

**Date 19.12.18**

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## Media Release

### Apprentice 'elves' donate toys to Children's Ward

The Children's Ward at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust has gratefully received some top-quality, beautifully crafted wooden toys – just in time for Christmas.

Family run construction company, John Sisk & Son has been making wooden toys at Christmas for over 40 years. Each year they donate all of the toys to children's charities around the UK.

The tradition was started by founder John G Sisk and is now supported by a specialised training facility for apprentice carpenters and joiners located at the Sisk Head Office in Dublin.

Toys donated include a scale model articulated lorry, play kitchen, table and chairs and a work bench including toy tools such as a spanner and screwdriver.

Mark Smith, Sisk Operations Manager said: "Every year our apprentices transform into elves for four or five weeks in the run up to Christmas creating these beautiful wooden toys. They really enjoy doing something special and different to the norm knowing that the toys are going to good causes.

"I really enjoy delivering the toys too – it's great to see children enjoy playing with them and you can see from the staff reactions just how much it means. It's nice to be able to give a bit of joy at this time of year."

RUH Play Specialist, Jo Powell said: "Incredible! We've never had anything quite like this before, it's almost like they are purpose built for us. They are excellent quality and totally unique. We'd like to say a huge thank you to Sisk, all their staff and especially the apprentices that made the toys – they are clearly all very talented."

As play specialist, Jo's role is to use play to welcome children to hospital and prepare them to cope with surgery or other procedures. She encourages children to keep up their usual interests and uses specific play techniques to minimise stressful events by acting them out in advance.

The toys will be located in the Children's Ward main play room and in certain other departments around the hospital.



**Ends**

**Notes to Editor:**

- The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.
- The Trust has 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.
- In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain, chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis
- The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now building a purpose built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and working towards the new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: [www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit\\_for\\_the\\_future](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future)
- For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

