# Media Release | Friday 19 January

**Virtual Ward helps patients recover at home**

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) has launched a new initiative giving patients the opportunity to continue their recovery from the comfort of their own home.

The virtual ward, which has capacity for up to 10 patients at a time in this initial phase, still monitors patients closely to ensure that they are continuing in their recovery, but it allows them to recuperate quicker in a more familiar setting rather than remaining in hospital.

QEH patients in the virtual ward are given a monitoring pack that includes a mobile phone, blood pressure and oxygen monitoring equipment that sends results to dedicated clinicians to review on a regular basis.

The first patients selected for this new service have respiratory conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or have Cellulitis, an infection of the deeper layers of skin and underlying tissue.

They have been selected carefully by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals to ensure that being at home is the best place for them as it can aid a faster recovery.

A dedicated consultant virtually monitors each patient’s results, including blood pressure readings and oxygen levels, as well as regularly checking in with the patient, their loved ones, or carers.

If needed the consultant can amend medication, discharge patients from the ward back to the care of their GP or, if medically needed, ask them to return to hospital.

Dr Shyam Seshadri, Diabetes and Endocrinology Clinical Director at the Trust, said: “I am proud to be one of the Virtual Ward Consultants who will support patients at home. As a team we will assess patients on a case-by-case basis for their suitability to become part of the virtual ward. Only patients who are medically well enough be put forward. This is an exciting new initiative that I hope will help make a real difference to patients allowing them to feel supported whilst they are being looked after from home.

“Patients and their families can contact the hospital at any time if they have any concerns, and we will be checking in on them regularly throughout the day to make sure they are recovering well.”

Simon Illingworth, Chief Operating Officer at the QEH, said: “We are really pleased that our new virtual ward is operational. We know that patients recover faster at home and it is better for them to be in familiar surroundings. The implementation of this virtual monitoring will free up space and beds in hospital for those who really need focussed 24/7 care. We hope to use the virtual ward for more of our patients in the coming months.”

**Ends.**

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