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Media Release

RUH Bath suspends visiting

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust in Bath has taken the difficult decision to suspend visiting from Thursday 26 November until further notice, to help protect patients and staff and in line with government advice to slow the spread of coronavirus.

The RUH suspended visiting at the end of March, but was able to relax restrictions during the summer months, while COVID-19 cases remained relatively low.

With coronavirus cases now rising in the local community and throughout the south west, the RUH has again suspended visiting.

Other than maternity visiting, the only exceptional circumstances where one visitor – an immediate family member or carer – will be permitted to visit are listed below:

- Parent or appropriate adult visiting your child
- Patients nearing end of life
- Parent or carer accompanying a vulnerable adult

People are asked to contact the ward in advance to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Maternity visiting guidelines are:

- A birthing partner can continue to accompany a woman in labour or on maternity departments or ward.
- All pregnant women can be joined by their partner when attending the ward or birth centre for any reason.
- Visiting for your birth partner after your baby is born remains 11am - 5pm.

- Pregnant women and children attending outpatient appointments can be accompanied by one adult, but no siblings.
- Your birth partner can join you for 12 and 20 week scan appointments only.

For all other queries relating to scans please contact the antenatal ultrasound department directly.

Any inpatients with COVID-19 or awaiting test results for COVID-19 are **not** able to receive visitors with the exception of those who are receiving end of life care.

During this time we ask and encourage visitors to use other methods of keeping in touch. Each of the hospital's wards have a mobile phone and an iPad with Whatsapp and Zoom to help keep patients in touch with loved ones through phone and video calls.

We also have a dedicated 'Keeping in Touch' service which can pass on a message to your loved one in hospital. Just email ruh-tr.keepingintouch@nhs.net or call 01225 826984 to tell us what your message is.

Many outpatient appointments are now being held virtually but those people who do need to attend for treatment as an adult outpatient should come into hospital alone. Pregnant women and children attending outpatient appointments can be accompanied by one adult, but no siblings.

You must not visit in any circumstances if you have any coronavirus symptoms.

Trust Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks said: "This has been a difficult decision for us to take, but one which will help to keep our patients and staff safe, as cases of COVID-19 continue to rise in the local community.

"We understand how hard this will be for many people, unable to visit their loved ones and friends in person. We would ask people to use phone and video calls to keep in touch and our ward staff will help to facilitate these calls whenever possible.

"We will keep these visiting restrictions under review and will make sure we publicise any future changes as and when they are made. Thank you for your understanding."

For more information about visiting the RUH, please see <https://bit.ly/2QQ7JIA>

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The World Health Organization has designated 2020 as 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 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

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