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## Media Release

### **RUH launches new screening test to identify heart problems in babies**

Babies born at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are being offered a new screening test which can help to identify newborns with heart defects.

Newborn Pulse Oximetry Screening, which measures a baby's blood oxygen levels, is currently being rolled out to babies born at the RUH's Bath Birthing Centre and, thanks to a donation of equipment from the charity Tiny Tickers, will be extended to Frome and Chippenham birth centres and babies born at home later this year.

The screening is not a mandatory requirement for UK hospitals but has been found to help identify babies who have critical congenital heart disease before they become unwell, as well as spotting those with breathing problems such as pneumonia.

The test is carried out using a pulse oximeter, a special machine that is used routinely throughout the world to measure the amount of oxygen in the blood. A small probe is wrapped around the baby's hand and foot and connected to a small, handheld machine that measures the baby's oxygen levels by shining a light through the skin.

Chris Tate, Consultant Paediatrician, said: "This screening is quick and painless and has been found to be really successful in identifying babies born with heart defects.

"By identifying heart problems at such an early stage babies can get the care and treatment they need.

"I would like to thank Tiny Tickers who have generously donated more monitors to us, which means we can now roll out the testing to the local community."

On average, approximately 4,500 babies are born each year at the RUH and in our Frome and Chippenham birth centres.

The Tiny Tickers charity aims to help improve the detection, care and treatment of babies with serious heart conditions. You can find out more about their work at [www.tinytickers.org](http://www.tinytickers.org)

## 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 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 spring 2024, 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](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)