

PRESS RELEASE

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[for immediate publication]

Temporary ward for recovering patients opens in Bath to help free up beds in local hospitals this winter

A temporary ward has opened at St Martin's Hospital in Bath to support people who are well enough to leave hospital but not ready to go home.

The ward has opened to help relieve pressure on local acute hospitals and free up beds for the most ill patients.

The community ward, which also opened to help provide extra capacity to the local health and care system last winter, has twenty three beds and offers a peaceful and relaxed environment in which patients can take time to recover before being discharged to home or to a care home.

The beds are only offered to patients who no longer require urgent care, but who need a few extra days of therapeutic or nursing support or who are waiting to receive a care package or reablement assistance before they can return home.

The initiatives have been put in place by the Royal United Hospital, HCRG Care Group, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board and other partners including the third sector to tackle high demand for hospital beds now and to help add extra capacity during the coming winter which is expected to be extremely busy.

Gill May, Chief Nurse at Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board said:

“The additional beds we are opening at St Martin's are specifically for patients who don't need to be in hospital but are either unable to go straight home or just need some continued support. They will help to ensure our services operate as efficiently as possible over the coming winter months.

“The pressures on our hospital services are expected to be intense over the winter months and the public can play their part by using our health and care services appropriately at the right time and help our emergency services be there for the people who really need them.

“People should only go to A&E in the case of genuine emergency, such as loss of consciousness, fits that are not stopping, persistent, severe chest pain, breathing

difficulties, severe bleeding that cannot be stopped, severe allergic reactions and severe burns or scalds.”

Simon Sethi, Chief Operating Officer, Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust said:

“This is a great way to provide care for patients who are well enough to leave hospital but still need some extra support.

“Opening up extra capacity at St Martins means we can support patients’ ongoing recovery in a more appropriate environment and ensures hospital beds are there for people with acute medical needs.”

Val Scrase, Regional Director at HCRG Care Group said:

“Putting in place the extra capacity offered at St Martins hospital to support services this winter has been a real team effort.

It shows how we and the wider health and care system across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire are working together to deliver the best care for local people while ensuring our acute hospitals have capacity to help those in need of urgent care.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board is a statutory organisation that is responsible for developing a plan of how to meet the health needs of the local population, managing the local NHS budget and arranging the provision of local health services
- As a sovereign corporate entity, the ICB has a Board made up of representatives from various organisations across the BSW health and care system
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board is part of the wider BSW Integrated Care System, which brings NHS providers, local authorities, community providers and voluntary sector partners together to collaboratively plan and organise how health and care services are delivered
- The local integrated care system is also known as BSW Together, and is home to 88 GP practices, two mental health trusts, three local councils, a single ambulance provider, three acute hospitals, a number of other NHS providers and more than 2,800 voluntary organisations and community groups
- Visit www.bsw.icb.nhs.uk for more information

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