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## Media Release

### Team GB Olympian swaps the running track for the hospital ward

A Team GB Olympian who took centre stage at last year's Olympic Games in Paris has temporarily put down her fencing sword and picked up her stethoscope to begin a new role at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust.

Kerenza Bryson, 25, who represented Great Britain in the women's modern pentathlon, started as a new resident doctor at the RUH in December.

She'll be a familiar face to athletics fans, many of whom will have seen her compete in Paris in the modern pentathlon's five different disciplines - running, shooting, swimming, horse riding and fencing.

Kerenza said: "Completing my medical degree at Plymouth University while also training for the Olympics has been challenging to say the least!"

"I would get up at 5.30am to train before getting into hospital for 8.30am for placement, followed by training again at 6pm, then eat dinner around 7.30pm, with time for one final training session finishing at 10pm. Then sleep. Then repeat!"

"It was an extremely difficult balance to get right at the time, so I was so pleased to both graduate from medical school and achieve an Olympic qualification spot just weeks apart.

"For the year running into the Olympic Games, I chose to be a full-time athlete and focus fully on sport, deferring starting work as a doctor for a year, which was one of the best decisions I made. I am very lucky that the RUH team were so supportive of my ambitions in Paris.

“It’s early days working here in Bath, but everyone here has been so supportive and accommodating, which has really helped with the transition from life as a full-time athlete to being a full-time resident doctor.”

As if being a doctor and a professional athlete wasn’t enough to keep her busy, Kerenza is also an Army Reservist with 165 Port and Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps.

“Long-term, I would love to join the Regular Army as a doctor,” she said. “The Reserves have been really supportive of both my medical and sporting goals, and I have loved the work with them so far. If I could one day combine my military and medical careers, that would be amazing.”

Kerenza, who grew up in Devon, began her Olympic journey at the age of just 11, when she joined the Pentathlon Academy at Plymouth College.

“As a child, I had so much energy, so ended up trying all of the different sports clubs and afterschool activities that I could possibly find.” she said.

“I somehow qualified for, and competed at, the National Championships when I was aged 11, where I surprised myself and everyone else with my performance, given my lack of experience and preparation at the time. I was talent spotted from there and the rest is history.”

In the lead up to the Paris Olympics, Kerenza won gold at the World Cup in Turkey, secured a bronze medal at the World Cup in Egypt and won another gold at the European Championship in Hungary, securing the title of European Champion.

Kerenza said: “Going into the Games I was in a really good place, mentally and physically, but I put a lot of pressure on myself to medal given the successes I had had in the 12-18 months prior.

“Nothing is quite like the atmosphere of the Olympics and nothing can quite prepare you for competing at the biggest competition of your life in front of 20,000 people and hundreds of cameras.

“I held it together in my semi-finals, crossing the line in first place and setting a new Olympic record, but after a slightly overwhelming start in the final, I was fighting from the back to get into medal position until the end.

“Ending my first Games with a ninth place finish was not what I had hoped for, but I made the final and learned a lot in the process, not just about sport, but about everything else that is important to me.

“The experience was incredible. Being with the rest of Team GB in the Olympic Village was wonderful, it really felt like being part of one big community, and something really special.

“I couldn’t believe I was rubbing shoulders with such amazing athletes, some of whom I had looked up to for years.

“The Olympics is like nothing else and if I could win an Olympic medal, it would be the realisation of a dream that I’ve had since I was a child.

“Whilst I am disappointed not to have got a medal this time around, I am very proud to say that I am now an Olympian, and was lucky enough to have so many of my friends and family there to support me.

“With a feeling of unfinished business, I am now set on giving Los Angeles 2028 my best shot and seeing if that could be my chance of a medal second time around. For now though, I have switched focus to my medical career for some time, so will be working though the new challenges that I am presented with.”

## **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.

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](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)