

complacent. She added that it is challenging for the Trust itself to capture the learning and she welcomed an external view on the actions of the Trust. She added that some of the staff stories she and other executives have heard have been humbling and that a main worry she has carried has been that a staff member might die.

- 2.5 The CEO acknowledged the huge commitment of staff to ensure that patients were well cared for and was appreciative of the lengths that staff went to during the pandemic surges. She did however also acknowledge that there had been a huge focus on staff behaviours to ensure that staff were protected, protected themselves and others through the adherence to guidelines with a key message that staff needed to be supported and protected to allow them to support and protect patients. This was a message that we heard from staff on several occasions during our visits.
- 2.6 The Trust Executive Director of Nursing commented that there has been a good spirit of transparency across the Trust with staff eager to share and learn. He added that surveillance and communications have been particularly strong.
- 2.7 He further referred to the collapse of a local residential care home early in the pandemic and outlined how Trust staff had intervened to admit the care home residents into one of the Trust's older people's wards and worked with staff in the care home to re-establish its processes and to allow it to open safely several weeks later. This was a difficult situation and one the Trust had not faced before. It was particularly challenging given the media interest and public outcry at the time. However it created opportunities to develop positive working relationships with the independent care home sector and to work in a new way with the RQIA to support a struggling care home and to achieve positive outcomes for the residents.
- 2.8 The Director of Strategic Capital Development advised that the Trust had completed the strategic development of a 72 ward block which opened ahead of schedule in June 2020. This had huge benefits for patient care where they were cared for in single room accommodation and he and other Trust Directors believe that this undoubtedly contributed to the lower rates of nosocomial transmission in Altnagelvin Hospital.
- 2.9 He did however acknowledge that in his view the state of the art accommodation for patients would not on its own be responsible for the lower rates of nosocomial outbreaks and that strong leadership plays an essential role. One of the most important actions he believed had been the conscious decision to increase visibility of senior managers across the Trust facilities.
- 2.10 We heard of a specific piece of work introduced by the Trust – **Working Safely Together**. This is a Trust wide group established during the first surge in March 2020. The purpose of the group is to embed a culture of Working Safely Together to protect patients, staff and their families. To support this commitment the Trust identified Safety Leads in each of the Trust facilities.