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Media Release

Stroke victim thanks RUH for his care

Would you recognise the signs of stroke?

A patient who suffered a stroke on a busy train has thanked the RUH for the care he received.

Nigel Lownds, aged 45, was travelling with his son and wife, who was eight months pregnant at the time, was travelling from Bristol to Bath when he fell ill near Bath Spa. "A lady in front of me was talking on her phone, but I couldn't hear much sound. She had noticed me and called 999, I didn't know that she was arranging an ambulance." This observant member of the public had recognised the signs of stroke, and ensured that Nigel was immediately rushed to the RUH when the train arrived in Bath.

Nigel said: "The staff at the RUH were a credit not only to the hospital but the whole NHS and the country; my experience was faultless. The doctors and nurses ensured that I was supported as an individual and additionally supported my wife and son. The staff constantly explained to us what they were doing and ensured we understood. The ward staff met our every need; they supported me but also encouraged me to take steps on doing some of my own things, which I believed helped me to quickly move forward step by step, hour by hour."

Nigel is continuing to make a good recovery, and has also become a father for the second time. "Our daughter was born exactly three weeks after I had my stroke; due to some complications my wife had a caesarean and our daughter was rushed to Intensive Care for a short time. I remember thinking 'three weeks ago I couldn't talk, walk or even know basic details about myself', but now I am running between my wife and newborn daughter and communicating with doctors.

"I think back on how amazing my recovery has been and thank the speediness and exceptional work that all the staff at Royal United Hospital have done to aid me in my recovery."

Nigel's story highlights the importance of early intervention when someone suffers a stroke. The FAST test is a simple way of recognising the signs of stroke, which anyone can learn how to do.

Consultant Geriatrician Dr Louise Shaw said: "I can't emphasise strongly enough how important it is every single person knows about FAST. I have seen people spared a lifetime of disability because when they were unlucky enough to have a stroke, they were lucky enough at that moment to be with someone who knew about FAST. The quicker we get someone into hospital when a stroke happens the better the chance of the clot-busting drug curing them. You never know when you personally may be able to make that difference to somebody."

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Notes to editors

The FAST Test is an easy way to test for the most common symptoms of stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA or 'mini stroke') – Face, Arms, Speech and Time to call 999.

Face: Can the person smile? Has their face fallen on one side?

Arms: Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?

Speech: Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say? Is their speech slurred?

If you see any one of these three signs, it's **TIME** to call 999. Stroke is always a medical emergency that requires immediate medical attention.

Ends