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## Media Release

### No laughing matter, RUH has dramatically dropped its carbon footprint by switching nitrous oxide delivery

- The RUH has reduced 2% carbon emissions by a simple switch to using portable gas canisters reducing our N<sub>2</sub>O usage from 2million litres to 13,500 litres a year

A staff led project at the Royal United Hospitals, Bath has made a huge contribution to the Trust's ambitious sustainability targets by decommissioning its entire nitrous oxide manifold which is the system that delivers the gas to the pipelines around the hospital.

Nitrous oxide has been used in hospitals for over 175 years as part of anaesthesia but it is a potent greenhouse gas, estimated to be nearly 300 times worse than carbon dioxide for the environment. A significant proportion of nitrous oxide emissions at older NHS hospitals is due to waste from manifolds and the associated old pipework.

The RUH Nitrous Oxide Working Party, made up of medics, estates staff, porters and sustainability experts, started surveying the N<sub>2</sub>O use in 2022 and discovered that routine N<sub>2</sub>O orders far exceeded what was needed.

The group led the Trust in decommissioning three cylinder manifolds and replacing them with portable N<sub>2</sub>O cylinders to be used in all theatres. They trained 75% staff to use the portable cylinders in three weeks in time for all three manifolds to be decommissioned. This simple switch has cut emissions by 2% (equivalent to SpaceX Falcon 9 flight to the international space station) and will save the trust £7,000 a year.

For mothers in labour Entonox, ("gas and air") is still readily available for those that need it.

**Abigail Mann, Clinical Fellow in Anaesthesia at RUH said** "Anaesthetic gases currently make up 2% of the NHS' carbon footprint and N<sub>2</sub>O is responsible for a 80% of this, so it has been brilliant working alongside so many different colleagues at the RUH whose expertise and energy has helped to make this switch to a more environmentally friendly way of working so seamless."

**Brian Johnson, Director of Estates and Facilities at RUH said** "This is a really positive step forward in our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint at the RUH. Changing behaviours is critical to the success of

many of our sustainability projects so I wanted thank everyone at the Trust who have demonstrated real enthusiasm and interest in progressing our ambitions to reducing our carbon footprint as rapidly as possible as we work towards net zero carbon by 2045.

## **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)