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## Media Release

### **RUH midwife receives prestigious award from Chief Midwifery Officer for England**

A midwife specialising in supporting families through pregnancy and baby loss at the Royal United Hospitals (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust has been recognised for her dedication with a national award.

Bex Walsh, Lead Bereavement Midwife, was presented with the Chief Midwifery Officer Silver Award by Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, OBE, Chief Midwifery Officer for England, at a recent visit to the RUH.

The award recognises and rewards the enormous range of skills, expertise and enduring compassion of midwives across the country. Bex was nominated for the award by her colleagues, recognising the specialist support she provides to women and birthing people and their families going through really difficult times.

Sarah Merritt, Deputy Chief Nurse and Director of Midwifery at the RUH, said: “Bex is well known for the compassion, care, dignity and respect with which she treats both those we care for and her colleagues. She is truly dedicated to supporting people through the difficult experience of losing a baby and we are so proud that she has been recognised by Professor Dunkley-Bent through this award.

“Bex has been the driving force behind the development and improvement of bereavement care for families who have experienced a pregnancy or baby loss. She has worked tirelessly to embed new national standards for bereavement care and to train other colleagues to improve the quality and consistency of care.”

Following a bereavement, women and birthing people and their families receive a range of support at the RUH. This includes use of the Forget Me Not suite, which provides a space

away from the busy maternity ward where grieving can have the privacy they need in a more homely environment.

The team also supports families with memory-making activities after their loss such as creating clay imprints and ink prints of their baby's hand and foot prints. These then form part of a memory box which parents can add other special items to.

Women and birthing people also receive one to one follow up support from Bex, who is just a phone call away should people have any questions or need any advice, and are invited to join a support group for bereaved parents which Bex runs in partnership with Somerset County Council.

Professor Dunkley-Bent, who was accompanied by Helen Williams, Regional Chief Midwife for the South West, visited the RUH earlier this month to present Bex with her award and meet the midwifery team at the hospital.

Bex said: "It was a complete surprise to receive this award but I feel really honoured.

"Losing a pregnancy or baby is a devastating experience and I feel passionately about making sure that people receive the best possible care during this time.

"I am really proud of how far the service has come since I took up this role in 2018 but I couldn't have achieved any of it without the support of the amazing maternity team. We know that we can't always make things better for families experiencing pregnancy or baby loss, but we are committed to doing everything we can to ensure people feel informed, well supported and cared for throughout this time."

## 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](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)

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