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Media Release

Think NHS 111 first this New Year weekend

Staff at Bath's Royal United Hospital (RUH) are asking people to contact NHS 111 first if they need medical attention over the coming New Year weekend.

The RUH remains very busy, treating both COVID and non-COVID patients, while attendances at its Accident and Emergency department continue to be high.

Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks said: "As we go into the long weekend, we would ask people with an urgent medical problem, who are thinking about coming to our Emergency Department, to contact NHS 111 first.

"Experienced 111 clinicians will assess your needs over the phone and direct you to the most appropriate local service, potentially avoiding an unnecessary trip to hospital."

People with very serious or life-threatening health conditions, such as chest pain, severe bleeding or loss of consciousness, should still continue to phone 999. Those who arrive at A&E without having first contacted NHS 111 will not be turned away, but may be asked to wait or be signposted to a more appropriate local healthcare service.

Cara added: "With cases of COVID-19 continuing to rise in the local community, and with B&NES and Wiltshire now in Tier 3, we would ask people to make sure they continue to follow the hands, face, space advice and help to reduce pressure on the NHS.

"We are all hoping for a brighter, healthier 2021, but if you are planning on seeing in the New Year with loved ones, please make sure you do it safely at home, and avoid any large gatherings."

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