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Media Release

RUH appeals for volunteers for vital new vaccine trials

Researchers at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are appealing for volunteers to help with a new series of trials which will support the development of vaccines for new COVID-19 variants and other infectious diseases.

The appeal comes during World Immunisation Week (24 – 30 April), held annually to highlight the action needed to protect people from vaccine-preventable diseases.

The new series of trials will be conducted with pharmaceutical and biotechnology company Moderna, which has played a key role in the development of COVID-19 vaccines.

Dr Kelly Spencer, Head of Research Operations at the RUH, said: "It's fantastic that the RUH has been chosen as one of the research centres to be involved in this study.

"Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious diseases, and are estimated to prevent up to three million deaths worldwide each year.

"The RUH has an impressive track record of supporting world-leading research into the development of new vaccines and we have already conducted four COVID-19 vaccine trials, each involving around 100 participants.

"We see first-hand the satisfaction that people who volunteer for trials get from knowing they are contributing to the discovery of what could be really vital treatments.

"So if you think you could help, or would like to find out more about the trials, please get in touch with us."

The RUH has previously supported studies into the development of the Jansen and Sanofi COVID-19 vaccines and also played a key part in the Comflucov study, which compared the side effects and immune responses of giving approved COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as the flu vaccine, compared to giving them separately. As result of this study, national policy was updated so that patients could receive both vaccinations at once.

Former trial volunteer Hannah Durrant said: "I feel honoured to have been part of the Sanofi vaccine trial to further our collective defence against COVID-19.

"The development of vaccines and the programme of immunisation has provided the only path out of the pandemic for all of us, and it has been incredibly rewarding to have been able to play a small part in that.

"The trial was superbly managed by the research team at the RUH. The process was explained clearly from the outset and the staff demonstrated the highest levels of care, integrity and professionalism throughout."

If you would be interested in taking part in future vaccine studies please email your name and contact number to ruh-tr.vaccinestudies@nhs.net

Ends

Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We are also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

We're currently building a new Cancer Centre at the RUH. The Dyson Cancer Centre, which is set to open in autumn 2023, will help transform the care we provide for patients, families and carers.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk