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Media Release

PM singles out RUH as leader in Dementia care

The Royal United Hospital Bath has been singled out by Prime Minister David Cameron in a keynote speech on dementia.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the G8 Dementia Summit's Global Dementia Legacy Event about the need for a global commitment to solving the disease that he described as 'one of the greatest enemies of humanity'.

Mr Cameron named the RUH as a leading example of a UK hospital that has demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of care for patients with dementia. He said:

"In the UK we're spending £50 million on transforming hospitals and care homes to make them more dementia friendly. So places like the Royal United Hospital in Bath now have dementia wards specifically designed to make patients feel more relaxed and at home."

The RUH's Combe Ward is a dedicated older persons' unit (OPU) and many of the patients treated on the ward will have some form of dementia or cognitive impairment.

Refurbishments to the ward last year focused on making the environment easier for elderly people to move around, with essential facilities – such as toilets – more readily accessible. Nursing stations were placed in each of the bays on the ward, so that staff could observe patients more effectively and so that patients could be reassured by their presence. Brightly-coloured flooring was used to mark out the different areas of the ward and signs have both text and pictures. The lighting on the ward is soft and even, and changes gradually throughout the day to give patients a sense of the passing of time.

Later this year, Combe Ward will also benefit from the completion of a specially designed landscape garden which patients will be able to access directly from the ward. The idea is to create a ward environment that minimizes distress and creates, as closely as possible, the experience of a home-from-home.

The Prime Minister's speech coincided with the launch of the Alzheimer's Society's Defeat Dementia campaign – a five-year £100m research drive aimed at accelerating progress towards new treatments and preventions, with the ultimate aim of putting an end to the disease altogether.

Until such an end is found, the RUH remains fully committed to continuing to improve the experience of patients who live with the disease.

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