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Media Release

Happy 10th birthday to RUH's neonatal unit

Staff at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the opening of the hospital's innovative Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) admitted its first sick and premature babies on 23 July 2011. Since then it has seen around 5,000 babies and built a reputation for modern methods of care in surroundings that provide a beneficial healing environment for babies and reduce stress levels experienced by parents. It is one of only six such units in England and Wales to have been awarded UNICEF's Baby Friendly accreditation.

RUH Medical Director Dr Bernie Marden is a consultant neonatologist and lead paediatrician who worked on the NICU project.

He said: "We needed to have a unit that really put the families at the centre of the care that we're delivering. So it needed to be a welcoming space, somewhere that families would generally feel they wanted to spend their time, to be involved in the care of their babies. But it also needed to be the sort of space where our staff would work effectively and safely to deliver the care that ultimately helps to get these children home."

The result was a contemporary building filled by controllable natural light, with treatment rooms arranged around a clockwise route to illustrate the patient's journey, beginning with intensive care units and ending with recovering patient rooms. Feedback from parents shows that progress along this route is important psychologically, confirming the gradual decreasing intensity of care to journey's end – finally going home.

The unit has 21 cots, four double ensuite bedrooms for families, a play area for brothers and sisters, and a private enclosed garden for peace and quiet.

Taya Bassett, from Bath, who was a NICU baby herself in the old RUH unit, is grateful for the care her six-month-old twins Harvey and Charlie received after they were born prematurely.

She said: “We knew it wasn’t going to be an easy journey, but having the support of all the staff really made it a lot easier. I know from my own experience how incredibly grateful we are to everyone in NICU, because we wouldn’t have coped and got through it as well as we did without them.”

The new NICU replaced smaller, cramped facilities to provide a dramatically different and improved environment. It cost more than £6m and was half funded by the NHS and by public donations, through a public campaign led by the hospital’s charity The Forever Friends Appeal. The major donor for the project was the James Dyson Foundation, which contributed £500,000. The construction marked the start of a major programme of transformation across the RUH site, which will culminate this summer with the start of building work for the new Dyson Cancer Centre.

Senior Sister Angie Walker said: “The main objective of the design of the new unit was to be a space to grow. I have had the privilege of working as a Senior Sister on both the old and new unit, as well as other neonatal units around the country, and I can honestly say that this unit has exceeded all my expectations. The Dyson Centre enables everyone involved throughout the hospital and beyond to come together and provide family centred care to help achieve the most amazing outcomes on a daily basis for babies and parents alike.”

Sir James Dyson, Founder and Chief Engineer at Dyson, said: “The Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care demonstrated the very significant effect that design and architecture can have on the recovery of patients. The bright, well considered new spaces quickly proved their value to their tiny patients, something that we hope to replicate at the new Dyson Cancer Centre at the RUH.”

Watch our video about The Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care [here](#)

Ends

Notes to Editor:

Hear from Sir James and RUH staff following the James Dyson Foundation’s visit to RUH earlier this year [here](#)

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

James Dyson Foundation

Founded in 2002, the [James Dyson Foundation](http://www.jamesdyson.com) supports design, technology and engineering educational work in the UK and internationally in America, Japan, Singapore, Philippines and Malaysia. To date, the James Dyson Foundation has donated over £120m to charitable causes, including £12m to Imperial College London to create the Dyson School of Design Engineering, and £8m to Cambridge University to create the Dyson Centre for Engineering Design and the James Dyson Building. This summer, the [Dyson Cancer Centre at Royal United Hospitals in Bath](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/dyson-cancer-centre) breaks ground.