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Communications Department

Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230

RUHcommunications@nhs.net

www.ruh.nhs.uk

Media Release

New pathology laboratory up and running

A new pathology laboratory and mortuary at the RUH is now fully operational following a six-week phased transfer of services.

The department of pathology began transferring over to the new £12 million development at the end of April, and a five-day transfer of the most acute pathology services marked the completion of the move on 15 June.

The department of pathology provides diagnostic and screening services to the hospital and to GP practices in BaNES, Somerset and Wiltshire – serving a population of 500,000 people. The department carries out nearly 4m tests each year and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The laboratory is also home to the blood transfusion department which is responsible for providing blood and blood products to patients across our catchment area.

The move itself was a highly complex project and was carefully managed by the Estates and Facilities Capital Projects team and staff from the department of pathology.

A number of very heavy and extremely fragile state-of-the-art analysers had to make the journey across the site – requiring the specialist services of a dedicated laboratory removals company – and the transfer of services in the department had to be staggered so as to keep disruption to a minimum. In fact, pathology services remained fully operational throughout the move.

The relocation brings with it several knock-on advantages: by transferring the department to a site at the heart of the hospital, the laboratory links far more logically and effectively to other departments (such as the operation theatres and the Emergency Department) which all helps speed up processes and communication.

Howard Jones, Director of Estates and Facilities, said: “No construction project at the RUH is ever developed in isolation. All building projects are part of the overall strategy for the redevelopment of the whole site. The working relationship that has proved so successful in the build of the new pathology laboratory will remain intact, as the Cancer Centre and redevelopment of RUH North will be handled by the same team. This means that any knowledge acquired during this project can be carried over and applied to the future projects.

“More than 150 staff work in the department, and they have all been looking forward to leaving the outdated labs behind to move into their new home. It’s a much more pleasant place in which to carry out the fantastic work they do.”

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