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Communications Department

Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

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

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

Funding boost to help rough sleepers leave hospital

A scheme to help rough sleepers when they're discharged from the Royal United Hospital has been given a boost following a successful funding bid by Bath and North East Somerset Homelessness Partnership.

The project, run in partnership with the charity Developing Health & Independence (DHI), aims to ensure that homeless people are discharged to suitable accommodation, rather than back onto the streets. It will receive £60k in 2020/21 out of a total of a £417,000 grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government fund (MHCLG).

The new funding means the initiative can be extended and the small DHI team will remain based at the RUH for the third year running.

David Walton, Housing Director of Developing Health & Independence, said: "This funding will allow us to continue with vital work in the RUH to stop the vicious cycle of people coming to hospital from the streets, being discharged back to the streets and then quickly ending up back in hospital. Our homeless in hospital work has helped over 80 of the most vulnerable people being discharged from the RUH and ensured they had somewhere safe to go on to."

Bernie Marden, RUH Medical Director, said: "It's excellent news that this valuable service will continue at the RUH to help some of the most vulnerable people in our community."

The DHI team have proven their worth over the years and we're so glad they'll be carrying on their great work in the hospital."

The DHI team visit homeless patients in the RUH, working across all wards, and carry out an initial assessment. With the patient's consent they can be referred to their local authority to be found suitable accommodation and linked to other services that can help them.

The (MHCLG) money follows on from 18 months of funding from central Government and will allow new services to be introduced in B&NES to meet very complex needs of some rough sleepers, as well as help existing provision to continue.

Tim Ball, Bath & North East Somerset Council cabinet member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development, said: "We are pleased that the excellent work already being done by a range of partner agencies across Bath and North East Somerset will not only continue for another year, but can be added to. We know that the needs of people sleeping rough are complex and can take time to address. This funding will help us build on what we know works and to develop new approaches for those whose needs are most acute."

The new services include a tailored response for particularly vulnerable people and support for landlords who rent accommodation to rough sleepers.

For 2020/21, the money will help fund

- continued extended provision of emergency accommodation in severe weather,
- cross-border working with people in or from Wiltshire to ensure valuable connections and accommodation can be kept up
- helping people avoid rough sleeping when they are discharged from the RUH
- mental health support workers placed with the outreach team and working with people already sleeping rough
- a new tailored response to particularly vulnerable rough sleepers who have both mental health and substance misuse problems

- Helping rough sleepers access private rented accommodation and support for landlords who rent to rough sleepers, also a new initiative.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The World Health Organization has announced that 2020 will be the Year of the Nurse and Midwife to commemorate the 200th 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

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

