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Media Release

RUH Bath reinstates visiting – but restrictions continue

Limited visiting has been reinstated from Monday 12 April at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust as coronavirus pressures ease.

Most visiting was suspended at the end of November 2020 in line with government advice to help protect patients and staff and to slow the spread of the virus.

Now, with COVID-19 cases reducing at the RUH and with updated NHS guidance, new visiting arrangements have been introduced.

RUH Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks said: “This is excellent news and will come as a welcome relief to patients and their families. The health, safety and wellbeing of our patients, communities, individuals and teams remain our absolute priority, and we are really pleased to be able to relax our regulations in a managed and responsible way.”

From Monday 12 April visiting will be allowed in the hospital with each patient able to have one visitor a day for a maximum of one hour. In most cases these visitors will be limited to one close family contact or someone important to the patient. Visitors will be expected to provide their name and contact details for NHS Test and Trace purposes.

Visits must be booked at least a day in advance with ward staff to avoid overcrowding. All visitors must wear a face mask or covering at all times and will be expected to follow social distancing and infection prevention and control measures. In some situations, such as when visiting a patient who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19, extra personal protective equipment may be required.

Exceptions to the general one visitor only rule include the Children’s Ward and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, vulnerable adults and patients nearing the end of life. More details about all visiting can be found on the RUH website www.ruh.nhs.uk

The new arrangements are similar to those being introduced at the Trust's neighbouring hospitals in Swindon and Salisbury.

Cara Charles-Barks said: "We understand how difficult it has been for many people to have been unable to visit, or restricted in visiting, their loved ones and friends over the past four months. It was important then to help to keep our patients and staff safe – and it's important now that we keep these new visiting arrangements under review as we all start, hopefully, to return to some sort of normality of life."

Ends

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 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