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Communications Department
Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

Tel: 01225 826230 / 821459
Mobile: 07557 756658 (office hours)

Media Release

Ruh-tr.communicationsteam@nhs.net
www.ruh.nhs.uk
<https://twitter.com/RUHBath>

RUH first to offer recovery boosting fitness programme

Patients recovering from life-threatening blood clots are working out to a fitter future with a unique new exercise programme at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH).

The specialist exercise classes, thought to be the only one of their kind available in the country, are supporting patients to overcome their fears and return to active lifestyles after suffering from a pulmonary embolism – a blood clot on the lungs.

Regitse Lewis, RUH Therapies Team Leader, said: “These classes are a great introduction back into routine exercise in a safe environment with professional support on hand. We tailor each session to the abilities and needs of those attending, but an average class could include walking, exercise bikes, weights and stretching. We see huge improvements in patients’ fitness and confidence even after only a couple of sessions – we encourage them to complete a progress sheet each week which seems to be both rewarding and motivating.”

Patient Simone Vandermeer from Bath said: “I was terrified to exercise again, I knew it would help me recover but I didn’t know what was safe and how far I should push myself. At first I couldn’t even walk from one end of the room to the other without getting completely breathless. Now I can easily get round at least four or five laps.

“The physiotherapy team are helping me recognise what pain or breathlessness is normal and what are warning signs to look out for. I’m starting to feel safe and confident to get active again.”

The funding for the classes was secured thanks to a successful bid to the Trust’s Innovation Panel – where staff can pitch for funding to finance projects that will improve patient care and experience or will increase efficiency.

Consultant Haematologist Dr Mark Robinson said: “A pulmonary embolism can be a terrifying disorder and our experience is that patients are fearful to get moving and exercise after a diagnosis. However research shows that regular exercise reduces both risk of reoccurrence and risk of bleeding for patients on anticoagulants. The programme is designed to install confidence, help patients get back to normal as quickly as possible and develop new healthy habits. To our knowledge we are the only hospital in the country offering such a targeted programme.

“We approached the Innovation Panel when we identified a gap in provision for patients who were fearful to exercise after suffering from a pulmonary embolism. This is reflected nationally too – if you have a heart attack then cardiac rehabilitation is offered, if you have chronic lung disease then pulmonary rehab is offered. However for those with a pulmonary embolism – even though the consequences can be far-reaching – there is no rehab available.”

To find out about symptoms, treatments and ways to reduce your risk of a pulmonary embolism visit [nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pulmonary-embolism)

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 provides 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 and 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 new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: 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