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Media Release

RUH marks Black History Month by proudly flying flag

The start of Black History Month is being celebrated at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust by raising a flag outside the front of the hospital.

The flag, with the Pan-African colours of red, yellow and green, represents the RUH's recognition of the contributions of Black people to healthcare and beyond, and a pledge to continue to value diversity in the workforce and in the community.

Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks was joined by staff for the ceremony, as Inclusion Ambassadors Sherron Watson and Alvina Ware raised the flag accompanied by music from local group Rainbow Steel Band.

Cara said: "One of the best things about working in the NHS is the diverse range of backgrounds our colleagues come from, including many different ethnicities and nationalities. I firmly believe our diversity makes us stronger, and can positively influence the care we provide.

"Black people have made, and continue to make, an incredible impact on the NHS and that's something we should recognise and celebrate each and every day.

"I was really proud to be there as we raised our flag as a way of celebrating our diversity, but also to demonstrate our commitment to continue improving opportunities for staff from ethnic minorities."

Black History Month takes place annually throughout October and is intended to recognise the contribution and achievements of people with African or Caribbean heritage. It's also an opportunity for people to learn more about the effects of racism and how to challenge negative stereotypes.

More than 13% of RUH staff are from a Black, Asian or ethnic minority background, and that proportion is represented at Board level too.

Equality and Diversity Officer Gayle Williams said: “We’ve got a lot to be proud of, including our thriving Fusion staff network celebrating diversity from all cultures, and our recent improvements to the percentage of Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff at senior levels.

“But, we’ve got ambitions to be even better, and we are working on initiatives that will support even more staff to further progress in their careers.”

Other activities taking place during October’s Black History Month include staff-curated displays celebrating Black history and culture and the unveiling of a new piece of art in the hospital’s main entrance, which celebrates the contribution of Black people to the NHS.

The RUH is also supporting a free regional online conference for both staff and the public, with guest speakers on the line-up including historian and writer David Olusoga, presenter and campaigner June Sarpong, and former professional footballer Anton Ferdinand.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

- The RUH is supporting a free online Black History Month conference, alongside other local partner organisations. It takes place on Monday 11 October from 1pm – 5pm, and will feature celebrity guest speakers including historian and writer David Olusoga, presenter and campaigner June Sarpong, author Stuart Lawrence who is the brother of Stephen Lawrence, and former professional footballer Anton Ferdinand. Everyone is welcome to attend, and tickets can be booked here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-west-black-history-month-conference-2021-tickets-170429613562>

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

Chair:
Alison Ryan

Chief Executive:
Cara Charles-Barks

