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Communications Department

Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230

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RUHcommunications@nhs.net

www.ruh.nhs.uk

Health Minister visits BIME and RUH

Minister for Care and Support Services Norman Lamb visited the Royal United Hospital today to see first-hand some of the latest developments in caring for patients with dementia.

Mr Lamb's visit started at the Bath Institute of Medical Engineering (BIME), an independent charity on the RUH site working to improve the quality of life of children and adults with disabilities and healthcare problems through the use of technology.

He was shown some of BIME's current work helping older people and those with dementia and also some of the products resulting from its past work. Mr Lamb also heard how BIME has become a nationally recognised centre of excellence for research and development of assistive technology.

Then he visited Combe Ward, an older person's ward which is currently being refurbished to become a dementia friendly ward, fully designed with the dementia patient in mind.

On Midford, another older person's ward, the Minister spent time talking to staff and patients, and sat in on a reminiscence session which encouraged patients to talk about their memories. He was also shown the Combe Clocks, designed by BIME to help patients suffering from dementia related orientation problems.

Midford is one of our 13 departments which have been awarded a Charter Mark for the excellent care they provide to patients with dementia. The Charter Mark scheme was developed by the RUH and the voluntary organisations Alzheimer's Support and the Alzheimer's Society. It provides a gold standard for staff to ensure care for people with dementia on all adult wards, not just those specifically for older people, is the very best it can be.

The Minister also met one of our dementia co-ordinators who spoke about their work to ensure that all patients in the hospital with dementia are treated as individuals and that their needs are met.

Mr Lamb said: "I was very impressed by the quality of dementia care I saw at the Royal United Hospital, and the new technology being pioneered by the Bath Institute of Medical Engineering.

"I really enjoyed talking to patients and staff who are at the forefront of providing excellent dementia care, while the progress on the new Government-funded dementia-friendly unit was absolutely brilliant."



Consultant Geriatrician Dr Chris Dyer said: "We were very proud that Mr Lamb visited us and saw the close integration between us as an acute hospital, the wider health community, and BIME.

"We were delighted to be able to show him the state-of-the-art ward we are creating on Combe so close to it being ready for our first patients, and also to meet one of our three dementia co-ordinators, which we believe are the first of their kind."

BIME Deputy Director Tony Husband said: "It was great to welcome Norman Lamb to BIME and show him examples of our work researching and developing assistive technology for older people and people with dementia. Thanks to Don Foster, President of BIME, for inviting the Minister to come and visit us and the RUH."

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