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Media Release

RUH thanks staff and local 'snow angels'

The Royal United Hospital has said a big thank you for all the extra efforts of both staff and local volunteers in keeping hospital services running smoothly throughout the bad weather.

The hospital has continued to run all clinics and appointments as usual despite the severe weather, and plans to keep the good work going, despite the forecast for more snow over the weekend.

Director of Operations at the RUH, James Rimmer says: "At the moment, it's very much business as usual and we have put contingency plans in place to help maintain the safe running of hospital services. We have a number of 4x4 vehicles which have been bringing staff to and from work throughout the last few days, and we are extremely grateful to the kind and generous volunteers who gave up their time, and vehicles, to do this.

"We have also made sure accommodation is available for staff who want to come in early for their shifts, or can't get home afterwards and need to stay overnight."

Some staff members have gone to extraordinary lengths to get to work, with one staff nurse leaving Corsham at 8am to walk the 11 miles to get to the hospital for a late shift. A kind driver stopped in Batheaston to give her a lift the rest of the way. A chef in the patient's kitchen walked through the snow from Paulton to Farnborough and then thumbed three lifts to arrive 20 minutes before his shift; he also stayed overnight with his brother who lives locally to be in for his early shift the next day. Neighbours, friends and even local farmers have been helping battle the elements to make sure the care the RUH gives to patients continues as normal.

James adds, "We are using the RUH website and the telephone answering service to keep patients and the public regularly updated on our services, as well contacting patients directly by telephone if necessary. We are also asking the public to listen to local radio and TV broadcasts for the latest information, especially if the weather should take a turn for the worst over the weekend."

The hospital's Emergency Department had a busy few weeks with an increase in patients with fractures and sprains thanks to the bad weather and snow. Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the RUH, Dominic Williamson says: "Hospitals are incredibly busy at this time of year, so we would ask everyone to take a moment to think whether they really need to come to this Emergency Department or whether they could get treatment in a more appropriate way, and to take care in these icy conditions.

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