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## **RUH open and providing essential care during COVID-19**

People needing urgent medical help are being reassured that the Royal United Hospital is open and able to provide essential care as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

While anyone with coronavirus symptoms is advised to stay at home and not come to a hospital, RUH Medical Director Dr Bernie Marden says most services are running as usual and that people with no coronavirus symptoms should still seek help if they need it.

He said: "People are still having accidents, strokes, heart attacks and so on. We have organised the hospital in a way that makes us confident we can still provide the same level of care for all our patients.

"We are still very much a functioning, active general hospital providing all the services that people expect us to provide at any hour of the day or night. Nobody should be worried about coming here if they need to."

The public is advised to follow the same processes – using the emergency number 999, the non-emergency number 111 and pharmacists in the usual way.

The hospital is particularly keen to reassure parents that they should not hesitate to seek help if their child is ill. They should follow guidelines and call NHS 111 if their child has any symptom that they are worried about, whether they think this relates to coronavirus or not.

Dr Marden said: "I know how worried parents can be when their child becomes unwell. It's therefore really important that they understand that we are here for them and that they seek help as soon as they are concerned."

The Children's Ward has created a dedicated COVID-19 area with its own entrance and special staffing system, meaning patients can receive the care they need and that staff and patients in other part of the ward are protected.

Paediatricians have drawn up guidelines with information about what steps to take if your child becomes unwell or has an accident. These include when to go to A&E or call 999,

when to call your GP, and when to check with NHS 111 or a community pharmacist. You can read more [here](#)

Dr Marden said the RUH Trust had planned for coronavirus for several months, and that the hospital was well prepared.

A new Respiratory Assessment Unit has been opened to admit suspected COVID-19 patients, a new 14-bed intensive care unit is under construction in a former orthopaedic ward, and this Easter weekend oncology services are moving from the RUH to the independent Circle Bath hospital in Peasedown St John.

Dr Marden said that the Trust was confident in its supply of personal protection equipment and was well-connected with the NHS supply chain. It was being used to maximise protection for staff and patients.

Dr Marden paid tribute to RUH staff who have “risen to the challenge” of the coronavirus pandemic.

He said: “What has been overwhelming is the way in which our staff have responded. Whatever their role is in the organisation, this has affected everybody.

“Our teams are finding completely new and innovative ways to help patients such as video or telephone consultations. The level of flexibility and resilience has been impressive. They have also really been there for each other.

“Often we forget those behind the scenes such as cleaners and porters – but they are also rising to occasion, taking on different roles and being flexible.

“It brings into sharp focus the values that we hold here, which everyone is living in abundance at the moment.

“The Trust is looking after our hard-working staff in a number of ways. Counselling and psychology services are available, we have a Thank You board that displays messages of support from the public, and care packages of items including snacks and toiletries donated by the public are being distributed to teams across the hospital by our charity The Forever Friends Appeal.

“Finally I’d like to say a big thank you to everyone in the community who has shown us such support. It’s really humbling. These are challenging times and it’s fantastic to know that so many people are behind us.”

**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)