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Media Release

One-way system to keep RUH visitors safe

A new one-way system to keep visitors safe and distanced has been introduced at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust.

The measure comes after the RUH reinstated limited visiting earlier this month as coronavirus pandemic pressures ease. The resulting higher number of visitors, combined with increased numbers of outpatients who are now able to attend appointments, has meant the hospital corridors and in particular the main atrium space are now busier than they have been for months of lockdown.

Chief Nurse Toni Lynch said: "The safety of our patients, visitors and staff is our priority and we are taking these steps to minimise the risk of infection from COVID-19.

"The coronavirus threat has not gone away and we all have a duty to follow the usual procedures of washing hands thoroughly, wearing a face covering at all times within the hospital buildings, and keeping a safe distance from others."

Visitors are encouraged to use the face mask and hand hygiene stations that are in place at all public entrances to the RUH. Once in the main atrium everyone will be directed to follow a one-way pedestrian system, while signs and stickers in corridors will direct visitors and staff to maintain a two-metre distance.

The new visiting arrangements were made possible as the RUH moves into the next stage of its post-COVID-19 recovery. Now, with fewer coronavirus patients needing care at the hospital than earlier this year, the hospital has also restarted some planned, elective orthopaedic surgery, such as hip and knee replacements.

RUH Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks said: "This is great news for the Trust and our community and another significant step forward in the hospital returning to being able to provide near-normal services. We're really pleased to invite patients in for procedures that they've had to wait many months for, and we'd like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding in what has been an unprecedented time."

The Trust took the difficult decision to postpone elective operations in January of this year because of increased COVID-19 pressure. It continued to provide all cancer, high priority emergency and trauma services, while also maintaining daily activity of outpatient appointments either virtually or face to face.

Ms Charles-Barks said: “Like every Trust, the pandemic has had a significant effect on waiting times at the RUH. We are now in a better position and we’re working hard – including in collaboration with our partner Great Western Hospital and Salisbury Hospital trusts – to provide patients with the elective care they need and to reduce the numbers on waiting lists.”

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