



Press Release
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Friendly faces help transform dementia care at the RUH

This Dementia Action Week (21-27 May) we are celebrating the Friendly Faces Project which is helping patients living with dementia at the Royal United Hospitals, (RUH) Bath.

A volunteer dementia project launched by Sir Tony Robinson at the RUH is celebrating a year of success in transforming the care of patients living with the condition.

In its first twelve months the Friendly Faces Project has recruited volunteers from all walks of life. More than half are students – many from the University of Bath studying Applied Clinical Psychology and Art Therapy.

The project's three-year aim is to provide patients with outstanding dementia care, with the vision of becoming the leading dementia friendly hospital in England by 2020. To do this, the project will provide an estimated 160 volunteers on the hospital's older person units and 4,800 hours of care over the three years.

Chris Dyer, RUH Consultant Geriatrician and project lead said:

“Just having a friendly face around and someone there to keep you company is proven to be really beneficial to patients living with dementia. This is why the Friendly Faces Project is so important. By helping reassure and calm patients, our volunteers can reduce a patient's anxiety and stress.

“Today is about celebrating our success so far, and thanking our volunteers who give up their free time and have so far spent over 980 hours with our patients who have dementia. We're really passionate about becoming a dementia friendly hospital to make patients with dementia feel relaxed and valued whilst being treated on wards throughout the hospital.”

The Friendly Faces Project is funded by the RUH's charity, The Forever Friends Appeal and works in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Research Institute for Care of the Elderly (RICE).

Tracy Williams, Side by Side Hospital Coordinator, Alzheimer's Society said:

“Dementia Action Week this year is all about the small actions people can take to make a big impact on the lives of people affected by dementia. Our volunteers are a great example of people taking action. They're wonderful, they sit and talk to patients who may be feeling lonely or perhaps restless or agitated as they wait for their relatives, to be seen by a doctor or for treatment. By inviting patients to join in with art and craft activities, our volunteers can start a friendly conversation and provide the comfort and support which some patients need.

“Volunteering is very rewarding and we are looking to recruit more volunteers to help us expand our service. If you have spare time in the week or at weekends and are good at listening and enjoy helping others, please get in touch by calling 01225 396678 or email: bath@alzheimers.org.uk.

The Forever Friends Appeal is looking to expand the project to reach more patients with dementia at the RUH and needs support from the public to do this. If you're interested in making a donation to the Friendly Faces Project please visit our website www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk/causes/dementia.

Ends

For more information contact Rebecca Hedges, Marketing and Communications Officer on 01225 826282 or email: Rebecca.hedges@nhs.net

Notes to Editor:

Photos attached are:

About The Forever Friends Appeal

- The Forever Friends Appeal is the principal fundraising charity for the Royal United Hospitals, Bath. As well as fundraising for major campaigns, we raise funds for the hospital's wards and departments to pay for state-of-the-art medical equipment and facilities, research and innovations, staff training and the creation of welcoming and highly beneficial healing environments for our patients and their families. Each year we invest in projects that go above and beyond what the NHS can provide.
- For more information about the Appeal visit: www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk

Dementia Action Week

- The Alzheimer's Society's national Dementia Awareness Week has been renamed Dementia Action Week (21-27th May). They are calling on everyone to unite and take actions, big or small, to improve the everyday lives of people affected by dementia.
- In the UK, one person develops dementia every three minutes and almost everyone knows someone whose life has been affected. Yet too many people face the condition alone, without adequate support.