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## Volunteers hit the right note for patients with dementia

More volunteers are being sought to sing alongside patients with dementia at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust.

Singing to, and with, patients with dementia can help to reduce their stress and anxiety and increase energy levels.

At the RUH, volunteers with the Friendly Faces project, funded by the Forever Friends Appeal, lead the singing sessions on Cheselden ward and Combe ward.

Terry Field, Patricia Freeston, Lauren McEwan and Sally Campbell deliver a range of classic sing-along songs for patients, such as Bring Me Sunshine, Oh What a Beautiful Morning, Edelweiss and All Things Bright and Beautiful.

Tracy Williams, the Alzheimer's Society's Volunteer Coordinator at the RUH, said: "Singing with patients gives them an opportunity to be expressive and can evoke memories and emotions. Above all though, it's fun and lifts the spirits, and we often find visitors and relatives will join in too.

"We're extremely thankful for our volunteers who give up their time to sing on the wards – but we need more volunteers to come forward as we need a bigger singing team to call upon.

"We're looking for people who can spare a couple of hours on a regular basis. And don't worry, you don't need to be able to hold a tune – enthusiasm is all we are looking for!"

The RUH is committed to becoming an even more dementia-friendly hospital. Around 75% of our patients are over 65 and of that patient group, around 30% are living with dementia – but may be in hospital for other treatment.

Last year, the RUH launched its ground-breaking audiobooks for dementia patients' initiative which has proved so successful it is being copied throughout the country. Patients with dementia now have the chance to listen to audiobooks, plays and TV and radio shows during their stay at the RUH. The aim of the initiative is to keep patients stimulated and engaged, while helping to relieve some of the boredom of being in hospital.

On Combe ward, nursing stations are placed in each of the bays on the ward, so that staff can observe patients and patients can be reassured by their presence. Brightly-coloured flooring marks out the different areas of the ward and signs have both text and pictures.

The lighting on the ward is soft and even, and changes gradually throughout the day to give patients a sense of the passing of time.

Recent improvements to the hospital's Medical Assessment Unit have seen larger, dementia-friendly signs installed around the unit, to help patients navigate their way around.

To volunteer to be part of the singing team contact Tracy Williams on 07702 108994 or [t.williams@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:t.williams@alzheimers.org.uk)

You can find out more about the Friendly Faces project on The Forever Friends Appeal website - [www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk](http://www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.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)

Chair:  
Alison Ryan

Chief Executive:  
James Scott



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