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Media Release

RUH apprentice scheme tackles national radiographer shortage

A successful in-house apprenticeship scheme is helping the Radiology team at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust to tackle a national shortage of radiographers.

Radiographers help in the diagnosis of patients through capturing images of bones, organs and human tissue.

They may work with X-rays, CT scans, MRIs or ultrasounds in a variety of places, from operating theatres to accident and emergency rooms.

Traditionally, Therapeutic Radiographers and Diagnostic Radiographers would join the hospital after graduating from university.

However, new apprenticeship pathways give those without suitable academic qualifications like A-levels the opportunity to learn on the job, gaining the relevant additional qualifications they need while studying with a variety of education providers, including Weston College.

These qualifications allow the individual to meet the entry requirements to undertake a BSc (hons) degree apprenticeship to become a state registered radiographer studying at either Exeter University or the University of the West of England (UWE).

With International Day of Radiology and World Radiography Day both falling on Monday 8 November, work is going on across the country to promote radiography as a career.

The RUH's Radiology team has two new qualified radiographers about to join them via the apprentice route, and recruiting is already completed for the next academic year.

One recently qualified apprentice, Pat Jenkins, said: “I was a Radiology Assistant for about five years, but I wanted to progress my career and the apprenticeship route was perfect for me.

“I worked at the RUH four days a week and then one day a week was spent at Weston College, studying for a UWE-accredited Foundation Degree. I’ve since gone on to get my Bachelor’s Degree.

“The apprenticeship route appealed to me because you get so much on-the-job experience. Once I was qualified, I could step right in and join the team.

“Being a Radiographer is a fantastic job. There’s so much variety – one day you could be working in A&E, the next Theatres. We also get to work collaboratively with departments across the hospital.”

Suzanne Boyle, Clinical Education Lead, said: “The apprenticeships have opened up a new route for people to consider Radiology as a career and give them opportunities they may not have otherwise had.

“Nationally there is a shortage of radiographers so the apprenticeship scheme has been really successful in opening up radiology as a career for those people who may not have considered it before.

Sarah Bond, Radiology Team Leader, said: “The chance for vocational, on-the-job learning is much more appealing for a lot of people starting their career.

“It gives Radiology porters and Radiography Department Assistants the opportunity to take their first step into a career as a radiographer.

“We’re committed to ensuring the RUH is an outstanding place to work, where staff can flourish, so we’re proud to be the first profession in the RUH to have home grown graduates, who are a real credit to the team.”

The apprenticeship scheme is run in-house and is currently only available to RUH Radiology employees.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

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