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## Media Release

### Your RUH and NHS – open this winter

Patients are being reassured that the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH) remains open for those needing care, and that measures are in place to support COVID and non-COVID patients safely throughout the winter months.

As the second national lockdown begins, the message is that people across the South West should not be put off from accessing any NHS care and treatment.

Unlike the first lockdown period in March and April, much more of the NHS will remain open, such as diagnostic services, including scans and blood tests, some pre-planned surgery and ongoing cancer care.

Dr Ruth Grabham, Medical Director of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “While the rest of the country goes back into lockdown, the NHS, just like the first time around, will remain open for those who need it.

“GP appointments will be available and, although most will be happening in a virtual format in order to comply with social distancing, face-to-face consultations remain available if your doctor or nurse feels it is required in order to make a fuller assessment.

“This goes for appointments at hospital too, and I would like to offer the reassurance that the hospitals in our region are safe places to be, and no person should put off attending their appointments, especially if it relates to a serious condition, such as cancer.”

Emergency care at the Royal United Hospital, the Great Western Hospital in Swindon, and Salisbury District Hospital will be available around the clock for those with the most serious injuries and illnesses.

However, people with more minor health conditions are advised to seek help elsewhere from services such as NHS 111, which is available online and over the phone, and from

local pharmacies, many of which can provide one-to-one consultations without the need for an appointment.

Dr Bernie Marden, RUH Medical Director said that while the hospital was now seeing increased numbers of Covid-positive patients who need care, the hospital remains open with services continuing, including non-emergency elective treatments and surgery.

Restricted visiting is still allowed, although this is under review and subject to possible changes in national guidance. To prevent the risk of infection, anyone with coronavirus symptoms, or living with someone with symptoms, must not visit the hospital. Measures are in place to minimise the number of people on site and those that do come must wear a face covering and follow hand hygiene and social distancing guidelines.

Dr Marden said: “Our aim is to keep patients and staff safe and to ensure that the RUH provides the widest possible range of patient care services. We’d ask everyone in the community to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by following government ‘hands, face and space’ guidelines and strictly abiding by our hospital visiting advice. We’d also remind patients that their appointment will go ahead unless they’re told otherwise, so do please attend.

“The NHS has learned a huge amount about coronavirus and caring for COVID-19 patients that has made us better prepared for what may lie ahead. We have made many changes within the RUH and to our clinical and nursing practices with the aim of maintaining services for all who need our help.”

One latest change will be the reopening soon of the hospital’s Respiratory Assessment Unit (RAU), which will again act as a front door for suspected COVID-positive patients. This is an appointment-only service for patients who are directed there via NHS 111 or their GP. The RAU was set up earlier this summer and remained open until COVID cases declined.

Dr Marden said: “We know this could be a difficult winter for us all and at the RUH we are committed to doing our very best for all our patients. We’d ask everyone to look after yourself, stay healthy and follow all the guidelines to protect yourself and others from infection. We don’t want to see you in hospital – but rest assured, if you need our help, we’re here for you all.”

**Ends**

**Notes to Editor:**

The World Health Organization has designated 2020 as 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

Chair:  
Alison Ryan

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family and throughout the year we are 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)

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