

27.03.24

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Media Release

Maternity services at Bath's Royal United Hospital retain outstanding rating from the CQC

Press release embargoed until 00.01hrs on Wednesday 27 March

Maternity services at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are in the top three per cent in England following a recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which saw the team retain its 'outstanding' rating.

Following the inspection in November 2023, inspectors found examples of outstanding practice relating to the RUH's commitment to continuously improving services, patient experience and the supportive environment provided for staff.

The development of a maternity and neonatal communication plan to improve engagement with staff was noted as 'outstanding practice', as was our Maternity Development Panel, which supports staff to develop their own projects and ideas to further improve the care we provide for our community.

Inspectors also found that:

- The service engaged well with women, birthing people and the community to plan and manage services.
- People could access the service when they needed it and did not have to wait too long for treatment, and all staff were committed to continually improving services.
- Staff said they felt respected, supported, and valued and were focused on the needs of women and birthing people receiving care.
- Staff managed safety and medicines well, assessed risks to women and birthing people, acted on them and kept good care records.

- Staff had training in key skills and understood how to protect women and birthing people from abuse.
- Inspectors also found that safety incidents were well managed and the service learned lessons from them.
- Leaders ran services well using reliable information systems and supported staff to develop their skills, while managers monitored the effectiveness of the service and made sure staff were competent.
- Staff were clear about their roles and accountabilities and understood the service's vision and values, and how to apply them in their work.

For the first time, community birth centres in Frome and Chippenham were also included in the inspection, with both centres receiving an overall 'good' rating. Inspectors recognised the community teams' commitment to continually learning and improving services, including several initiatives to tackle health inequalities and the ongoing quality improvement projects facilitating women and birthing people's choice of birth place.

Zita Martinez, Director of Midwifery at the RUH, said: "I'm absolutely delighted with the outcome of the CQC inspection, it is a true credit to the hard work and commitment of our staff based at the RUH and those in our community birth centres, who go that extra mile every day.

"I was extremely proud to hear the inspection team's reflection of the positive culture they observed during the visit and how our staff work within and promote a culture of dignity and respect for the people we care for.

"We are already developing action plans that focus on those areas where inspectors felt improvement is needed to ensure we continue to provide women and birthing people with the very best care at all times. This includes further training in adult basic life support and supporting an increased compliance with infection control measures.

"A major refurbishment of our maternity facilities at the RUH site is currently underway, to further improve our families' experience. This includes the relocation of our Day Assessment Unit alongside the creation of a new fully equipped day room for our families to prepare food and relax away from the bedside."

RUH Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks said: "This is a truly fantastic achievement that recognises the commitment and dedication of our Maternity team to providing an outstanding service to the people we care for.

"This accomplishment reflects what's at the heart of our You Matter Strategy; a commitment to shared values and continuous improvement which provide a positive experience for the people we care for the people we work with and the people in our community."

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

You can find the full inspection report on the [CQC website](#).

Ends

Notes to Editor:

- **As of 7 September 2023, just 3% of hospital maternity services were rated Outstanding overall. This official data - the latest available - comes from the CQC's 2022/23 State of Care report.**

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