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Generous donation helps the RNHRD to continue to lead the way in the treatment of Lupus

Patients being treated for the debilitating auto-immune illness lupus at the new RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre are to benefit from a £250,000 legacy.

It was left via the hospital charity The Forever Friends Appeal in the will of a former patient who wished to make an impact for future patients and invest in further research carried out in this area of work.

The RNHRD, which recently moved from The Mineral Hospital to the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust's Combe Park site, is already a designated Centre of Excellence by Lupus UK – one of just seven nationwide.

The hospital has an international reputation for its research into a range of rheumatic conditions, including lupus, and its rheumatology team provides both specialist and general rheumatology services for adults, children and adolescents.

The lupus service is led by three Consultant Rheumatologists, all specialists in autoimmune Connective Tissue Disorders – Dr Ellie Korendowych, Dr Sarah Skeoch and Dr John Pauling, and is supported by two Nurse Specialists, Jaliah Norcott and Sarah Smith as well as specialist Rheumatology therapists.

Dr Korendowych said: "October was national Lupus Awareness Month and this incredibly generous legacy via our hospital charity The Forever Friends Appeal will help us to continue the fantastic work we are doing in lupus research to support our clinical and research programme.

"The RNHRD is the only Lupus UK Centre of Excellence in the south west, something we are extremely proud of and which reflects the hard work and dedication of all our staff.

“Our number one priority is providing high quality care for our patients and research underpins everything that we do. We work closely with Professor Neil McHugh, Honorary Consultant at the RNHRD and Head of the Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology at the University of Bath.

“Professor McHugh established the lupus service at the RNHRD and has an international reputation in research into this field. We are planning some exciting research projects in collaboration with the University of Bath to further enhance our knowledge of lupus and the impact it has on our patients.

“We run a dedicated lupus clinic and also work very closely with our colleagues across the RUH, particularly in Obstetrics, Dermatology and Respiratory medicine where we hold combined clinics for our patients with lupus.”

Jane Batchelor, who has been treated for lupus at the RNHRD for over 20 years, said: “I’m always impressed with the continuity of care I receive. You are being treated by people who have vast experience in what is quite a rare condition. It’s the same team too – familiar faces who know you and your history. I have to come for infusions every six months and it’s always a very relaxed, low-key, yet professional environment.

“I’m very grateful for the care and support I’ve received over the years at the Mineral Hospital, which I am confident will continue at the new RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre.”

Systemic Lupus is a life-long illness of the immune system, a condition in which the body's defence mechanism begins to attack itself through an excess of antibodies in the blood stream. This causes inflammation and sometimes damage in the joints, muscles, skin and other organs.

Studies have shown that nearly 1 in a 1000 people living in the UK have Systemic Lupus. Approximately 90% of sufferers are female and it is most common to develop the condition between the ages of 15 and 55.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

Gifts in wills are a vital source of funding for the Trust and the work it does in research, trials, medical treatment and caring for its patients. These gifts have underpinned many projects, discoveries and achievements in many of the research programs throughout the hospital's history, leading to better diagnosis and treatments, and improving patients' lives not only now but in the future,



By leaving a gift in your will to the hospital's charity, The Forever Friends Appeal, you can become a part of the journey to understand and help defeat many illnesses – your legacy will be life-changing.

To find out more or talk in confidence about leaving a gift in your will to support future research programmes, please call Jan Witt. Legacy Officer on 01225 825819 or email jan.witt@nhs.net

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 has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the 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