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Media Release

RUH giving the complaints process a 'Unique Voice'

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust joined forces with creative arts company Unique Voice on a project which aims to improve the way complaints are handled and resolved at the Trust.

Drawing upon the personal, real-life experiences of staff and patients who have been through the complaints process, Unique Voice, in conjunction with the Patient Experience team at the RUH, produced an original drama which was performed to an audience of over 200 RUH staff on Friday 13 February.

Theresa Hegarty, Head of Patient Experience at the RUH said: "This moving and personal performance was extremely well-received – both by staff at the hospital and by the patients, families and carers who were involved extensively in workshops and who came along to watch. I hope the play clarified the importance of working towards an improved complaints process at the Trust and served to capture the hearts and minds of those watching. At the centre of each and every complaint is an individual, and an effective policy on paper is worth nothing without the empathy and compassion of the staff who implement it."

A couple who had gone through the complaints process themselves, and had been unhappy with how the complaint had been handled, attended the event. After the performance, the patient's partner spoke movingly to the audience about his own experience. **He said:** "It is vitally important that all parties involved in a complaint are kept informed throughout the process. The emphasis should not be on the person who has made the complaint to chase; the onus should be on the organisation to keep the complainant well informed. It doesn't matter how long it takes – so long as the lines of communication are kept open throughout. Continuity is also an important issue; it's exhausting and distressing to have to keep explaining your situation to new people.

"Having been personally involved in the workshops, I feel the efforts of the last twelve months will help to produce a robust system for handling complaints – but I also hope the system can nail some of the issues that are leading to complaints in the first place."

The performance was part of the Trust's See it My Way series of events, designed to help staff view important and challenging issues from the perspective of patients and carers.

Ends

For media enquiries or more information, please call Tina Waller (External Communications Officer) on 01225 826282.



Notes to Editors

About 'Unique Voice'

Unique Voice is a highly respected Community Interest Company, providing excellent and thought-provoking work that contributes to supporting young people through childhood and teenage life into adulthood. Alongside this, the company works with businesses and charities providing training, conference enhancement and partnership work. Having created bespoke work for local and national organisations and authorities such as the NHS, The Carers Trust, Barnardo's, The Cooperative and Avon and Somerset Police, Unique Voice is well known for tackling issues with an innovative and unique approach. Unique Voice is proudly patroned by the NSPCC and Sir Patrick Stewart OBE.
www.uniquevoice.org

About the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust:

Locally and regionally referred to as the RUH, the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset, Somerset and West Wiltshire.

The Trust was granted a license to operate as an NHS Foundation Trust on 1 November 2014.

The RUH is one of the City of Bath's largest employers with over 5,000 members of staff and provides a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

The RUH is in the first phase of a major redevelopment strategy which will include the provision of a brand new state-of-the-art Cancer Centre, Pathology Lab, Therapies Centre, Pharmacy, and an Information Management and Technology Centre.