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## Supporting our patients on World Cancer Day

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust prides itself on the care it provides to patients who are living with and beyond cancer.

Support for patients comes from departments across the hospital, from nurses to volunteers.

One successful volunteer service is Macmillan Cancer Support's Head and Neck Buddies.

The volunteers have all had head and neck cancer themselves and support head and neck cancer patients in clinic waiting areas and during their chemotherapy. They share their experience of getting through treatment, which can be particularly gruelling for patients.

Anne Twitchett has volunteered as a Macmillan Head and Neck Buddy since recovering from oesophageal cancer.

She said: "I felt so pleased to have my life back after my treatment that I wanted to do something to help others who were going through the same experience as I had.

"We offer patients a lived experience of cancer. It's comforting and reassuring for patients to chat with someone that has been through the same experience as them and survived – it shows them that things can get better."

Anne, part of a team of five Macmillan Head and Neck Buddies, will sit in the clinic waiting room and talk to patients and will also sit alongside them while they are having chemotherapy treatment if the patient asks them to.

"We will offer them encouragement and try to keep them focused on completing the treatment," said Anne.

“I feel very privileged to be able to share conversations with people who are going through what is such an emotional experience and offer support to them where I can. It puts your experience into perspective and shows you can turn a negative into a positive.”

Across the RUH, nurses will be caring for cancer patients on World Cancer Day (Tuesday 4 February), as they do all year round. With 2020 being the international Year of the Nurse and Midwife, this year there is a particular spotlight on the work nurses do.

Theresa Peters and Sue Coppin are Macmillan Haematology Clinical Nurse Specialists. Theresa said: “We support patients with malignant haematological diagnoses, including leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma. Sue and I both run two nurse-led outpatient clinics each week where we review patients with chronic disorders face to face or over the phone, assessing blood results, medicines, toxicities and dosage.”

Sue said: “Theresa is the bone marrow transplant coordinator and together we carry out stem cell transplants in conjunction with training staff to undertake the procedure.

“We educate patients and obtain confirmation of consent for those receiving urgent chemotherapy. We endeavour to make sure we are there for our patients – a key part of our work is being a listening ear, offering advice and support to people who are battling life-changing illnesses.

“Some patients are with us from diagnosis for the rest of their lives. It’s very important to build a good trusting relationship in order to help them live their lives to the full. We also get to know the members of their support team very well.”

Theresa added: “It’s a great feeling when you see a patient being discharged after very intensive treatment and getting on with their life.”

The Forever Friends Appeal is raising funds for the RUH’s new Dyson Cancer Centre as well as the hospital’s Breast Unit. To find out how you can support these appeals, visit the charity’s website: [www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk](http://www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk)

You can find out more about Macmillan’s Bath and West Wilts Buddies scheme and all the support on offer from Macmillan on their website – [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

## Ends

### Notes to Editor:

The World Health Organization has announced that 2020 will be the Year of the Nurse and Midwife to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. Our nurses and midwives are a big

part of the RUH family and throughout the year we will be celebrating the work they do, going above and beyond every day to give our patients compassionate care.

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](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)