

Date: 7 May 2013

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## Media Release

### New Dementia Coordinators

Three new dementia coordinators are providing a 7-day service to support staff at the Royal United Hospital in giving the best possible care to elderly patients with a known diagnosis of dementia, and to improve the experience of patients and their carers.

Staff can refer all patients who are admitted as an emergency, and who have a diagnosis of dementia, to the Dementia Co-ordinators, who will be available Monday to Sunday.

Dee Scruton, one of the new Dementia Coordinators, says: "Over the next few years we are going to see a huge increase in the number of people being diagnosed with dementia. There is no cure – but we can aim for early diagnosis of this degenerative disease, so that we can put mechanisms in place to support the quality of life the patient has at the time, and to plan for their physical and psychological needs in the future.

"Our role is to support staff in improving the quality of care given to patients with a diagnosis of dementia. We'll be focusing on reducing unnecessary time patients spend in hospital, engaging with and involving carers, planning for discharge and ensuring better support at home to avoid unnecessary readmissions to hospital in the future.

"As dementia co-ordinators, we will be advocates for the patient, linking in with staff and community services, and tying everything in together to streamline the process from the time a patient is admitted, throughout their hospital stay and beyond, once they are discharged back in to the community.

"We will connect and engage with their carers to get them more involved, and finding out more about the person behind the condition, which is essential. Understanding more about what is important to them, knowing their likes and dislikes and their habits for example, will help us respond to the patient's needs and can help reduce their agitation or distress.

"We will also be working closely with Mental Health Liaison services, voluntary services such as Age UK, Carer's services, Alzheimer's Society as well as statutory services in social care and providers of care for dementia in the community, to ensure they have our contact details."

**Ends**

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**Notes for Editor:**

The RUH has been awarded almost half a million pounds to improve the experience of patients and carers affected by dementia. We have received £453,000 as part of the Dementia Challenge Fund bid; £296,180 came from the NHS South Challenge Fund and £156,820 from the BaNES and Wiltshire Clinical Commission Groups. The new 7-day service provided by the dementia coordinators is an element of the improvements being made in dementia care, which are funded by this investment.

Photo: Maggie Depledge, Astrid Siddorn and Dee Scruton are new dementia co-ordinators