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HRH The Duchess of Cornwall visits the RUH to officially open the new RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre

Staff, patients and guests celebrated the official opening today (Tuesday 22 October) by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, of the new RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre at the RUH.

The Duchess, President of the Royal Osteoporosis Society and Patron of Versus Arthritis, was given a guided tour of the new £20m purpose-built Centre and shown some of its facilities, including the hydrotherapy pool, specialist treatment areas and physiotherapy gyms.

James Scott, Chief Executive of the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We were delighted to welcome Her Royal Highness here again. She has a long association with the Trust as well as being a former patron of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases. The Duchess is a great supporter of our work and we were very proud to show her the wonderful new facilities we have created here."

The Duchess was accompanied on her visit by Trust Chair Alison Ryan. She was introduced to local entrepreneurs Andrew and Christina Brownsword, whose £1m Match Funding Challenge has enabled the hospital charity, The Forever Friends Appeal, to raise £2m towards the overall cost of the new Centre, with every donation doubled by the Brownsword scheme.

The RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre brings together therapies and pain services located at the RUH with many of the services previously located at the RNHRD's Mineral Water Hospital site, known locally as the 'Min.'

Uniting staff and services together on one site has been many years in the planning, and the RUH has worked closely with patients and staff to design the best new home for services relocating from the Min.

The Duchess also attended a reception to celebrate the 20th anniversary of The Forever Friends Appeal and its raising of over £25m for patient services at the RUH. She met with donors and volunteers and unveiled plaques to mark the event and officially open the new Centre.

During the reception The Duchess said: “As a past patron of the Min it’s lovely to be able to come here and see what has been done for the new Centre. I’m incredibly impressed by everything – the hydrotherapy pool looked extremely tempting! There seem to be a lot of very happy patients and it has a very welcoming atmosphere. I know that all of you here do so much to raise money for this hospital...so thank you for contributing to this wonderful new building.”

Ends

Notes to Editor:

RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre

The new RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre is an outpatient centre providing treatment, care and education for patients to recover from episodes of illness or injury, or to manage their long-term condition.

The new building includes a large hydrotherapy pool, group rooms, specialist gyms with rehabilitation equipment, and a biologics treatment space.

The new Centre has been specially designed to make use of natural light as well as garden areas and art to create a nurturing environment for all who use the building.

Art and artefacts from the Mineral Water Hospital site have been incorporated into the new Centre.

RUH Trust

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 has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the 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

The Forever Friends Appeal

- The Forever Friends Appeal is the fundraising charity for the Royal United Hospitals Bath.
- The charity was founded on 29 June 1999 with an aim to improve the experience of patients, visitors and staff by fundraising and investing in projects that go above and beyond what NHS funding can provide.
- This year The Forever Friends Appeal has celebrated its 20th anniversary. Since launching in 1999 the charity has raised over £25m.
- The Forever Friends Appeal has raised £2 million for the RNHRD and Therapies Centre in association with the Brownsword Charitable Foundation challenging the public to back the appeal by generously promising to match every pound donated up to the level of £1 million.
- Heading into its 20th year the charity launched four special appeals – Facial Surgery & Orthodontics Unit, Critical Care Unit, Breast Unit and The Friendly Faces Project. In October 2019, three of the special appeals were completed, with time left to focus on raising £450,000 for the Breast Unit Special Appeal.
- The charity's longest fundraising campaign, the RUH Cancer Care Campaign has raised over £9.7m through support from the public and major donations from The James Dyson Foundation & Medlock Charitable Trust.
- For more information about the Appeal visit: www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk

