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Media Release

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RUH vision for highest possible dementia care

People living with dementia were the focus of a week of action by staff at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust.

The Trust has set itself the ambitious target of becoming the first truly dementia-friendly hospital in England by 2020 and has already taken many steps towards reaching that objective.

During Dementia Action Week (20-26 May) staff, patients and visitors to the RUH and the RNHRD were able to learn about many of the ways the Trust is supporting people with dementia to improve the quality of time they spend in hospital, and to live a better life at home and with their family and community.

Consultant geriatrician Chris Dyer said: “We know that nationally 25 per cent of all hospital beds are occupied by people with dementia. Dementia care is so important to us at the Trust and it’s a focus for us every day and all year round. Our vision is to deliver the highest possible care, individually tailored, for people with dementia. We take a whole hospital approach, raising the profile of dementia, giving our staff increased knowledge about the condition and how to care for our patients.”

The RUH has appointed three specialist dementia coordinators who provide a seven-day service, helping staff provide the best possible care.

On our four older persons’ units at the RUH, called OPUs, we regularly hold:

- tea parties and lunch clubs on wards to promote the importance of nutrition and socialising for patients with dementia
- gardening clubs to provide exercise and purpose to the day

- Musical performances to entertain and engage
- Stitch in Time textile workshops to encourage mental and social wellbeing

We use technology and reminiscence as a powerful way to communicate with a person with dementia. We provide audiobook and headphones on loan, and tablet computers with a wealth of tools like vintage TV programmes, favourite music, old newspapers cuttings and photos.

Reminiscence areas called 'rempods' have been installed on wards – one with an area that creates the feel of a railway carriage with an LCD screen playing hours of scenic countryside footage. This therapy tool can create a calming and familiar environment for people with dementia, easing stress or anxiety.

All these tools are used by staff and volunteers who befriend patients as part of our Friendly Faces project, spending time to chat and help a patient lead a less isolated life.

For more information see our website <https://bit.ly/2VXXHU7>

Notes to editors

- Dementia is not a natural part of ageing – more than 45,000 people under 65 in the UK have dementia.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
- Although there is no cure for dementia, support and treatment are available that can allow people with dementia to live active, purposeful lives and carry on doing the things that matter to them most.

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- For more information visit <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

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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](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