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Press Release

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RUH supports five year old carers

Nursing staff at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) are supporting children as young as five, who are the main carer for a family member - often a parent.

On Thursday 16 April, the RUH will host an event to launch the Young Carer Pack aimed at children between the ages of five and eighteen who visit hospital wards and outpatient departments as a carer. It is not usual to include children when planning the care of their parent or relative, so the packs are essential to help young carers get the recognition, information and support they need.

Head of patient experience Theresa Hegarty says: "The Young Carers Teams in Wiltshire and in Bath and North East Somerset support around 700 children who are known to provide long term care for family members with learning disabilities, mental health problems, personal disabilities or chronic illness.

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"The Young Carer Pack has been funded by The Friends of the RUH and is based on a pack developed by young carers at Salisbury District Hospital. The children wanted it to include a range of important information as well as fun and practical items including a specific young carer leaflet, hospital map, contact numbers, top tips to get most useful information and information about 'bugs'. They also wanted to have a list of standard questions that they could ask so that they could be more involved in planning the care for their mum, dad or other relative.

Around 30 young carers will attend the launch event as part of a fun day planned at the hospital. In the morning, the children will spend time with artist Edwina Bridgeman. After a lunch provided by the hospital, a group of children will tell their stories at the launch event alongside Sonia Hutchinson, young carers' manager for Off the Record, Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).

Ends

Notes to editors

Photo Opportunity: The Young Carer Pack will be launched at 2pm on Thursday 16 April 2009 at the Royal United Hospital. Media are invited to the event and to take the opportunity to interview and photograph a number of young carers aged between 10 and 16 years. Please contact the communications office if you would like to attend.