



Royal United Hospitals Bath

NHS Foundation Trust

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Media Release

Saving Smiles in the Philippines

Tom Walker, Specialist Registrar in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, has just returned from a charity surgical mission to help children in the Philippines.

Dr Walker was part of an international team of surgeons, paediatricians, nurses, dentists and anaesthetists on the Operation HOPE trip where, on average, they perform 120 life-changing procedures each year.

Operation HOPE is an international project that provides free cleft lip and palate repairs to children in the Philippines.

A cleft lip and palate is a complex facial defect that can cause feeding, speech, hearing and dental problems and, in some cases, difficulties breathing. It is the most common facial birth defect in the UK, affecting around one in every 700 babies.

Tom said: "In the UK around 1000 children with clefts are born each year, with most babies beginning treatment in the first six months. However in developing countries, where there are over 120,000 cases each year, they are not managed in a timely manner – many children will go untreated as old as five or six years, often causing additional complications and long-lasting damage. There just isn't enough viable or affordable access to treatment.

"We all feel that children everywhere should have access to timely treatment and that if we have the expertise and capacity we should use it to make a difference. We all pay for our own flights, accommodation and expenses – every penny raised for the charity goes on treatment for the children."

Chairman:
Brian Stables

Chief Executive:
James Scott



Dr Walker was accompanied on the trip by Nick Barnard, a medical student at the University of Bristol, currently on placement at the RUH.

Operation HOPE is led jointly by The Face Charity, based in the UK, and The Philippine American Group of Educators and Surgeons (P.A.G.E.S)

To find out more about The Face Charity and Operation HOPE, visit www.thefacecharity.org

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Notes to Editor:

- The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.
- The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.
- In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.
- The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now building a purpose-built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and working towards new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future
- For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

