NHS
Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust



Year in Review

Highlights from 2025/26

The RUH, where you matter

The RUH, where you matter

Welcome to our Year in Review for 2025/26. This publication is an opportunity to reflect on the year at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, celebrating our achievements, acknowledging our challenges, and sharing how we continue to improve services for the people we serve.

It has been a demanding year. In September 2025, the Trust was ranked among the most challenged hospital organisations in the country under the Government's NHS Oversight Framework (NOF). We also faced increasing financial pressures and some of the highest levels of demand our Emergency Department has ever experienced.

However, the RUH is also characterised by the commitment, skill and determination of its staff. When improvements were needed, they rose to the challenge. Through innovation, collaboration and a shared commitment to providing the best possible care, our staff helped strengthen our financial position and improve performance. By the end of the year, we had climbed significantly in the NOF and were recognised as the most improved Emergency Department in the South West. Throughout, our focus remained firmly on delivering safe, high-quality and compassionate care.

However, performance measures tell only part of the story. Every day, our teams find new ways to improve experiences for patients and families. This year saw innovations ranging from our first same-day radical prostatectomy procedure to introducing a neonatal birth registration service, allowing parents with babies receiving hospital care to register their child's birth without leaving the ward.

We have also invested in our people, expanding training and development opportunities, including leadership programmes and British Sign Language training. These initiatives help staff develop new skills while improving experiences for colleagues, patients and visitors.

As an anchor institution, we remain committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our wider community. A major milestone this year was the opening of the Sulis Orthopaedic Centre, delivered in partnership with Sulis Hospital. The centre is helping thousands more patients access life-changing orthopaedic surgery much sooner. We have also continued our work to reduce our environmental impact and support a healthier future for our community.

2025/26 also saw us embrace new ways of working as BSW Hospitals Group, which was officially formed in May 2025 between the RUH, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in Swindon and Salisbury Foundation Trust. We are in the early stages of working together and are laying the groundwork for the future. However, our goal has always been clear: to combine our skills, resources and experience to help us more effectively tackle the challenges we all face, and to improve outcomes and access to services for more than one million people in the South West.

The stories in this publication represent only a small selection of what has been achieved over the past year. I hope they provide a flavour of the dedication, innovation and teamwork that underpin everything we do.

Finally, I would like to thank you – our patients, carers, volunteers, partners and local community – for your continued support. The pride you take in your local hospital is inspiring, and we really value when you share both your positive experiences and thoughts on where we could do better. Your encouragement, feedback and challenge are essential as we strive to provide the highest quality care and experience for all those who use the RUH.

I hope you find this review informative and inspiring, and I look forward to continuing to work with you for the benefit of our patients, staff and communities.



Cara Charles-Barks
Chief Executive, BSW Hospitals Group

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Strategy overview

We have a compelling Trust strategy to help us achieve our You Matter vision. You can read more on the 'About Us' section of our website. Each year we choose three to four breakthrough objectives to focus our energy on. Our progress against our breakthrough objectives are described throughout this document.

The people we work with

Together, we will create the conditions to perform at our best.

- Demonstrating our shared values with kindness, civility and respect all day, every day.
- Taking care of and investing in teams, training and facilities to maximise the potential of all that we have.
- Celebrating our diversity and passion to make a difference.

The people we care for

Together, we will support you as and when you need us most.

- Connecting with you – helping you feel safe, understood and always welcome.
- Consistently delivery the highest quality care and outcomes.
- Communicating well, listening and acting on what matters most to you.



The people in our community

Together, we will create one of the healthiest places to live and work.

- Working with partners to make the most of our shared resources and plan wisely for future needs.
- Taking positive action to reduce health inequalities.
- Creating a community that promotes the wellbeing of our people and environment.

The people we care for

At the RUH we work together to support the people we care for, as and when they need us most. Over the next few pages we share some highlights to show how we are achieving this.

Looking back at the last year...

2025 April

The Stoma Therapy team launched Water Confidence sessions for patients. Experts from the team provide support to improve patients' confidence and help them get back in the water after life-changing surgery.



May

A new support group was launched to bring together patients with heart failure to ask questions of clinical staff and get advice. Patient Sue Hounsell said she found the opportunity to connect with others really valuable.



August

Patients living with diabetes helped to transform the diabetes unit. New murals by local artist Natasha Clutterbuck were installed alongside small-scale watercolours created by patients. Young people had asked for the department's appearance to be improved.



April



A patient who underwent major robotic surgery was able to be discharged home the very same day. Patient Eddie Harvey underwent a radical prostatectomy, a treatment for prostate cancer that hasn't spread beyond the prostate.

June



New mouth care boxes were rolled out across wards to support patients' oral hygiene. Poor oral hygiene impacts nutrition, hydration, comfort and communication, so it's vital that staff have the training and resources they need to support patients with mouth care.

Parents of babies receiving care on the neonatal unit are now able to register their baby's birth at the hospital. This means the parents no longer need to leave their babies to visit a registry office, providing them invaluable extra time with their newborns.



November

February 2026



The RUH welcomed three cousins just hours apart! Identical twin girls Frankie and Connie were born shortly before their cousin Maddox. Georgie, mother to Frankie and Connie, said: "The staff at the RUH kept us calm, reassured and supported throughout."

2025/26 in numbers

Our 2025/26 breakthrough goal was to show we valued patient and staff time, which we measured by looking at the time it took to see patients in our Emergency Department after arriving by ambulance.

This waiting time improved steadily from February 2025, with an average handover time of 33 minutes during October, November and December.

While system pressures meant this was difficult to sustain, improvements were delivered across the emergency care pathway. See page 6 for more details about our performance, and page 9 for more details about how we are continuing to improve our performance in Urgent and Emergency Care in 2026/27.

Delivering and supporting:

585,208 outpatient appointments

17,637 operations

334,077 diagnostic tests

4,257 babies' births
6.4% more than in 2024/25

107,136
Emergency Department attendances

5.6% more than in 2024/25

Most improved in the South West

In Quarter 4 of 2025/26, the RUH was announced as the most improved Trust in the South West in terms of performance, and the 11th in the country.

This reflects the performance published in the NHS Oversight Framework tables, a government initiative that aims to provide greater transparency about how local hospitals are performing.

Published in September 2025, the initial results were very disappointing, with the RUH ranked among the country's most challenged hospital trusts. In the second half of the year, we made significant improvements. Thanks to the sustained effort of teams across the hospital and support from partners, including Sulis Hospital, we were able to significantly improve our position, rising 30 places in the national rankings – one of the biggest improvements by any hospital trust.

This reflected progress in a range of areas. Over the year, around 4,200 more patients received treatment within 18 weeks of referral. We also eliminated waits of more than 65 weeks for treatment and significantly reduced the number of people waiting more than 52 weeks. This means far more people are getting the information and treatment they need much quicker than before, relieving anxiety for patients and their families and potentially improving outcomes.

There is still more to do, particularly in Urgent and Emergency Care, although progress has been made in these services and work will continue into 2026/27 (see page 9). However, we are encouraged by this improvement and by the progress made over the year, which we feel better reflects the care we provide and the compassion, dedication and commitment of our staff.

Cancer patients praise care at the RUH

People receiving cancer treatment at the RUH have praised the hospital for the care and support they have received.

The results of the National Cancer Patient Survey 2024, published in August 2025, showed a continued year-on-year improvement, with the Trust's overall 'experience of care' rating rising to 9.1. This is above the top 'upper expected' range and reflects the RUH's commitment to supporting the people we care for every step of the way.

For 18 questions in the survey, the Trust scored above the 'expected' (average) range, with none scoring below it.

Patients felt that they were:

- Provided relevant information on available support
- Able to involve family members or carers in treatment decisions as much as they wished
- Treated with privacy and dignity
- The RUH was also praised for helping patients manage pain and side effects.

> This is really positive feedback and shows that we are making sure the people we care for have the support they need when they need it most.
>
> These results are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and our determination to consistently deliver the highest quality care and outcomes for our patients.
>
> While we are pleased to receive such positive feedback, we are not complacent and are always looking for ways to further improve the experience we offer our patients.
>
> **- Ros Helps**
> Lead Cancer Nurse

The National Cancer Patient Experience Survey is commissioned and managed by NHS England. It helps monitor progress in cancer care and provides information to support local improvements.

Quality priorities report back



Our priorities from 2025/26

We set priorities every year that ensure we are focusing on patient safety, clinical effectiveness, and the experience of the people we care for. They are based on reviewing what our data is telling us about the services we provide, consultation with our key stakeholders and, most importantly, through listening to the feedback we receive from patients and carers.

Improving learning from patient safety events

At the RUH, patient safety is at the heart of everything we do. In 2025/26, we focused on strengthening the Trust's safety culture, improving learning from patient safety incidents, ensuring learning resulted in measurable improvements, and empowering our staff to act when they noticed concerns. During the year we introduced a more streamlined incident reporting process and strengthened oversight through the Patient Safety Events Oversight Group. Learning from incidents was more closely linked to quality improvement activity, and we also improved the way we shared this learning with staff through a new patient safety newsletter ('The Big Four'), dedicated webinars, improved intranet resources, and one-page learning summaries for all approved investigations, which are circulated trust-wide to promote shared learning. The new Safety, Quality and Improvement Collaborative Forum improves alignment between insight, governance and improvement teams. We also continue to focus on ensuring that we engage compassionately with patients, families and carers, as well as staff, following patient safety incidents.

Developing our framework for carers

We are committed to supporting carers and recognising the values they provide. We set out to build on the support already in place to improve their experience while supporting patients at the RUH. During 2025/26 we established a working group, which includes patients, carers and staff, so we can understand what we do well and what we could do better. These insights led us to focus on three key areas: environment, information and communication, and the provision of food. This has led to additional RADAR keys being made available for Changing Places facilities, dedicated toilets for carers on pilot wards, and a review of overnight accommodation on all wards. There is also an updated Carer's Charter, revised webpages and wider distribution of the Patient Welcome Booklet. Practical information about parking, visiting, catering and support services was also made easier to access.

Communicating with you in a clear and understandable way at the right time

We know that getting communication with patients and carers right is essential; it supports safe and high-quality care, builds relationships and helps patients feel heard and valued – meaning they have a better experience while in hospital. To support this, we focused on strengthening inclusive and accessible communication for patients, carers and families. The RUH remains accredited by Communication Access UK, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to making reasonable adjustments for people with communication needs, and we introduced new training for staff so they can better support those with communication needs. We also piloted a new British Sign Language (BSL) training programme, promoted Sunflower training to raise awareness of hidden disabilities and improved access to interpreting services. Service improvements in areas such as Gynaecology helped reduce communication-related concerns, while patient information was reviewed and updated in preparation for the Trust's new website. These actions helped improve access to information and supported more inclusive communication for patients, carers and families.

The plans for 2026/27

In the year ahead, we will be focusing on achieving our safety and performance standards by ensuring patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Reducing waiting times

Waiting for a diagnosis test result or treatment can be a difficult and anxious time for patients and their families. Providing care and information more quickly gives greater certainty and can improve outcomes.

Our goals for this year include:

- Eliminating waits of more than 52 weeks for treatment following referral to the RUH
- Achieving 80% against the 'NHS Faster Diagnosis Stands' (FDS) for Cancer, ensuring patients receive a diagnosis or that cancer is ruled out within 28 days of referral
- Ensuring 87.5% of patients wait no longer than six weeks for a planned diagnostic test or procedure

Right place, right time

We want to ensure that people are cared for in the setting that is best for their medical needs. We know that many people recover better and more quickly outside of hospital, whether that is at home or elsewhere in the community. We are therefore working to reduce the number of people who remain in hospital when they no longer need acute care. This work includes strengthening our partnerships with local ourganisations, including HCRG Care Group and local councils, to support timely discharge and ongoing care closer to home.

This work will also free up hospital beds for those who need them most. This ultimately supports our ambition to eliminate corridor care, by helping the flow of patients through the hospital. More information on our plans to improve the experience in Urgent and Emergency Care can be found on page 9.

All these improvements will help us provide safer, more timely care and improve the experience and outcomes of the people we care for.

Digital developments

This year, we are continuing to develop our digital infrastructure to provide an improved and more cohesive experience for patients and staff.

A new website

This will make information easier to find, navigate and understand. A strong focus on accessibility will help to ensure content that is clear and usable for everyone. The new site will also be easier for staff to maintain, helping keep information accurate and up to date.

Electronic Patient Record (EPR)

Work also continues on developing our EPR, a single digital record that brings key patient information together in one place. When launched in 2027, this system will transform how we deliver care across BSW Hospitals Group.

The EPR will give colleagues from across the Group access to the same, up-to-date patient information wherever it is needed and reduce the need to swap between multiple systems. It will improve patient safety, support more consistent and joined-up care, reduce duplication and administrative burden, and create a stronger digital foundation for future services.



How are we improving emergency care?

Improving the experience of Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) for both patients and staff is one of the RUH's primary focuses. Our goal is to ensure that everyone is treated in the right place, at the right time; getting UEC right will support this.

In October 2025, the Emergency Department (ED) received an unannounced visit from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Following this visit, the department retained its overall rating of 'Requires Improvement'. The report highlighted the compassion and dedication of staff, but identified corridor care as a barrier to delivering dignified care.

While the rating is disappointing, it's important to remember that the inspection took place during a period of unprecedented demand, with a 25% year-on-year increase in ambulance arrivals, and a 13% increase in attendances at ED.

Nonetheless, the report made clear the need for improvement for the benefit of patients, visitors and staff.

Since then, a number of changes have been introduced. These include increasing the availability of senior decision-makers overnight, providing a 24/7 security presence, and strengthening staff oversight of emergency access points. We have also been working closely with Avon and Wiltshire Partnership (AWP) to ensure patients attending with mental health needs receive appropriate care.

The focus is already delivering results. By March 2026, the RUH had been recognised as one of the most improved EDs in the country for four-hour performance (the amount of time it takes for a patient to be treated after arrival).

There are also longer-term, larger-scale improvement plans in train. The Trust's long-standing infrastructure challenges have also been recognised by NHS England, who have provided capital funding for a new, modular Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). This is expected to open at the beginning of 2027, and will help the department to operate more efficiently. Additional funding will support a full redevelopment of our integrated front door over the next four years, creating more space within the ED and enabling the UTC to operate more efficiently.

Planning is also underway to manage the additional pressures we typically see during winter.

While significant challenges remain, we are encouraged by the progress made and are committed to continuing to improve UEC at the RUH for the benefit of our community.

The people we work with

At the RUH we recognise the importance of looking after the people who look after you. That's why we strive to create the conditions for every single colleague to perform at their best. The following pages show just some of the ways we are achieving this.

Looking back at the last year...

2025 May

The radiology department celebrated its 50th anniversary. Radiographer Kathy Thomas, who has worked in the department since it opened, said that one of the most significant changes is how technology has made things easier and more reliable.



June

Kate Brintworth, Chief Midwifery Officer for NHS England, and Lucy Duncombe, National Neonatal Clinical Advisor, met with staff across clinical areas to gain valuable insights into their experiences and the practices that underpin our consistently high standards of care.



October

Dean Cooper from Wild About Fruit and Veg opened a fresh produce stall at the Combe Park site. This is one of many new retailers to join the site, giving staff, patients and visitors more food and drink choices while at the hospital.



June



Beckie Coles became the RUH's first Occupational Therapist apprentice to graduate with the University of the West of England (UWE). Beckie's passion for the profession started when she worked as a Therapy Support Worker on the orthopaedic wards.

October



Colleagues from the fracture clinic won a Halloween-themed 'Cast Off' competition to mark National Casting Day. The day shines a spotlight on the skills and experience of those who work in fracture clinics and cast rooms.

2025/26 in numbers

Our goal in 2025/26 was to recognise and value colleagues' work.

The NHS and RUH continued to operate under pressure during 2025/26, which impacted on staff. Despite this, our results in 2025 NHS Staff Survey showed the Trust performed slightly above the national average in terms of staff being compassionate and inclusive, feeling like part of a team, and feeling recognised and rewarded.

You can read about some of the initiatives we introduced to support wellbeing, leadership development, reward and recognition on page 12. We also looked at the management of violence and aggression towards staff.

Other highlights include:

We implemented our first positive action course to support Global Majority staff and improve career progression in clinical roles.

20 graduates of Routes to Success

£70k for staff wellbeing and development

Hospital charity RUHX spent £70,000 on staff wellbeing and development - helping staff enhance skills and be at their best, improving the care we provide.

More than half of staff

1/2

shared their views on working for the RUH, helping us to make positive change.

52% of staff took part in the 2025 NHS Staff Survey

January 2026

The Patient Experience team piloted a new British Sign Language (BSL) training course for staff. Tailored for healthcare settings, the eight-week course introduces hospital staff and volunteers to the basics of BSL and is intended to enable more inclusive, empathetic and effective communication with D/deaf patients, colleagues and visitors.



March 2026

BSW HOSPITALS GROUP

We launched a central 'Improving Together' hub for BSW Hospitals Group. This means colleagues can share improvement projects between the three hospitals, supporting others' learning and the development of improvement projects.

Developing and supporting our staff

Throughout the year, the RUH – and NHS in general – continued to work under sustained operational pressures, which had an impact on staff. However, we introduced a number of initiatives to support staff both personally and in their career development.

This included the successful relaunch of leadership development, with two core programmes; one is aimed at aspiring leaders and the other at developing existing ones. Together they have reached 100 staff to date, almost all of whom would recommend the programme.

The Trust's dedicated positive action programme 'Routes to Success' also saw its third intake of staff. The programme is a bespoke leadership development programme designed specifically to support Global Majority nurses, midwives and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) progress in their careers, with specific support for those working in Bands 5 and 6 in clinical roles.

The Academy Library performed highly against NHS England quality standards; the library is a vital resource in supporting staff training and development.

We also launched Perkbox, a platform offering financial, physical and emotional wellbeing support, including a 24/7 counselling service.

As we look ahead, supporting the wellbeing, development and success of our staff will remain central to delivering the best possible care for our communities.

Joining together: Staff Network inclusion weeks

Staff networks play an important role at the RUH, helping us better understand the experiences of our workforce and celebrate the diverse backgrounds, perspectives and skills that make our organisation stronger. They provide opportunities for colleagues to connect, share experiences, support one another and help shape improvements across the Trust.

In 2025, all staff networks came together for the first Inclusion Weeks, creating opportunities to learn from one another, share experiences and explore a range of topics through an intersectional lens.

As part of the programme, we held our first Inclusion Fête, bringing staff together to celebrate the diversity of our organisation through activities, music, games and shared learning.

Inclusion is a year-round commitment at the RUH. More than 50 trained Inclusion Champions now work across the Trust, promoting allyship, encouraging conversations and helping to create a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected and able to thrive.

By creating a more inclusive workplace, we are helping to ensure that our staff can provide the best possible care and experience for the diverse communities we serve.



Meet the RUH's leaders



John Palmer, Manager Director

Appointed in September 2025, John brings over 30 years' experience of working in public services, most recently as Chief Operating Officer at Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. While there, he led the development and delivery of a major reset and recovery programme to reduce elective and cancer waiting lists and restore urgent flow.



Rebecca Maxwell, Chief Medical Officer

Rebecca (Becky) joined the RUH in August 2026. A Consultant in Emergency Medicine, she was most recently Medical Director at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston Foundation Trust.

Becky is committed to delivering high-quality patient care and has previously served as Chair of RCEM Learning, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine's education platform.



Simon Sethi, Interim Chief Operating Officer

Simon joined the RUH in January 2021, where he was Chief Operating Officer until May 2023. His substantive role is now Director of Planned Care for BSW Hospitals Group. Simon has almost 10 years' Board experience working in Somerset and B&NES in Chief Operating Officer roles, and is passionate about working with teams to transform and improve care.



Jason Lugg, Chief Nursing Officer

Jason began in this role in June 2026, having joined the RUH as Deputy Chief Nursing Officer in 2023.

With over 25 years of nursing experience, Jason's clinical background is rooted in emergency and urgent care. He is passionate about delivering high-quality, safe care, ensuring a positive patient experience, and partnership working to improve services.

Outgoing Executives

We have recently said goodbye to:

- Kheelna Bavalia, Interim Chief Medical Officer, who returned to her substantive post working in primary care for NHS England's South West region
- Bernie Bluhm, Chief Operating Officer, who retired following almost fifty years of service in the NHS. This includes many years spent at the RUH, where she first worked as a trainee nurse
- Toni Lynch, former Chief Nursing Officer, who retired following thirty-one years of service in the NHS, five of which were spent at the RUH

We would like to thank them for all they accomplished at the RUH, and wish them well for the future.

Awards and recognition

We're proud that the people we work with have picked up a number of other accolades too. Below are just a few examples.



International acclaim for the Dyson Cancer Centre

The RUH's Art at the Heart team and Arcadis were awarded a European Healthcare Design Award. The prestigious award recognises projects that demonstrate exceptional skill in creating a compassionate healthcare environment, through the use of interior design and art. Hetty Dupays, Art at the Heart Art Design Manager said: "We were up against some incredible projects from as far afield as Singapore and the USA, so to have an NHS building recognised in this way is really special."



Endoscopy team receives JAG accreditation

The endoscopy team received JAG accreditation from the Joint Advisory Group on GI Endoscopy, which is awarded to high-quality gastrointestinal endoscopy services in recognition of the excellent care they provide.

Rowan Neville, Speciality Support Manager for Medicine, said: "It was a really challenging assessment process, which needed a huge amount of hard work from our clinical, nursing and admin team. This accreditation is testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone in the team to continuous improvement, and to ensuring our patients always get the very best care."



An important partnership praised

The Community Wellbeing Hub was highly commended at the MJ Awards, which celebrate achievements in local government. The Hub was recognised for its innovative partnership working to support thousands of residents in the local area.

The Hub is a really important partnership between Bath and North East Somerset Council and many local organisations. The RUH works closely with the team to ensure patients who might need additional support are referred to the relevant organisations, and to support the discharge process. The physical hub is based in the RUH's Atrium.

The plans for 2026/27



We want to ensure that all staff feel supported and well at work. That's why this year we are focusing on improving our sickness rates, with a goal to get this to under 4.8%.

Long-terms plan for staff wellbeing

In 2025/26 staff sickness levels were higher than we would have liked. We know that supporting the health and wellbeing of our workforce is essential, for both staff and the people we care for.

This financial year, we have been reviewing the factors contributing to sickness absence so that we can develop meaningful, long-term improvements. While this work will take time, it is helping us better understand where and how we can make the greatest difference to staff wellbeing and attendance. We have aligned our programme to national NHS Staff Standards and the Lord Mann Review.

Anxiety, stress and burnout are the largest causes of staff absence at the RUH, accounting for more than a quarter of all sickness absence. In response, we are looking at how we can ensure workloads are manageable, that staff have opportunities to take meaningful breaks, and colleagues have access to the support they need to maintain their wellbeing.

We are also strengthening the support available to managers, helping them to have effective conversations with staff, apply policies consistently, and support colleagues returning to work after long-term sickness absence.



Alongside this, we are reviewing whether our wellbeing services and support systems are visible, accessible and effective, ensuring staff know where to seek help and that those who need additional support are identified early and offered appropriate assistance.

Another priority is ensuring that we have a safe and inclusive workplace. Initially, we'll be focusing on reviewing our Violence Prevention Policy and reporting, including how incidents are followed up, and that staff feel confident in managing violence and aggression, with appropriate support and learning.

These are just some of the priorities that we will be focusing on, but much more work will be taking place to ensure that all of our staff feel well and rested, and psychologically and physically safe.

Looking after our staff is fundamental to delivering high-quality care. A healthy, supported workforce helps provide greater continuity for patients, improves staff experience, and enables us to deliver the best possible care.

The people in our community

We want everyone in our community to have an equitable experience of healthcare, and for Bath to be one of the healthiest places to live and work. These are just some of the ways that we are working towards this vision.

Looking back at the last year...

2025 April

Staff members volunteered their time to plant 120 new trees across the RUH site. Green spaces are linked to better health outcomes, and the new trees will also help to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.



August

Our new water- and air-source heat pumps were delivered to site. This is just some of the new equipment being installed as part of Project Clean Heat, our multimillion-pound, grant-funded project to upgrade our heating equipment to cleaner technology.



October

We welcomed comedian and TV star Greg Davies and local charity Time is Precious. Greg is a proud patron of the charity and visited to see the incredible impact they are making to children and families by transforming spaces across the hospital and providing equipment.



June



The Florence Rose room was officially opened by Ella and Ryan, who fundraised to help create it in memory of their daughter, Florence. The peaceful room gives bereaved families a private space away from wards to be with their babies and say goodbye in their own way.

August



Hospital charity Friends of the RUH reintroduced the beloved shop trolley. Volunteers take products to wards, allowing patients and visitors to more easily purchase items that make a hospital visit more comfortable.

The Frome Systemic Anti Cancer Treatment (SACT) satellite clinic opened in Frome. Now some patients, after having their treatment plan established at the RUH's Dyson Cancer Centre, can receive their treatment much closer to their homes with the same specialist team of nurses.



2026 January

January



The RUH became one of the first hospitals in the world to recruit to the world's largest-ever trial aiming to slow or even stop the progression of Parkinson's Disease.

2025/26 in numbers

Our 2025/26 breakthrough goal for the people in our community was about maximising value and eliminating waste, which was measured by how productive we were and delivering our challenging financial plan.

We ended the year with a £20.5million deficit, representing a £12million improvement against our mid-year forecast.

Other highlights include:

We welcomed **18,932 swimmers** to our outdoor community swimming pool

We signed up **4,840** research participants

We ran over **300** research studies

We had 35 stands at our Community Day in September.

60% more stands than at our first event in 2024



Sulis Orthopaedic Centre to cut surgical waiting times

The opening of the Sulis Orthopaedic Centre (SOC) marked an important step in reducing waiting times for orthopaedic surgery for NHS patients at the RUH.

Based at Sulis Hospital, just south of Bath, the SOC provides year-round, ring-fenced planned orthopaedic operations such as hip and knee replacements for suitable NHS patients under the RUH's care. This not only increases capacity and thus reduces waiting times, but also safeguards services from the increase in demand expected in future due to the ageing population of the people we care for.

Patients remain under the care of their own consultant teams, ensuring continuity of care, and pre- and post-operative treatment continue to be based at the RUH. This means patients only need to travel for the operation itself, reducing environmental impact and ensuring convenience.

For patients like Jane Fawcus, who had been struggling to walk and had given up activities she enjoyed, the impact was significant: she was able to have her total knee replacement six weeks after meeting with her surgeon and was recovering well three weeks afterwards. As well as the timing of the operation, Jane praised the impact the physical environment of the new centre had on her experience: "The whole experience was genuinely pleasurable," she said. "The ambience of Sulis made me feel relaxed. Usually I'm so anxious about coming into a clinical environment, but at Sulis I felt calm and at ease."

Reducing health inequalities



Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health experienced by different people and communities. These differences can be linked to where someone lives, their background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and other such factors.

In 2025/26 we therefore maintained a strong focus on reducing health inequalities, including raising staff awareness. The Academy Library provides health literacy training to BSW Hospitals Group staff, which helps teams communicate more clearly and accessibly with patients.

We continued to run an innovative smoking cessation service for inpatients, which takes a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. Our health coaches (pictured) consider wider factors that may affect success, including dependency on other substances, housing or employment challenges, and mental wellbeing, and refer to relevant services to ensure patients get the right support even after they leave hospital. This year we increased the capacity of Health Coaches to support individuals and introduced process improvements that allow for Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) to be delivered at their initial assessment, enabling the health coaches to review the patient and treatment the next day. These improvements mean that, as of quarter four, 50% of patients beginning a quit attempt were successful, compared to 13.2% in quarter one.

We also ran a digital inclusion service. Over two years, they supported more than 550 patients to use technology while in hospital or to manage their health, helping them navigate an increasingly digital NHS. The team has strengthened links with community partners, improved the accessibility of our ten most-visited webpages, and provided resources to help departments offer digital support.

These initiatives are helping to improve patient wellbeing and reduce barriers to accessing high-quality healthcare in our community.

Financial summary

Our Trust strategy describes our commitment to maximising productivity and minimising waste.

We have been able to make significant progress on this but with more to do, we are working against the backdrop of a national and local context which has proved challenging.

We ended the year with a £20.5million deficit, representing a £12million improvement against the mid-year forecast of £32million. Cash management and financial savings remain a priority for 2026/27.

Our full financial reports are available on our website.

How we spent our money in 2025/26:

£418m on pay
(59% of operating expenses)

£290m on non-pay
(41% of operating expenses)

£2.5m on medical equipment
Including the purchase of a replacement CT scanner. £0.4million was funded through donations and £0.1million through Public Dividend Capital funding for diagnostics.

£15.7m on estate schemes
Including refurbishment to provide a new Neurology ward and Admission and Discharge lounge.

£3m on Sulis Hospital
Including further investment in the Community Diagnostics Centre, such as £2million for an MRI scanner.

£7.8m digital investment in hardware, clinical systems and infrastructure support.
This includes £5.1million in the BSW Hospitals Group EPR.

£12.5million on our large-scale decarbonisation project, £9.1million of which was from grant funding.

£0.1million on developing a business case to improve emergency treatment
(see page 9).

Community support for the RUH





RUHX

For RUHX – the official hospital charity of the RUH – the past year has been one of beginnings and new focuses. It:

- Launched a three-year campaign to raise £4million for a new PET-CT scanner and extension, which will support quicker diagnosis and monitoring for cancer and other patient groups
- Raised money to create a 'de-escalation room', for the Children's Ward. This will give patients a new, safe space and support mental health
- Provided over £70,000 to support staff wellbeing and development
- Launched the Women's Health Urodynamics campaign, to help the RUH's Gynaecology department support more women facing urinary incontinence issues more quickly.

The charity was also crowned winner of the 'Legends' category at the Bath Life Awards. This was in recognition of the charity's work over more than 20 years, and how it supports better healthcare for communities in Bath and beyond.

Friends of the RUH

Last financial year, the Friends made £400,000 available to the RUH. This supported areas such as wheelchairs for safer and more dignified patient transport; an ultrasound machine in the Emergency Department, aiding faster bedside diagnosis; and reclining and lay-flat chairs, providing respite and comfort for families during longer hospital visits. The 'Shop Trolley' has also been reintroduced, making it easier for patients on wards to buy essential and comforting items.

The charity also provided the Soundbite Music Programme, delivered by Art at the Heart. This is a series of public lunchtime concerts and a Musician in Residence, who engages with patients and provides live music on wards. Feedback shows that this music has a positive effect on mood, comfort and recovery.

In 2025, volunteer numbers grew to 238 from 198 the year before. These volunteers contributed over 23,900 hours during the year, up from 21,158 – a reflection of their generosity and commitment.

The plans for 2026/27

We will continue to work towards making Bath one of the healthiest places to live and work. We are looking forward to collaborating with partners for the benefit of the people we work with, the people we care for and the people in our community.

A greener, cleaner RUH for all





In 2026, we expect to see the completion of 'Project Clean Heat', our large-scale decarbonisation project that has been funded by a £21million grant from Salix. The project will modernise the hospital's ageing heating infrastructure, cut carbon emissions, and create a more sustainable environment for patients, staff, visitors and the wider local community. This includes replacing ageing heating equipment with air-source and water-source heat pumps, additional solar panels, installing high-quality LED lighting, better insulation and more advanced heating controls.

Once complete, the project will reduce the RUH's annual emissions by 3,212 tonnes of carbon every year – the equivalent of 14,500 return journeys between Bath and Edinburgh in the average petrol car. It will also improve the physical hospital environment.

We are grateful to our partners Veolia and CEF, as well as Salix, for their support with this project.

Joined-up, modern care in Trowbridge

The opening of Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre (TICC) marked a major milestone in improving access to healthcare for people in Trowbridge and the surrounding area.

The TICC opened in April 2026 following a £16million investment, and brings together a range of NHS and community services under one roof, supporting more joined-up care closer to home.

The new centre provides all patient-facing services previously based at Trowbridge Community Hospital, alongside a Minor Injuries Unit, outpatient maternity care provided by the RUH's community midwifery team and much more. There's also improved parking and more modern facilities, which provide a better expeirence for staff and patients.

The development supports the NHS's ambition to deliver more care in local neighbourhoods.



Putting research at the heart of care

The RUH is proud to be a research active hospital, with studies taking place across the hospital that are shaping the future of healthcare.

2025/26 marked the beginning of greater collaboration between the three dedicated research teams at the RUH, Great Western Hospitals and Salisbury Foundation Trust, with Professor Richard Graham taking up the role of Research and Development Director for BSW Hospitals Group. By working together more closely, we can strengthen opportunities for patients to access innovative treatments, diagnostics and services, and create a stronger platform for partnerships with industry, universities and research sponsors.

At the RUH, more than 300 active research studies were delivered, 54 new studies opened and 4,840 participants were recruited. Researchers and academic partners also submitted 40 hosted or collaborative grant applications, with 35% being successful. All of this work is supported by multidisciplinary teams across clinical specialties, research delivery, pharmacy, pathology, imaging, informatics and operational services.

Project highlights

These are examples of just some of the areas and studies that have been run and supported by the RUH during 2025/6.

- **Cancer:** Around 70 oncology and haematology studies were active across a wide range of tumour types. Fourteen new trials opened during the year, including PICCOS, which introduces a new approach to delivering chemotherapy directly into the abdomen. The research team has also pioneered the use of AI-assisted translation to create trial information in 22 languages, with the aim of making research more accessible to underrepresented communities.
- **Cardiology:** Trials including FORTIFY and LIBREXIA are exploring new approaches to reducing cardiovascular risk. The RUH-led MICROFIT study continue to investigate how personalised exercise and lifestyle interventions can improve symptoms in people with coronary microvascular dysfunction.
- **Critical Care:** Researchers have contributed to national studies addressing sepsis, respiratory failure and emergency care. Recruitment was completed for the BathMat trial (pictured above), a novel product developed in collaboration with engineering expertise from the University of Bath, to support patients being treated in a prone position (lying on their front).
- **Maternity and neonatal:** the RUH was the highest recruiting site nationally for the iGBS vaccine study, which is developing a vaccine for use in pregnancy to help prevent Group B strep. We also exceeded recruitment targets for the Generation project, a major national study led by Genomics England in partnership with the NHS. This aims to screen newborns for more than 200 genetic conditions, allowing families and babies to access more timely treatment and support.
- **Neurology:** We opened the ECLIPSE study, which is evaluating whether innovative Electroencephalogram (EEG) biomarkers can improve treatment selection for people newly diagnosed with epilepsy. EEG biomarkers are measurable patterns of electrical activity in the brain that indicate biological or neurological states in real time.
- **Parkinson's:** Research has expanded to include drug repurposing, genetic testing (including a test that can be taking in the comfort of someone's own home) and potential treatments that may affect the course of the condition.

Each study helps to build knowledge and improve outcomes and care for future generations. We are very grateful to the patients who participate in these trials and make them possible, and everyone who helps make research an important part of patient care at the RUH and across BSW Hospitals Group,

Members and Governors

Over the course of 2025/26, representatives of the Council of Governors were formally involved in:

- ✓ Approving the appointment of Paul von der Heyde as Interim BSW Hospitals Group Chair (for an initial period of up to 18 months from 1 April)
- ✓ Approving a new Non-Executive Director model for the BSW Hospitals Group Board
- ✓ Approving amendments to the Trust's constitution
- ✓ Approving the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review and simplify the Council of Governors' working structure
- ✓ Appointing Kate Cozens, Public Governor, as Lead Governor
- ✓ Endorsing the appointment of Craig Jones, Staff Governor, as Deputy Lead Governor
- ✓ Approving the appointment and re-appointment of Non-Executive Directors
- ✓ Approving revised Terms of Reference for a temporary Councils of Governors Committee-in-Common Nominations and Remuneration Committee, to oversee recruitment of the first cohort of Group Non-Executive Directors
- ✓ Delegating responsibility to these Committees to oversee Group Non-Executive Director recruitment
- ✓ Planning of and attendance at the AGM
- ✓ Continuing to provide a link between the Trust, its members, local communities and stakeholders

Meet Paul von der Heyde, new Chairman



I am grateful for the warm welcome I have received from colleagues, governors and our wider community since joining BSW Hospitals Group as Chair in April 2026.

Although last year was challenging, there was much to celebrate. I have seen the commitment of RUH staff to delivering high-quality care and improving services, and am grateful to those who have helped build the strong foundations on which we can grow.

With over 40 years' experience of working at Board level, including roles as Chair of NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board and Chair of Yeovil District Hospital, I know the value of listening, earning trust and building effective partnerships. I have seen life from many angles in the NHS and I know that we must make the best use of the power of collaboration.

BSW Hospitals Group has a clear set of strategic priorities that will transform how we provide care by harnessing the power of digital innovation, improving the experience for colleagues and ensuring we are financially stable.

While working together as a Group, we retain our local identity and accountability. The RUH continues to have a strong voice in decisions about how services are provided across the Group and remains responsible for the care it provides.

Our Group enables us to do more than we than we could ever do apart, and I look forward to continuing our work together to improve care, experience and outcomes for the patients and communities we serve.

NHS
Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

Would you like to become a Member?

Being a member of the RUH gives you the opportunity to influence how the hospital is run and the services that we offer to patients.

We believe that the RUH belongs to our staff, patients and the local community, and through the Council of Governors, our Members are given a greater say in the development of the hospital.

Membership is completely free and it's up to you as to how involved you would like to be. You just need to be aged 16+.

For more information and to apply to join, visit ruh.nhs.uk/membership

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