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Media Release

RUH brings cancer care closer to home for Frome and neighbouring community

People in Frome and the surrounding area can now access cancer care closer to home, thanks to a new satellite clinic run by the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH).

The new Systemic Anti-Cancer Treatment (SACT) Centre, based at Frome Medical Centre, opened earlier this year and has already provided care for over 200 patients.

SACT is the use of drugs to treat or control cancer, which includes chemotherapy, immunotherapy, hormonal therapy and targeted therapy.

Patients still receive their initial treatment at the Medlock Unit at the Dyson Cancer Centre, which is based at the RUH. Suitable patients can then continue their therapy in Frome and still receive treatment from the Medlock Unit's team of nurses.

Mel Burcombe, RUH Matron for Haematology and Oncology, said: "We're really pleased we've been able to open this satellite clinic in Frome. It means more people can receive high-quality care closer to where they live, in a setting that is calm, welcoming and local. Since launching, we've already increased our clinic here from two to three days a week.

"We are very grateful to the Bath Cancer Unit Support Group, who are long term supporters of the RUH. Their fundraising support has been instrumental in enabling us to bring this service to Frome."

Feedback from patients has been really positive. Brian Melksham, who is undergoing treatment in Frome, said: "I'm very happy going to Frome. It's much more convenient and seeing the same friendly faces from the Dyson Cancer Centre is very reassuring. The care they give is first class."

Michael Taylor, Chairman of the Bath Cancer Unit Support Group, said: "This project would not be possible without the generosity, dedication, and community spirit of our funders and supporters. "Thanks to them we've been able to raise funds to purchase and install all of the equipment at the Frome SACT Centre.

“Together, we are making a meaningful difference, bringing essential cancer treatment closer to home and improving the experience of patients across Frome and the surrounding area.

“A special thank you to the Trustees of the Richard Oatley Foundation for their generous grant towards our fundraising.”

The clinic forms part of ongoing work across local health partners and the wider NHS to make services more convenient, reduce travel for patients, and improve access to specialist care within community settings.

The centre benefits those from neighbouring towns and villages such as Shepton Mallet, Warminster and Westbury, as well as Frome residents.

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