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Media Release

RUH and RNHRD – Working towards acquisition

The recent authorisation of the Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH) as an NHS Foundation Trust enabled the RUH to move a step closer towards acquisition of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS FT (RNHRD), locally known as 'The Min'. The prime objective of the acquisition is to maintain and enhance patient care.

The quality of services at the RNHRD is rated highly, however the organisation continues to experience significant and long-standing financial challenges. The RNHRD cannot continue in its current form and has identified that acquisition by the RUH provides the best opportunity for the future provision and continuity of its high quality patient focused services.

James Scott, Chief Executive of the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust said:

“It is envisaged that all RNHRD clinical services will continue once they become part of the RUH. Nurturing the high quality services, successful brand and research expertise of the RNHRD is at the heart of planning for the acquisition, as is enhancing patient access to wider clinical services, diagnostics, and modern facilities into the future.”

To ensure the proposed acquisition delivers the shared ambition of maintaining and enhancing patient care, the RUH is developing an integration plan to describe how all RNHRD clinical services will continue to be provided in line with commissioner requirements, with a focus on maintenance and ongoing improvement of quality and patient experience.

Kirsty Matthews, Chief Executive of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust said:

“Our aim is to secure the future of all our high quality services to ensure that our patients continue to benefit from them. We have a longstanding relationship with the RUH and our clinical teams have been working together to deliver specialist care to our patients for many years.”

Patients can be confident that high quality service provision will be maintained throughout and beyond the acquisition process. Clinicians at the RNHRD have been central to the planning of the future of their services and they will continue to lead and deliver them going forward.

Current planning is for services to continue to be provided out of the RNHRD building for up to three years following acquisition. Subject to the appropriate approvals of the plans for acquisition, by both Monitor and the Board of Directors and Council of Governors of each Trust, it is anticipated that the acquisition will take place in the early part of next year.

At an extraordinary meeting of the RNHRD Trust Board, held in public on the 27th November 2014, the Trust Board formally approved the proposed acquisition of the RNHRD by the RUH and agreed the resolution for the RNHRD Council of Governors to approve to this effect.

At its extraordinary meeting held in public on the 2nd December 2014, the RNHRD Council of Governors subsequently approved the RNHRD's application to Monitor for the RNHRD to be acquired by the RUH.

The RUH Trust Board and Council of Governors meetings for their approval processes are planned to take place later this month.

In the meantime, patients will continue to be seen and treated at the RNHRD as usual whilst our hospitals work together to deliver the proposed acquisition.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people, the trust has expertise in general and complex:
 - Rheumatological conditions,
 - Chronic pain management including Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
 - Fatigue Management (CFS/ME and cancer survivorship fatigue).
 - The RNHRD has an excellent reputation for research both nationally and internationally. Research informs our treatment programmes and contributes to a better understanding of many of the conditions in which we specialise
- **Acquisition of RNHRD services:** As a result of significant and longstanding financial challenges the RNHRD cannot continue in its current form and needs to become part of a larger organisation. The RNHRD Trust Board has outlined a strategic intent to be acquired by the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH).
- **Aim of the proposed acquisition:** To continue and enhance the provision of the highest quality clinical services and diagnostics for patients with long term rheumatic, pain and fatigue conditions optimizing research and innovation, access to specialist expertise and patient experience.
- **Approvals:** At its Extraordinary Trust Board meeting held in public on Thursday, 27th November 2014, the RNHRD Trust Board of Directors have taken into account the necessity of responding to a financial position that has resulted in the organisation being found by Monitor to be in breach of its licence. An extraordinary meeting of the RNHRD Council of Governors was held in public on the 2nd December 2014 in order to conduct a vote of the Council of Governors to approve, pursuant to the Act and under the Trust's Constitution, the application for the Acquisition. Governors are responsible for satisfying themselves that the board of directors has been thorough and comprehensive in reaching its proposal, and that it has appropriately obtained and considered the interests of members and the public as part of the decision-making process.

More information can be found online at www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/ and www.rnhrd.nhs.uk/about-us