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Communications Department
Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230/1299

communication@ruh.nhs.uk
www.ruh.nhs.uk

Media Release

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RUH launches Breast Cancer information service for women across the south-west.

The Breast Unit at the RUH has today launched extensive new web pages to coincide with National Breast Cancer Awareness month.

For the first time, women and men referred to the breast unit can find out what will happen on their first visit, right through to what is involved in breast reconstruction and other types of surgery and treatments.

Over 3,500 women are referred to the RUH Breast Unit every year and about 300 of these will be diagnosed with cancer. The vast majority of patients are women, but the unit also sees men with breast problems.

Consultant Breast Radiologist Dr.Dorothy Goddard is the director of the unit.

She says she's wanted to update and improve the web pages for a long time

"We really wanted to better inform patients about what to expect when they visit the unit , as we understand how very worrying it is to be referred to the Breast Clinic."

The RUH Breast Unit has some of the most up to date facilities in the south west of England. It is an "all digital unit" with state of the art breast imaging equipment for performing mammogram and ultrasound tests.It also offers patients breast reconstruction after breast cancer surgery, a service not routinely available at all hospitals.

The unit prides itself on being able to see patients quickly, with every woman suspected of having a breast cancer being seen within 2 weeks of referral.

Dr Goddard says the new web pages have involved all the staff on the unit

"The whole team here has contributed to the content and overall feel of the pages. We want to let patients know that from the moment they walk in our door they'll receive the best care and attention during what is for most patients and their families, a very stressful time"

One patient has had a sneak preview of the site. Emma Eccles , a patient from Winsley near Bath, was diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago

"Overall, I think it's absolutely great. It is full of relevant information but manages to be concise too. I really liked all the pictures of the staff at work, and the information and photos of the staff team. I learnt some things about the staff at the clinic that I didn't know before, and, if I was to be diagnosed for the first time today, I would find it reassuring to put faces to roles even before I came in. I found all the information about the different procedures, conditions and operations helpful and straightforward to understand".

RUH Web Developer Louette Eagles, who designed the site, has unique insight into the subject of breast cancer

"Last year, I found a lump that turned out to be cancer and resulted in a mastectomy and reconstruction. My quest for information in the few days following my diagnosis led me from website to website. Finding bits of information from all over the world was frustrating to say the least. I wanted to know what could be done at the hospital where I was going to have my surgery and treatment; what the facilities were like; what I could expect; and, who would be looking after me. Working on this site has been both a professional and a personal journey. I can only hope the final result is a true reflection of the fantastic work done by the amazing staff of the Breast Unit".

The pages have taken more than 2 months to create and have involved both staff and patients

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Editors notes

- Website address www.ruh.nhs.uk/breastunit
- The RUH is one of few hospitals in the region which can offer all forms of treatment for breast cancer (including surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy) on one site.
- The RUH Breast Unit has a specialist Family History service offering screening and advice to people with family history of the disease.

To speak to Dr. Dorothy Goddard please phone Brigid Devlin on 07980307610

