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**Communications Department**

Royal United Hospital  
Combe Park  
Bath  
BA1 3NG

Tel: 01225 826230 / 821459  
Mobile: 07557 756658 (office hours)

[Ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net](mailto:Ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net)  
[www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)  
<https://twitter.com/RUHBath>

## Kindness matters at the RUH

Kindness is the theme for staff at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust with a series of daily topics and events arranged during this national Mental Health Awareness Week 2020.

The Mental Health Foundation has chosen kindness as its topic of the week because its own research shows that protecting our mental health is going to be central to coping with and recovering from the coronavirus pandemic.

The RUH has experienced numerous acts of kindness, shown by NHS staff themselves and from the public to the NHS, over the past months. They include neighbourhoods decorated with rainbow paintings and thank you posters, frontline hospital staff clapping a recovering COVID-19 patient who's leaving intensive care, and generous public donations, among many other gifts, of flowers, food and free bicycles.

Sarah Shatwell, RUH Head of Counselling, said: "One in four people will experience a mental health difficulty in their lifetime. Being kind to ourselves is a really good starting point for looking after our emotional wellbeing and mental health, especially when so many hospital staff work in roles looking after and caring for other people.

"So this week we are focusing on kindness, to ourselves and to others, examining how it can help our mental health. We're explaining various ways of how to take a moment to be kind to ourselves. We're looking at barriers that stop people accessing mental health and wellbeing support, we're discussing how to talk to someone struggling with their mental health, and we're sharing random acts of kindness on our social media platforms."

The Trust is also broadcasting daily podcasts from Bath-based clinical psychologist and author Linda Blair on why kindness is so important to personal health and society as a whole.

Linda said: “We’ve all learned during this crisis how fantastic it feels to thank people and be kind to people when they are doing so much for us. But in the middle of all this thanking and kindness to others we often forget to be kind to ourselves – and that’s really important.

“Psychological research shows that when you take a moment to show some self-kindness and self-respect you get a burst of energy, your creative powers are boosted. We also know from research that your mood is likely to remain more positive and steadier for longer when you take a moment to thank yourself and to be kind to yourself.”

You can find out more about Mental Health Awareness Week and watch Linda’s podcasts [here](#)

## 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)