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Media Release

New mouth care boxes support patients' oral health

Patients being cared for at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are being given a reason to smile thanks to new mouth care boxes that have been rolled out across wards to support their oral hygiene.

Mouth care is an integral part of a person's health and wellbeing. Often staff are required to support patients with their oral hygiene and need the right equipment to do this.

Each ward has now been provided with a mouth care box which includes items such as toothbrushes and toothpaste.

The idea for the mouthcare boxes came from Matron Erin Houlihan, who recognised that a small change could make a big difference for many of the people we care for

Funding for the project came from the RUH's Innovation Panel, which supports staff to develop their own innovative projects and ideas by providing support and funding to improve patient care and experience, and the way staff work across the Trust.

Erin has been supported by Lorraine Forrester, Senior Dental Nurse, who has been instrumental in introducing the mouth care boxes to RUH wards and providing training for staff.

Lorraine said: "Good oral hygiene is so important but it is one of the things that many patients can overlook if they are staying at the hospital.

"Poor oral health has an impact on nutrition, hydration, comfort and communication so it's important that staff have the training and resources they need to support patients with mouth care.

“Staff on wards have been trained about how to brush patients’ teeth for them when they are unable to do it themselves and how to use a pen torch to check patients’ mouths for any concerns.

“Each ward also has its own mouth care box which contains things like different types of toothpaste and different toothbrushes, so staff can provide support to those patients who need it.

“The mouthcare boxes and oral hygiene training has proved really successful and have had a really positive impact on our patients’ experience while they are with us.”

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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