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Media Release

Spade hits the ground for construction of specialist orthopaedic hub to serve the South West

The new centre will treat an extra 3,750 NHS patients a year with ‘Outstanding’ care

Construction work is underway at the Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre, with an official breaking of the ground event at the Somerset site commemorated on Wednesday 24 July. The Centre is a highly anticipated addition to the award-winning Sulis Hospital and is set to open in late 2024. It will create the capacity for an extra 3,750 non-emergency orthopaedic NHS patients across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire as well as the wider South West region each year, allowing people to have the surgery they need.

Patients will receive exceptional quality of care, as the hospital has achieved accreditation as an elective surgical hub through NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) scheme and has a CQC rating of ‘Outstanding’ for care and ‘Good’ overall.

The hospital does not have an emergency department so elective surgery is ‘ringfenced’. It is at less risk of being cancelled because the hospital does not perform urgent, non-planned operations. Facilities at the Centre will include two new modular theatres, additional inpatient beds, and the conversion of two existing theatres to laminar flow theatres.

Paul Doyle, Transformation Director of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB), opened the ceremony commemorating the project milestone with a speech. He spoke about how organisations like Sulis Hospital are coming together to work in collaboration to provide the best care for patients, and that this building epitomises that as a direction of travel.

Vinci Building and Integrated Health Projects (IHP) are delivering the project. The regional director, Russell Flowers, presented a plaque to commemorate the achievement. The Groundbreaking Ceremony marks the commencement of the foundations for the new modular building at Sulis Hospital. It represents the start of a new milestone for the build, to appreciate the work that has been done to date, and to reinforce the vision for the future.

Sulis Hospital has been part of the Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH) family since 2021. The elective care delivery model will benefit considerably from the Centre, ensuring that local people will get the care that they need as quickly as possible. NHS patients will actively see these benefits with a further reduction in wait times and waiting lists, and increased capacity to offset delays.

The region will also benefit from the 100 jobs that Sulis Hospital is recruiting to staff the Centre and provide exceptional care for every patient. The hospital is committed to providing the highest quality of care and the highest standards to benefit all, reinforced by its great patient feedback, staff surveys and excellent staff engagement, and national accreditations and awards.

Among those commemorating the breaking of ground was Simon Milner, Hospital Director at Sulis Hospital. He comments: "It's wonderful to be at the breaking ground stage of this development, which has been eagerly awaited by all. At Sulis, we're proud to reaffirm our commitment to increase capacity and help improve NHS patients' access to high-quality year-round elective orthopaedic care. As part of the RUH family, we're able to give so much back to the local community and we're keen to pioneer a new way of thinking in healthcare that can benefit everyone."

Doyle, adds: "Patients from the three acute hospitals in Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire will benefit significantly from our joint work to create the Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre. Building on the strong reputation of the existing Sulis Hospital, our ambition is to be an exemplar regionally and nationally, providing quick access and high-quality care to our population and beyond. This spade in the ground moment marks an exciting progression towards that ambition."

Andrew Hollowood, Chief Medical Officer, Royal United Hospitals Bath, adds: "We all want to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people in our care. One of the ways we can do this is to reduce the time people wait for elective surgery, so they can get on the road to recovery and a better quality of life more quickly. Today is a significant milestone for this goal as construction work begins on the Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre. I'm looking forward to welcoming our patients to the Centre when it opens later this year."

Ends

Notes to Editor:

About Sulis Hospital

Sulis Hospital is an award-winning hospital designed to feel modern and relaxed so you can enjoy your stay in comfort. The hospital was purpose-designed through a collaboration between world-renowned architects Foster & Partners and the founding doctors, who combined their experience in NHS and private practice, to create a healing experience for patients. Foster & Partners' work on Sulis Hospital has been shortlisted for the 'Stood the test of time' Architectural Today award in the 2024 healthcare category.

This is why we are able to offer a world-class experience that we would want to receive as a patient. The atmosphere is calm yet efficient, combining the simplicity and beauty of a modern, well-equipped hospital with a relaxing environment to help you feel at ease. Specialist teams of experts will ensure you receive the best treatment and care every step of the way. Sulis Hospital is closely affiliated with the Royal United Hospital Bath, being part of the family. The Hospital is the first fully-operational private hospital in the UK where 100% of the shares are owned by an NHS Trust.

<https://www.sulishospital.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/sulis-hospital/posts/?feedView=all>

<https://www.facebook.com/SulisHospital>

<https://x.com/SulisHospital>

About the RUH

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.

Our new Dyson Cancer Centre brings together many of the RUH's cancer services under one roof to provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West. The centre includes the RUH's oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, a 22-bed inpatient ward, a dedicated pharmacy, research team and nuclear medicine and physics teams.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub. The three-storey hub provides a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. It also includes comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

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