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New COVID-19 intensive care unit opens at RUH

A new intensive care unit for COVID-19 patients, built in just 42 days, has opened at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH).

The Pierce Intensive Care Unit has 14 beds available and, with the hospital's existing intensive care unit, means the Trust now has space for 27 intensive care patients.

Trust Chief Executive James Scott said: "Our teams of staff and contractors have done an amazing job in creating this facility so quickly. Back in March we answered the call from the Department of Health to increase ICU capacity as part of the response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and in just six weeks we've transformed and converted what was a surgical ward into one of the most sophisticated ICUs in the region."

An improved feature of the new Pierce Intensive Care Unit's 14 beds is that each is contained in a negative pressure environment – sealed areas with carefully controlled ventilation that prevents contaminated air from escaping the room - which maximises safety for staff and patients. Staff enter and exit via a separate room that acts as an airlock, helping to reduce the risk of infection.

ICU Lead Consultant Dr Andy Georgiou said: "This fantastic ICU is the only such facility in the South West. It allows us to do two things – firstly to expand our intensive care capacity from 13 to 27 beds, and secondly to separate the care we offer to intensive care patients. It means that if you are coming into intensive care having had, for example, a major operation, you can be confident in the knowledge that you will be cared for in a separate location to patients who are critically ill with COVID-19.

"We're proud to open the unit and are really grateful to the Trust and our contractors and staff who have helped us to develop and build this facility in such a short space of time."

James Scott said: "While the RUH has, thankfully, not experienced the number of positive COVID-19 patients seen in other parts of the country since the pandemic began, we have rightly followed Department of Health advice to make contingency plans. The new ICU's extra capacity will allow the Trust to manage

any future surge in intensive care demand, and also to plan for the future when more of our hospital services resume.”

Watch our film inside the new Pierce ICU here <https://bit.ly/2zYSPnj>

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The World Health Organization has announced that 2020 will be the Year of the Nurse and Midwife to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. Our nurses and midwives are a big part of the RUH family and throughout the year we will be celebrating the work they do, going above and beyond every day to give our patients compassionate care.

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