

Date 10.05.18

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Media Release

Dying Matters Week

People across the South West are being urged to talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, with staff at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Dorothy House Hospice Care supporting Dying Matters Awareness Week (14-18 May).

Events are being held in wards and departments at the RUH to encourage discussion among staff, patients and families about end of life issues. The RUH and Dorothy House are also holding a 'See It My Way' session for staff to hear from guest speakers, three patients and a carer, about their own personal experience of living with or supporting someone with a life-limiting condition.

Helen Meehan, RUH Lead Nurse for Palliative Care and End of Life, said: "Dying Matters is not just about a person's final days of life. It's about the weeks, months and years before, and it's really important for staff to be aware and understanding of the needs of people however close they are to the end of life.

"Every minute someone in England dies, but many people still feel uncomfortable about talking about end of life. We have conversations every day in the hospital about living with uncertainty and about approaching end of life. But this isn't just about what the hospital can do, talking about our own wishes for care at the end of life, sharing what is important to us with our loved ones, our GP and those supporting us can help us to get the care and support that we need, where we want it, at the end of our lives."



Stephen Dale, Head of Community Partnerships at Dorothy House Hospice Care said: “The See It My Way event is an invaluable opportunity for staff to hear direct from our patients and carers about the small things that make a big difference to their experience of care.”

During the week, representatives from the RUH Specialist Palliative Care team, the Bereavement office, Chaplaincy team, Patient Experience team, Quality Improvement team and the Forever Friends Appeal will visit the wards with information on the resources that are available to support staff who provide compassionate end of life care.

These include information leaflets to support advance care planning conversations, and practical comfort items for the ward Comfort Boxes such as tissues, wash bags, flasks for family members wishing to stay overnight.

The Chaplaincy team can even help to arrange a marriage at short notice under special license for a patient nearing the end of life. The RUH palliative care team has also created special wedding boxes that contain bunting, fairy lights, two ceramic hearts as a keepsake gift, flowers, bubbles, a wedding card and a gift bag, which the wards can request to support the marriage of a couple when time is so precious.

The RUH’s charity The Forever Friends Appeal is also involved in Dying Matters Week. People are being invited to a Time of Reflection service to remember and celebrate loved ones, to be held in the Spiritual Care Centre on Saturday 26 May at 3pm.

For more information see <https://www.dyingmatters.org/AwarenessWeek>

Ends

Notes to Editor:

- 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 and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population



served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

- The Trust provides 565 beds and 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.
- In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME.
- The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now working towards building a purpose built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and a new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future
- For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

