

14 February 2012

Communications Department  
Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230/1299

communication@ruh.nhs.uk  
www.ruh.nhs.uk

## Media Release

### Gold standard dementia care at the RUH

**“We’re so proud that our striving to do the very best for our patients is being recognised” Terri Bolton, Senior Sister on Midford Ward.**

Terri is referring to Midford ward’s recent success in achieving a Gold Charter Mark for the care they are giving to patients with dementia.

The Charter Mark Standard has been developed with the voluntary organisation Alzheimer’s Support. It is the first such scheme in the UK and provides a ‘gold standard’ for staff to ensure care for people with dementia on all adult wards, not just those specifically for older people, is the very best that it can be.

There are about 750,000 people in the UK with dementia and at any one time, up to a third of all patients in hospital may have dementia or delirium. Whilst these patients may have been admitted to the RUH for other reasons, their dementia can make time spent in an unfamiliar hospital bed even more distressing.

Dr Chris Dyer, Consultant Geriatrician says "People with dementia may feel sad, frightened or angry about what is happening to them, and a decline in their ability to talk, read and write can make it hard to understand medical problems or communicate with the staff caring for them.

"We've worked with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and voluntary organisations such as Alzheimer's Support, in creating this extremely important Charter Mark Standard for RUH Patients with Dementia. The high standards are set for each adult ward to ultimately provide the very best care possible for patients with dementia and ensure their stay in our hospital is as stress-free as possible."

Midford ward is an acute medical ward, and caring for patients with medical conditions who also have dementia brings a different set of challenges to the staff that are providing that care. They are adapting to the needs of these patients as well as making sure their acute illness is properly treated.

Regular comfort rounds have been introduced involving several visits to each patient to check and record such things as fluid intake, skin condition, if there is pain or confusion. Patients have protected (and assisted) mealtimes to help staff monitor their nutritional needs. Therapy sessions, such as reminiscence therapy and music therapy are taking place and changes have been made to crockery and signage.

Dr Dyer adds "We hope all wards will take on the Charter Mark challenge and work on each of the areas so we can bring our care of all dementia patients up to the gold standard."

The award follows on from a successful Peer Review Site Visit from the South West Dementia Partnership. The Partnership represents NHS BaNES, NHS hospitals and health organisations across the South West, and its members are senior nurses, public health specialists, geriatricians, carers and other health professionals.

This review group was impressed with the broad commitment, from staff at all levels across the Trust, to improving care for people with dementia.

Their report commended the Trust on its good practice in ensuring dignity, respect and appropriate care for this patient group. The hospital was also praised for the ward environment including its pictorial signage, the way it ensures nutritional needs of patients is met and monitored, and mealtimes are protected, and for the development of the dementia charter mark and the creation of dementia champions.

Some areas where improvements were identified included increased training for staff, and volunteers who can support activities on the ward, improved mental health liaison and the need to strengthen the direct referral process.

**ENDS**

### **Notes for Editors**

Each ward is being given the opportunity to apply for the Charter Mark, with three levels available - gold, silver and bronze. The standards cover four main areas of care: respecting and caring for people with dementia, the ward environment, meeting nutritional needs and suitability of staffing.

Within each of these areas there are then further markers of 'excellent care'. These include ensuring that care is person-centred and that feedback from patients and their carers show a high level of satisfaction. To be awarded the gold standard Charter Mark, signs on the wards must be easily understandable for people with dementia and every effort must be taken to prevent boredom by regular therapeutic sessions or activities.

In order to apply for the Charter Mark, each ward manager sends a written application before taking part in a preliminary informal review. A formal review then takes place involving patient representatives followed by an observation period to really see work in practice on the ward.