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Press Release

BaNES residents urged to have their say on the RUH's future

People living in and around Keynsham are being urged to have their say on the Royal United Hospital's plans to become an NHS Foundation Trust.

A public meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday (24 May) at Keynsham Parish Hall, Keynsham, to enable anyone to find out more about the plans and to become members of the new Trust.

As an NHS Foundation Trust, the RUH will be able to recruit members from our staff, patients and the local community and these members then have a say in how the hospital is run and the services it provides. One of the most important aspects of being an NHS FT is our accountability to the population we serve through that membership. Members can choose how involved they want to be, including standing for election as one of our Governors.

Brian Stables, the Trust's Chairman says: "We are a successful hospital and have made tremendous improvements in our standards of quality and care and managing our money.

"We'll continue to focus on our core services – providing acute and urgent care but becoming an NHS Foundation Trust means we will also have greater freedom to build on our achievements and more control over how we invest money in patient care.

"By signing up as a member of our NHS Foundation Trust hospital, local people can directly influence the future of the services we offer here at the RUH.

"I would urge everyone to come along on Tuesday, or to one of our other meetings, to find out more. Becoming a member is the best way to get involved in the work of the RUH and make your voice heard."

Tuesday's meeting is one of a series of public meetings being held across Wiltshire, Bath, North East Somerset, Somerset (Mendip) and South Gloucestershire as part of a 13 week consultation on the RUH's plans.

Details of the meetings are advertised on the RUH website, www.ruh.nhs.uk, and are also printed in our Consultation booklets available from outpatient departments and the Information desk in the Atrium at the RUH.

Membership is free, and open to those aged over 16 who live in Wiltshire, Bath, North East Somerset, Mendip, or South Gloucestershire or the rest of England and Wales.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. NHS Foundation Trusts are individual organisations which are still an integral part of the NHS, but based on the concept of mutual organisations or cooperative societies. They have members who are representative of local communities and staff.

2. NHS Foundation Trusts are:

- free from Department of Health and Strategic Health Authority control
- duty-bound to deliver free care based on need, not ability to pay
- locally accountable to their members who are drawn from staff, patients and the local community
- more accountable to patients, staff and the public.

3. Details of how to become a member, where the public consultation meetings will be held and more information about the NHS Foundation Trust consultation are available on the RUH website at www.ruh.nhs.uk or from the Information desk in the Atrium at the RUH.

4. For further information about NHS Trusts, go to www.monitor-nhsft.gov.uk

5. Subject to approval from the SHA, Department of Health and Monitor, we plan to become a Foundation Trust on 1 April 2012. You can be a member of more than one NHS Foundation Trust.