

16 December 2010

## **Media Release**

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

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

### **Children's Surgery at the RUH**

Parents can be reassured that the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust is providing high quality emergency surgery for their children, even though only 48% of English District General Hospitals do so.

A survey published today, 16th December, by the Royal College of Surgeons shows more than half of NHS hospitals cannot provide emergency surgery for sick children. It says that children who need common, general or urological operations face delays or long journeys to specialist centres for routine elective and emergency surgical care. The data, which covered NHS hospitals in England, also suggest that a shortfall in safe, sustainable and accessible General Paediatric Surgery (GPS) in District General Hospitals (DGHs) will continue unless local hospitals adopt measures to share resources, services and expertise and surgical training opportunities are taken up.

However paediatric surgeons at the RUH routinely operate on children as young as 4 weeks and there are very few planned surgical procedures which cannot be done at the hospital. This means parents in Bath, north east Somerset, Wiltshire and Somerset do not have to make long journeys for the children's surgery.

The survey also found that many NHS Trusts face problems in sustaining anaesthetic services for children in general and urological surgery – 33 per cent reported that they could not anaesthetise children under the age of three. Even in hospitals that reported a lower age limit for anaesthesia, the provision of this service varied greatly depending on the skills of the available anaesthetists. However the RUH has a team of anaesthetists specially trained in paediatric anaesthesia and so most emergency surgical procedures on children over the age of two, as well as planned surgery can be done at the RUH.

John Budd, Consultant Paediatric Surgeon at the RUH says,

"Parents can be reassured that their local hospital, the RUH, provides comprehensive general paediatric surgery for children from 4 weeks old. We have surgeons and anaesthetists qualified to treat children needing various types of surgery and in addition we have excellent paediatric doctors and nurses in our Children's Centre as well as in the neonatal intensive care unit. In the majority of cases, parents have no need to face long journeys for their children's treatment and can access a high standard of care locally"

Professor Terence Stephenson, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health said: "The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health welcomes the production of this report on the provision of GPS in English hospitals. The report will assist NHS providers and commissioners in implementing high quality, safe and sustainable services for children."

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

1. Full survey results can be found at [www.rcseng.ac.uk](http://www.rcseng.ac.uk)
2. For interview inquiries please contact the Communications Department at the RUH.