Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

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# Media Release

## Hear to help – RUH volunteers lend a hand with NHS hearing aid retubing

A team of volunteers from the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust is running free hearing aid retubing clinics at the hospital and in the local community, providing minor repairs to the devices free of charge.

The clinics focus on changing the plastic tube that connects the ear insert to the part behind the ear.

These tubes get dirty and become hard over time, which affects the quality of sound.

Steve Brunton, one of the volunteers who runs the fortnightly clinic in the Atrium at the RUH along with Jane Clapp, said: “We regularly see people who think their hearing aid is broken, but actually it’s often just a case of replacing the plastic tubing – which should be done every six months.

“It’s quite a quick job but can be a bit fiddly, especially for older people, so we help with that. We also offer advice on how to care for hearing aids – how to clean them and check the battery, for example.

“We can’t help with the electronic side of the devices, that’s down to the hospital’s audiologists, but by carrying out these repairs we can help take a bit of pressure off that department.”

As well as the RUH, clinics are run at Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre, Frome Health Centre, Malmesbury Primary Care Centre, Chippenham Hospital, Wells Health Centre and Warminster Hospital. They have proved so successful that Steve has started to offer them to local nursing homes too.

“I really enjoy doing it and you get a lot of satisfaction from seeing the difference it makes to people,” said Steve.

“I was keen to volunteer at the hospital, and as someone who has a hearing aid when this opportunity came up it was the perfect fit for me.

“I was trained up and quickly got to grips with it all and things have just gone from there.

“When people are struggling with their hearing, it doesn’t just affect them, it affects the people around them too, so it’s a real pleasure to be part of a free service like this, that can transform the lives of people with hearing loss.”

Annelore Verhaegen, Volunteering Development Manager, said: “We have a fantastic group of volunteers who support teams and departments across the RUH and their contribution is invaluable.

“These repair clinics are just one example of the positive impact our volunteers have on the people we care for and I’m delighted they have been such a success.”

To book an appointment to have your hearing aid retubed at the RUH Atrium clinic, please contact the RUH’s Audiology department - ruh-tr.Audiology@nhs.net or 01225 824035.

For the retubing clinics in any of the community locations please contact the local site directly:

- Frome Health Centre: 01373 468378
- Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre: 01225 711300
- Malmesbury Primary Care Centre: 01666 825825
- Warminster Community Hospital: 01985 212076
- Chippenham Community Hospital: 01249 447100
- Wells Health Centre: 01749 672137

Free hearing aid batteries can also be collected from the main reception at the RUH.

If you are interested in volunteering at the RUH contact ruh-tr.volunteers@nhs.net or ring 01225 824046.

**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 NHS services for the benefit of the people we care for.

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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