



25.09.25

Communications Department

Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

Tel: 01225 826230 / 821459
Mobile: 07557 756658 (office hours)

ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net
www.ruh.nhs.uk
www.twitter.com/RUHBath

Media Release

Standing beside staff: RUH launches compassionate cancer support policy

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH) has teamed up with Working With Cancer (WWC) to develop a new policy to support RUH colleagues who are affected by cancer.

Estimates suggest that on average someone is diagnosed with cancer at least every 90 seconds in the UK. As one of the biggest employers in the area, there will be people working for the RUH who have cancer or who are caring for someone with a cancer diagnosis.

The RUH worked closely with WWC, a specialist not-for-profit social enterprise which supports employers to manage cancer in the workplace, to look at the impact of a cancer diagnosis and put in place clear and compassionate support and guidance.

Alfredo Thompson, RUH Chief People Officer, said: "I'm proud to launch our Working With Cancer pilot initiative that lays out how we, as leaders and colleagues, can stand beside our staff when they need us most.

"This policy is more than process; it's about compassion, flexibility, and dignity. It's one of life's most challenging journeys, and as a Trust, we want to be a place where people feel supported, not just professionally, but humanely.

"We want the RUH to be a place where people feel they can be themselves, ask for help, and trust that we'll do the right thing. We want our people to know that they matter."

The new policy is intended to support team members who receive a cancer diagnosis whether they are in treatment, remission or managing recurrence, someone caring for a loved one with cancer, or anyone working alongside colleagues affected by cancer and wondering how best to help.

Baz Harding-Clark, UNISON Bath Health Branch Secretary, who co-signed the new policy, said: “We’re incredibly proud of what’s been achieved. It is a significant milestone, not only because of the policy itself, but because of the way it was developed.

“This was a truly collaborative process with staff wellbeing at its heart. We developed the new policy with input from across the Trust, under the guidance and support of Working With Cancer.”

Veronica Foote, Working With Cancer’s Head of Policy and Consulting, worked with the RUH to support the development of the new policy. She reviewed existing policies and created a working group which included representatives from different departments across the Trust, union leadership and people who had been affected by cancer.

“We estimate there are now more than a million people of working age with cancer in the workforce,” said Veronica “and that number is increasing. Advances in treatments means that many more people want to continue working, or return to work, if cancer enters their lives. But research we carried out last year with the Institute of Employment Studies found that 96 per cent of organisations do not have a dedicated cancer policy.

“The RUH initiative is a groundbreaking and best practice policy for NHS employees as it will make a significant difference for those affected by cancer, not only in Bath but potentially for employees across the NHS.”

The new policy covers everything from pay through to workplace adjustments, support for carers and return to work plans where appropriate.

Staff are already benefiting, with one colleague reflecting “This policy will mean a lot to anyone going through a diagnosis of cancer or to those caring for someone they love.”

The RUH’s official NHS charity RUHX supported the development of the policy. Rhyannon Boyd, RUHX Associate Director said: “Staff at the RUH are extraordinary, and that is why part of our mission is to support staff wellbeing so they can keep on doing what they do best. That’s why we’ve been able to fully fund this important work by WWC to ensure that colleagues affected by cancer can receive the support, compassion and flexibility that they need.”

The RUH will now take the learnings from developing the policy and over time will expand the policy to apply to other long-term health conditions.

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