**Boosting staff morale with ‘extra mile’ patient experience initiative**

[**University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust**](https://www.uhmb.nhs.uk/) (UHMBT) have kick started a new patient experience initiative that enables patients to highlight individuals and teams that have gone above and beyond with their care.

During the pandemic, NHS England have advised organisations that they can suspend collection of patient experience feedback through The Friends and Family Test (FFT), leading some hospitals to hit pause on surveying patients.

In the current climate, patient feedback is still a hugely important part of a trust's day to day and by continuing to collect this, hospitals can see the same benefits that they always have from FFT; be it the identification of key areas, making changes to improve patient care or assisting with planning. In a time when hospitals are embedding new ways of working, the impact of patient feedback is growing and arguably, it is even more important that this be collected and actioned early.

UHMBT are continuing to survey patients during Covid-19, believing now more than ever, patients want to share feedback on their experience; especially when it comes to thanking individuals that have cared for them.

**The extra mile initiative**

Positive feedback provides a much-needed morale boost in this challenging time and staff are keen to find out what is being said. Barry Rigg, Head of Patient Experience at the trust, echoed this sentiment: ‘I've had more staff enquiries about FFT in the last 3 weeks, than I have in the last 3 years!' At a time when gratitude for the NHS is at an all-time high, it is important that patients and carers are given a platform to express their thoughts at each step of their journey.

Barry saw this as an opportunity to capture feedback that highlighted exceptional care experiences and enables patients to personally thank staff that have gone above and beyond to help them. To do this, [Healthcare Communications](https://healthcare-communications.com/) added a simple, additional question to the FFT survey where patients can specifically name staff or teams that have gone the ‘extra mile’:

“Our Trust colleagues work incredibly hard to care for patients across Morecambe Bay and to help recognise this work, we have recently set up an initiative called the 'extra mile'. The system gives patients, families and carers an opportunity to acknowledge and thank colleagues and teams.”  
**Barry Rigg, Head of Patient Experience**

The feedback is instantly received back to the trust through Healthcare Communications' patient experience platform, along with FFT feedback.

Weekly, the hospital radio station reads out the extra mile comments live on air with accompanying song requests and dedications. These comments are also used as part of the trusts' existing ‘star of the month’ colleague recognition process. This makes sure that everyone is aware of the hard work these people are putting in and get the full recognition they deserve.

Patients are thrilled to be given the opportunity to praise staff that have cared for them, with comments captured including:

“I was delighted to receive a text message from my hospital asking me to provide feedback on my experience and enabling me to give recognition to our key workers. The staff in the A& E department yesterday should be so proud of themselves, we are incredibly lucky to have our NHS.

I honestly can't remember all the staff names of who I met, however Dr H and the whole team were all so lovely yesterday evening, they all deserve a comment about going the extra mile.” Patient, UHMBT

Feedback also highlights how patients could thank those that made a difference to their care, that they couldn't do in person:

“This week, I received a text message asking me to provide feedback on my experience. I said I felt safe with the extra measures taken during Covid-19. I was then asked if I wanted to provide any comments to the hospital staff. I had thanked the ward staff on discharge, however through the extra mile text message, I was able to pass on my special thanks to the catering team for catering to my dietary needs.

I think the extra mile feedback service is an excellent idea to ensure recognition is routed through to those key workers behind the scenes.” Patient, UHMBT

**Capturing feedback on virtual appointments?**

Like all NHS hospitals, the trust has also adapted to using new communication channels to assess patients across specialities. As ‘virtual by default’ becomes the 'new normal', UHMBT believes it is crucial to capture patients experience of attending their appointment remotely, to ensure any improvements can be shared within the wider organisation.

As the country has quickly had to adapt to a 'digital first' world, we have all had to ramp up our use and adoption of new technology to communicate. This means that digital communications can be used by hospitals to get in touch with more patients and staff than ever before.

**About Healthcare Communications**

Founded in 2000, Healthcare Communications is the leading provider of patient communication services in the UK healthcare market – working with more than 120 NHS organisations and delivering 100 million secure patient communications a year. It supports digitally-driven, patient-led NHS communications that improve engagement, boost appointment attendances and increase patient satisfaction levels.

It helps the NHS interact with all patients across multiple channels, according to their individual preferences (such as via its digital portal, SMS, IVR, telephone and post).

Healthcare Communications is part of IMImobile PLC.

[www.healthcare-communications.com](http://www.healthcare-communications.com)

**Notes to editor: Image approved for distribution alongside press release.**



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