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Media Release

Pop-up hospital gets toys on the road to recovery

More than 100 soft toys were successfully treated at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust's first teddy bear hospital, which was held on Saturday 15 June.

The free, ticketed event was put on to give primary school children the opportunity to experience a visit to the RUH in relaxed circumstances, and to give them lots of handy hints on looking after their own health at home.

Their visits replicated what it might be like to come to hospital: when they arrived, the children and their cuddly charges were first triaged at the nurses' station, before seeing a doctor to get their toy's legs, arms or tail plastered.

There was then the opportunity to learn more about healthy eating and oral hygiene at the dental station, and to test how good their handwashing was with the help of gel and a UV light to show the spots they'd missed. Some even assisted in surgery, operating on a bear specially made by a staff member, which was stuffed with removable, handcrafted felt organs.

Paramedics from the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust were also on hand to talk about their work and to give visitors a glimpse inside an ambulance.

Although the RUH's paediatric team has long worked closely with the local community, this was the first time that they had invited children to visit the hospital. For many attendees, it was their first visit to the RUH and it gave them a feel for what to expect should they need to come again in future, whether as a patient or to visit a loved one.

Others were already familiar with the ward and the event helped paint a different perspective of the hospital, making them feel more confident and relaxed about future appointments.

The day was organised and run by volunteers from children's ward staff and sponsored by Midsommer Norton-based family-friendly café, Fox & Kit.

One of the organisers, Dr Charlotte Horrigan, said: "Most children's first experience of hospital is when they are unwell. We wanted to change that, by giving them an enjoyable, fun and positive experience, to help alleviate fear and anxiety."

"It was brilliant to see the children excited to learn about healthcare and healthy living, and a lovely way to build relationships with the community."

Bears and owners who missed out this time should not worry: the success of the day means planning has already begun to help make this event become an annual fixture.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

Our new Dyson Cancer Centre brings together many of the RUH's cancer services under one roof to provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West. The centre includes the RUH's oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, a 22-bed inpatient ward, a dedicated pharmacy, research team and nuclear medicine and physics teams.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub. The three-storey hub provides a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. It also includes comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

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