



Press Release

Date: 21.01.19

Make your new year's resolution to be a friendly face

A friendly face is just what a patient who has dementia needs during their time in hospital – and the Royal United Hospitals (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust is looking for more volunteers to be just that.

The hospital's Friendly Faces Project needs people who have a committed, flexible approach and can spare a few hours of their time during the week or weekends to be a friendly face to patients who have dementia. We're looking for people who would be happy to come in and sit with patients, have a chat or listen to some music with them to help them feel more at ease whilst being in the hospital.

Tracy Williams, Alzheimer's Society's Volunteer Coordinator for the Friendly Faces Project at the RUH explains:

"We are looking for people who have good verbal and listening skills and are comfortable to be in a hospital environment. We'll provide the training and you'll become part of our Friendly Faces team as an Alzheimer's Society's volunteer at the RUH.

"Often a hospital stay for a patient living with dementia can be quite distressing and confusing but, they may be in the hospital for other treatment. Therefore, being able to introduce a volunteer to a patient who has dementia, who can provide a friendly face and help them stay calm and relaxed in hospital is proven to be really beneficial. Plus, our volunteers find it really rewarding and enjoy their time with patients, so we hope more people will step forward to help support their local hospital."

The Friendly Faces Project launched in 2017 and is funded by hospital's charity The Forever Friends Appeal and works in partnership with Alzheimer's Society, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Research Institute for Care of the Elderly (RICE).

In its first twelve months, Alzheimer's Society volunteers have spent around 1,175 hours with patients and the hospital's three-year aim is to have an estimated 160 volunteer placements offering 4,800 hours of care to patients with dementia.

Sally Pillinger, Alzheimer's Society volunteer on the Friendly Faces Project said:

"On entering a ward, I saw an elderly lady looking very dignified, but very confused and worried. I introduced myself, smiled and mentioned that I had heard she loved singing.

"I could see that we had made a connection and I continued to see this lady for several weeks. One day, just before Christmas, I was greeted by this lady who was wearing a festive red coat, she was going home. When we went to say goodbye, she opened her arms for a hug and told me she was at last, going home - I was pleased for her."

If you or know someone who can spare some time to come and talk to our patients, maybe play a game of cards - and be a friendly face, please get in touch with Tracy Williams on 07702 108994 or email: T.Williams@alzheimers.org.uk

Ends

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

Notes to Editor:

- The Friendly Faces Project is funded by The Forever Friends Appeal and works in partnership with Alzheimer's Society, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Research Institute for Care of the Elderly (RICE).
- By 2020, the RUH wants to be the leading dementia friendly hospital in England. The project works in partnership with The Alzheimer's Society, the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Research Institute for Care of the Elderly (RICE) to provide this important service.

About The Forever Friends Appeal

- The Forever Friends Appeal, the fundraising charity for the Royal United Hospitals, Bath for fundraising for the Friendly Faces Project and needs to raise £30,000 to expand the project to reach more patients living with dementia who are being treated/cared for at the RUH.
- As well as fundraising for major campaigns, the Appeal raises 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.
- It's the 20th anniversary of The Forever Friends Appeal on 29 June 2019 and as the charity turns 20, it invites the public to join in celebrating, rediscovering how they've supported patient care at the RUH and help us fundraise for some very Special Appeals – Facial Surgery & Orthodontics Unit, Critical Care Unit, Breast Unit and The Friendly Faces Project.
- For more information about the Appeal visit: www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk