

15.10.20

## Media Release

### Phone a friend at your RUH outpatient clinic

Outpatients at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH) are now being encouraged to phone a friend, a member of the family or a carer during their consultation – thanks to one patient’s personal experience.

She really wanted some support when she felt it was important during her first ‘virtual’ phone consultation. She was also concerned that, because of COVID-19 visitor restrictions, she’d have to go alone to her second, this time face to face appointment at the hospital.

So she contacted the Trust’s Patient Experience team, who helped arrange for her consultation to be relayed live via mobile phone loudspeaker – as her husband waited outside in their car.

The patient, who has asked not to be named, said: “My consultant was fantastic about it. My husband was able to ask questions and take notes, and having him there on the phone made me feel really supported. It was a very positive experience.”

Sharon Manhi, RUH Lead for Patient and Carer Experience, said: “It’s such a simple idea and one that our outpatient department staff are more than happy to encourage and organise. We’re very aware that coming to a clinic alone can increase a patient’s anxiety and stress – so arranging for them to phone a friend, or family member or carer can provide important emotional and practical support.”

The RUH is now adding another of the patient’s suggestions to their outpatient letters and website page advice – a list of questions and ideas to help people gain the most from their consultation. [Read more](#)

Sharon Manhi said: “We’re really grateful to the patient – sharing her experience with us has been invaluable. Patient experience matters at the RUH and this is a great example of feedback that helps us to further improve our service for patients and their families and carers.”

**Please note, with some exceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic:**

- **Family or friends are not allowed to accompany patients to outpatient appointments**
- **Patients arriving at our A&E department are asked to come on their own**
- **Inpatients can have one visitor a day for up to one hour**
- **All outpatients and visitors to the RUH are asked to wear a face covering at all times**

**Ends**

**Notes to Editor:**

The World Health Organization has designated 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. Our nurses and midwives are a big part of the RUH family and throughout the year we are 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](http://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](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

**Chair:**  
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**Chief Executive:**  
Cara Charles-Barks

