

## Press Release

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### **£700,000 WARD GETS RUH'S INFECTION CONTROL WEEK OFF TO A FLYING START**

Staff at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) are celebrating Infection Control week with the unveiling of a ward which has been completely refurbished and fitted out at a cost of £700,000 plus news that RUH has been awarded a further £220,000, part of £5m allocated to NHS trusts in the region, to further boost infection control measures.

The new look Marlborough Ward now has 6 side rooms with en-suite side facilities for those with infections like MRSA and C.Diff and also for patients admitted with other infections. The sluice and kitchen have been refurbished to provide spacious and easy to clean facilities and all the ward equipment and services such as medical gases, nurse call, electrics and water have also been replaced.

Part of the money to fund the renovation of the hospital's Marlborough ward came from the Department of Health's Capital Challenge fund which was specifically targeted at helping hospitals reduce infections. The hospital's League of friends also contributed £72,000 for patient comforts such as new curtains, floor covering etc.

Tracey Halladay the RUH's Infection Control lead nurse says: "Improving our isolation facilities has been an important part of our work to tackle infections. The newly refurbished Marlborough ward is a real asset because it enables us to isolate patients with infections quickly and reduce the risk of cross infection to others.

"In July we also opened a special 10 bedded ward for those patients identified with *Clostridium difficile* where they can get the nursing care they need. Staff on the ward have been praised for their care and attention by both patients and families and it has been seen as one of the key measures in successfully

reducing C diff. cases at the RUH over the last four months. From average monthly rates of around 40 cases at the start of the year, in September the RUH recorded just ten, the lowest figure since information was first collected in 2003.

Infection control week (5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November) comes at a time when the RUH is making sustained progress in reducing healthcare acquired infections. Other key actions have included closely monitoring use of antibiotics, highlighting the importance of good hand hygiene amongst staff and visitors and ensuring high levels of cleaning, including annual deep cleans of all wards.

In line with national NHS initiatives, the RUH has also changed its uniform rules so that clinical staff are 'bare below the elbows' to ensure rigorous hand washing and high levels of hygiene.

In September new visiting arrangements were introduced to help make the hospital cleaner and safer for patients, their relatives and staff. Visiting times have been restricted and friends and family encouraged to use hand gel or soap to clean their hands on entering and leaving wards. Cleaning audits have since shown improvements in hand hygiene whilst many patients have welcomed the increased privacy and dignity that the new visiting times has brought.

Tracey Halladay adds: "Reducing infection is everyone's business and staff at the RUH have certainly taken this on board. I would also like to thank members of the public for co-operating with the trust's new visiting arrangements – it's really helping us to make a difference.

"Although we are making good progress in improving infection control in the hospital we recognise we have more to do and will be working closely with our PCT colleagues to tackle this across the whole local health community. "

**Ends**

**Issued by RUH communications team  
Tel: 01225 82 5849**