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## **RUH staff run virtual clinics for patients**

Staff at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust have been running ‘virtual’ clinics, so they can keep in contact with patients without them having to visit the hospital in person.

Using the video platform Visionable, staff across the Trust are able to meet with their patients remotely, allowing everyone to follow social distancing guidelines while reducing the number of patients and staff on the hospital site.

One doctor who has been using the new software is Dr Marc Atkin, of the RUH’s Department Of Diabetes and Endocrinology. He said: “We have been using Visionable to contact our patients at home, many of whom are self-isolating and unable to come into the hospital. This has had advantages for our patients who can talk to a specialist from the comfort of their own home, while staying safe.

“For the healthcare staff it has been very helpful to ‘see’ our patients; there are many things that can be done over Visionable that cannot be done by phone. Our clinics are more efficient and we can share glucose meter downloads with our patients, allowing us to have similar conversations to those that we have when in clinic. The doctors and nurses are also spending less time in their cars travelling between hospitals, meaning we can spend more time treating patients.

“This will be a big part of how we do things from now on and we are looking to build it into ‘business as usual’ for our Diabetes & Endocrinology patients. It will not be for everyone and will not be suitable for everything we do but it could bring big beneficial changes to the way we work, allowing us to improve what we can offer to our patients.”

Liz Peace, Patient Pathway Manager for Haematology & Oncology, said: “It has provided us with invaluable help to liaise with our patients from a safe distance which has given them reassurance that they were still being seen but not being placed in any danger.

“It has helped us continue our service almost seamlessly as it has enabled us to see new patients 'face to face'. It has also enabled us to meet with patients in isolation and has meant their relatives can join in on the consultation remotely, so still participate in the appointment. Footfall through the department has been reduced, ensuring out patients are kept safer when they have to come into the hospital for their radiotherapy treatments.

“Going forward, Visionable could continue to be very useful, given that we expect social-distancing restrictions to stay in place. It will mean that members of a patient’s family can ‘attend’ the consultation even though they are not in the room. It will also mean that we can ‘meet’ with patients who are less mobile, in the comfort of their own home.”

RUH Medical Director Bernie Marden said: “These virtual clinics have been running for a little while now, but to deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic we have increased the number of departments running them and their frequency too.

“Using technology to provide things like virtual clinics reflects the NHS’s long-term plans to deliver more personalised care to people in the comfort of their own homes.”

## 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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