative was a new collaboration between Go Epsom, **The British Hat Guild**, Brain Tumour Research and Epsom Downs Racecourse and was promoted via the hashtag **HatsFitForAQueen**.



The project formed part of Go Epsom's wider Platinum Jubilee festivities across the **Borough of Epsom and Ewell**, which celebrate The Queen's lasting association with hats and their continued importance as a quintessential piece of raceday style.

The initiative was a new collaboration between Go Epsom, The British Hat Guild, Brain Tumour Research and Epsom Downs Racecourse.

**Karen Pengelly**, Bid Manager for Go Epsom said: "I am delighted that we have been able to help raise so much money for Brain Tumour Research with 'Project Hat'. It was very satisfying to see some of these incredible hats being worn over The Derby weekend by some extremely well known celebrities. And to know that they have now gone on to be cherished by their new owners is wonderful. If Her Majesty the Queen had been able to attend the Derby I feel sure she would have been very touched to have seen the efforts that the UK's top milliners had gone to as a nod to her."

**Hugh Adams**, Head of Stakeholder Relations at Brain Tumour Research, said: "We are extremely grateful to Go Epsom, Epsom Downs Racecourse and The British Hat Guild for staging this wonderful exhibition, creating such a valuable platform to raise awareness of brain tumours and for the money raised. The auction proceeds will fund the equivalent of three days' research at a Brain Tumour Research Centre of Excellence where scientists are focused on improving treatments and, ultimately, finding a cure. To be a part of this wonderful initiative during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations have made this very special for us."

**Edwina Ibbotson**, on behalf of The British Hat Guild, said: "All the 15 members of the British Hat Guild who took part were honoured to participate in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. We loved the idea of making hats from all decades of HRH The Queen's reign from styles which would have been worn at The Derby in the 1950's and right through to the modern day. The Guild have a close relationship with Brain Tumour Research, and we were thrilled that our members' creations could be auctioned off to raise vital funds for them and their important work."

**Simon Durrant**, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said: "The Hats Fit For A Queen display at The Cazoo Derby proved to be a great success and the whole **Jockey Club** team are delighted to see the collection raise close to £9,000 for Brain Tumour Research. It was a great honour for The Cazoo Derby to be part of the official celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee and we hope the money raised for Brain Tumour Research will ensure that there is a positive and impactful legacy for this initiative."

## Council Pride in Not Uncommon Green Flag

7 September 2022



**Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** is pleased to have received a Green Flag Award for Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve, one of 2208 UK winners. The award is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.

This is the 16<sup>th</sup> year that **Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve** has received this award.

Over the last few years, borough parks and nature reserves have been vital places for people to relax, exercise and meet friends and family safely.

**Councillor John Beckett** of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee said: "We have some fantastic parks and green spaces in the borough. The news that Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve has achieved the Green Flag Award for the 16th year in a row is a testament to our teams and volunteers whose hard work all year-round ensures it is well maintained. We are also reminding everyone to be fire aware and not to light any BBQs in our green spaces as there is currently such a high risk of fires spreading in this dry spell."

Commenting on the news Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve has met the Green Flag Award standard, **Keep Britain Tidy's Accreditation Manager Paul Todd** said: "I would like to congratulate everyone involved in making Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve worthy of a Green Flag Award."

"Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve is a vital green space for the local community. This award is testament to all the hard work of staff and volunteers, who do so much to ensure that it maintains the high standards demanded by the Green Flag Award."

The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

A full list of Green Flag Award-winning parks and green spaces is available at <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/sites/default/files/2022%20GFA%20UK%20winners%20list.pdf>.

The Green Flag Award Scheme (<http://greenflagaward.org/>) is run by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful, Keep Wales Tidy and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

Keep Britain Tidy is a leading environmental charity. It sets the standard for the management of parks and beaches, inspires people to be litter-free, to waste less and live more sustainably. It runs campaigns and programmes including the Great British Spring Clean, Eco-Schools, Love Parks, Eco-Schools, the Green Flag Award for parks and green spaces and the Blue Flag/ Seaside Awards for beaches. To find out more about Keep Britain Tidy, its campaigns and programmes visit [www.keepbritaintidy.org](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org).

Any green space that is freely accessible to the public is eligible to enter for a Green Flag Award. Awards are given on an annual basis and winners must apply each year to renew their Green Flag Award status. A Green Flag Community Award recognises quality sites managed by voluntary and community groups. Green Heritage Site Accreditation is judged on the treatment of the site's historic features and the standard of conservation.

See yesterday's report on **Epsom Common Association**



Flagging Up Epsom Common

## Flagging Up Epsom Common

7 September 2022



28th July **David King** and **Cynthea Blunden** of the **Epsom Common Association** (ECA) represented **Epsom & Ewell** at the **Green Flag Award** ceremony in Lambeth Community Hall. This marked the sixteenth successive year that **Epsom Common** has received this award, which describes itself as "the international quality mark for parks and green spaces".

Much of the Common is designated as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest**. **Natural England** consider all of this land to be in "favourable" condition. Taken together, these points suggest that **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**, which owns and manages the Common, is successfully balancing the various and sometimes conflicting demands of a recreational open space and a nationally important nature reserve. The new flag will be flying over **Stamford Green** just as soon as the flagpole that blew down last winter is replaced.

At 176 hectare, **Epsom Common** is the largest Local Nature Reserve in Surrey, with habitats including: rough grassland, woodland with veteran oak pollards, remnants of heath, and several ponds. Management is guided by the **Council's One Hundred Year Plan: 2016 to 2116**, which has been approved by **Natural England**. Clearly woodland containing trees aged five hundred years or more takes some time to reach maturity, but even grassland, consisting of short lived plants, takes many years to fully develop its potential range of plants and animals. So planning for the long term is essential.

The **ECA** was founded by local residents in 1974 to fight a proposed road across the Common. In 1979, in partnership with the Council, the ECA completed the restoration of **Great Pond** dam, recreating the mediaeval pond that had been drained in the Victorian era. Nowadays the ECA has a membership of around five hundred households, and works closely with the Council's **Countryside Team** and the **Lower Mole Partnership** to protect and improve the Common. After two years with activity limited by the pandemic, the usual programme of events has resumed.

As well as their conservation work, by the end of this year ECA will have: distributed three newsletters; held two public meetings with guest speakers; and arranged several expert led guided walks, looking at birds, butterflies, etc. Every few years they also hold an "**Epsom Common Day**" on Stamford Green, most recently in 2019.



The Summer sun into the clouded sky over the Great Pond brings out the yellow

On Tuesday evenings in summer (until the end of August) the volunteers hand-pull bracken for a couple of hours, to prevent selected areas of heath or grassland being smothered. Their labours are relieved by a break for homemade sparkling elderflower drink and chocolate brownies. During the autumn ECA will hold the three remaining conservation tasks of the year's programme of eight. Each task runs for two days, usually the third Sunday of the month and the following Monday. The task programme is guided by the One Hundred Year Plan and agreed with the Council's Countryside Team. The work typically involves removing scrub and small trees to maintain and improve areas of grass and heath; they have also planted a hazel coppice.



Epsom Common under plough

Why is all this management work desirable? Old photographs show that before the **Second World War** much of the Common was open, with small areas of woodland and some old trees, many of which are still alive. Much of the open land was ploughed for agriculture during and immediately after the war. This ceased around 1955, and most of the Common was then essentially left alone. By the 1980s the previously ploughed area had become an almost impenetrable mass of



young trees. This uniformity of age, along with the absence of the animals such as: aurochs (the extinct large wild ancestor of domestic cattle), wild boar, beaver, etc., that once shaped woodland and kept it more open, resulted in a habitat that was neither particularly natural nor rich in variety of plants or animals. On the Common, grassland and lowland heath were probably manmade habitats, arising from a combination of tree felling and grazing, but they support species not found in woodland. By careful management a mixture of grassland, heath, ponds and varied woodland, can be created and maintained, leading to a much greater range of plants and animals.

During the summer, three areas of the Common are grazed by cattle, this year a total of fourteen animals. The cattle graze the grass and heathland in a way that cannot be replicated by mowing. In recent years the **Great Pasture** has been extended to include an area of woodland, a habitat in which the cattle's ancestors would have been at home. Today's **Belted Galloways** and **Dexters** also appear happy to forage amongst the trees, particularly during hot weather. For their health the cattle must be checked every day, as are the fence lines and water troughs. Each week the ECA provides four of the daily checks; without their contribution it is unlikely that grazing could be continued.

Finally, ECA make excellent hardwood charcoal from logs harvested during conservation work. Last year, thanks to a grant from the **Council's Community Infrastructure Levy**, they were able to take delivery of a modern charcoal retort. Compared with the conventional ring kilns used previously, the retort greatly reduces the smoke and increases the yield. The charcoal sales help finance ECA's activities. Volunteers are not paid, but of course they do have to pay for tools, fuel, insurance, etc.

If you would like to find out more about ECA's efforts to keep the Common special, please visit their website: [epsomcommon.org.uk](http://epsomcommon.org.uk) or our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/EpsomCommonAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/EpsomCommonAssociation)

They welcome new members, whether you wish to take part in conservation tasks or simply support their efforts through your membership.

See also press release from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council issued 12th August

Council Pride in Not Uncommon Green Flag

## Epsom Hospital bucks Brexit staff bottleneck

7 September 2022



**Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust** bucks the national trend in maintaining its level of recruitment of UK qualified medical staff between 2015 and 2021. Nationally the picture is different.

The share of homegrown doctors and nurses joining England's NHS is at its lowest for seven years, BBC analysis of workforce data has found.

Some 58% of doctors joining the health service in 2021 came from the UK, with health bosses increasingly turning to international recruitment.

The **British Medical Association** told the BBC the NHS faced a "workforce crisis". It "faced a challenge retaining staff from overseas, due to the "financial and bureaucratic barriers" they faced. **Dr Amit Kochhar**, its international committee deputy chair, said medical graduates were charged up to £2,400 to apply for indefinite leave to remain, with each of their dependents facing the same fee.

While overall numbers have been increasing, critics said declining domestic recruitment was unsustainable to keep pace with demand.

**Patricia Marquis, Royal College of Nursing** (RCN) Director for England, said ministers must do more to reduce the "disproportionate reliance" on international recruits. "We are seeing a sharp increase in people leaving nursing, with more of our members saying they are considering alternative careers," she said.

**Danny Mortimer**, chief executive of NHS Employers, said it was "high time for the government to commit to a fully-funded, long-term workforce plan for the NHS" to tackle "chronic workforce shortages". He said "relentless demand" was affecting staff due to vacancies which stood at around 110,000 - "gaps which cannot and should not be filled through international recruitment alone".

A recent report by the cross-party Commons health and social care select committee concluded the large number of unfilled NHS job vacancies was posing a serious risk to patient safety.

The BBC analysed workforce data provided by NHS Digital from 2015 to 2021, to investigate if trends it previously reported following the Brexit referendum in June 2016 continued. The share of UK doctors joining the health service had fallen from 69% in 2015 to 58% last year. Over the same period, the share of new UK nurses fell from 74% to 61%. Recruitment of doctors from the Rest of the World rose from 18% to 34% over the same period, and that share of international nurses rose from 7% to 34%.



In the **Epsom and St Helier Trust** the level of UK recruitment remained even though there was a 13.7% reduction in EU recruitment and a corresponding 13.7% increase in worldwide recruitment during the period analyzed.

News and data provided by the **Local Democracy Service of the BBC** in which **Epsom and Ewell Times** is a partner. For the full in-depth report [CLICK HERE](#)