

15 October 2012

**Communications Department**  
Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230/1299communications@ruh.nhs.uk  
[www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)**Media Release****RUH play team promote play**

Play specialists at the Royal United Hospital will be helping young patients celebrate Play in Hospital Week (8-12 October) by organising a range of exciting activities and entertainment.

During the week, the children will be getting creative with Artists, and they will be enjoying a messy play day. They will experience some magic with Jack the Magician and meet Muppet the PAT dog.

Perhaps the highlight of their week will be the opportunity to see a fire engine, police car, and a police sniffer dog up close, as some of our local community policeman and firefighters will be visiting in support of Play in Hospital Week.

Play has an important role in a child's health and development, and is an essential part of a youngsters' care.

The RUH has two Play Specialists, Jo Powell and Lyn Gardiner. Working alongside other health care professionals, they organise daily play and activities in the children's ward or at the bedside. Providing play to help children master and cope with fears and anxieties, and prepare children for hospital procedures.

Play specialist's aim to use play to welcome children to hospital and prepare them to cope with surgery or other procedures. We encourage children to keep up their usual interests and use specific play techniques to minimise stressful events by acting them out in advance. This helps reduce a child's possible fear of hospital, lessen any pain or anxiety and meet their play needs.

When play specialists prepare children for surgical and medical procedures, they explain what is going to happen and how, by using photographs, dolls and real objects. They encourage the children to ask questions and they can play with a doll and objects such as a hat, mask, lines, syringe and bandages. By using toys and activities, they aim to distract the children by making the process much easier and more positive for the whole family.

**Ends****Photo opportunity**

There will be a photo opportunity at 10.30am on 11 October when local community police and firefighters arrive.