

**12 April 2011****Communications Department**

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**Press Release****Health Minister Lord Howe visits RUH**

Health Minister Lord Howe visited the RUH today (Tue 12 April) to see first-hand the hard work of staff who have helped the hospital perform better than ever before.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health was shown around the Emergency Department and the Medical Assessment Unit, where he spoke to staff and patients.

He heard about the RUH's success in ensuring that, for the first time, 98% of emergency patients received treatment within 4 hours of being booked into the Emergency Department.

Chief Executive James Scott said: "Our success last year was down to the hard work of our staff, who have done so much to speed up how quickly we see patients while ensuring they remain clinically safe.

"This is an enormous achievement given that we had 66,000 attendances in the Emergency Department last year. Of course there is more to be done, and we will continue to strive to improve the care we give to our patients and their overall experience of the RUH.

"We were delighted to be able to show the Minister around and introduce him to some of the staff who have helped the health community to achieve 98%."

The Minister was also told about the hospital's successful pilot scheme which has involved a GP working out of hours and at weekends alongside clinicians to see and treat those patients who attend the Emergency Department but do not need emergency care.

Health Minister Lord Howe said: "I am delighted the pilot scheme at the Royal United Hospital has been successful in reducing the number of unnecessary attendances to the emergency department.

"Having a GP on hand, out-of-hours to assess and treat patients who come into hospital but who do not need emergency care, means the hospital can treat patients more efficiently and effectively in a real emergency."

After being shown the Emergency Department, the Minister toured the Medical Assessment Unit, which carries out further assessment, observation and treatment on patients.

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