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Media Release

RUH's Musician in Residence spreads festive cheer this Christmas

Musician in Residence at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, Frankie Simpkins, has been sharing the joy and connectedness that music brings to the hospital's patients and staff this festive period.

It's through her understanding of the special role that music has which helps Frankie really make a difference at this special time of year.

She explains: "It's all about being really aware that music needs to be right in the moment for that person and how they are feeling. So, I can sing Christmas songs if we want to or I might sing something else."

Frankie has been the RUH's Musician in Residence for 12 years through the Soundbite Music Programme and with support from Friends of the RUH. As a result, she is really attuned to the difference music makes to patients and staff all the way through the year.

"Music in hospital has many benefits," she said: "Someone's face can light up despite feeling poorly when they hear something that's familiar or special to them."

Dr Helen Milbourn, Consultant Geriatrician, who sees the impact first-hand, said: "It's a joy to see Frankie come on the wards. It's so nice to see some of our patients who have been unwell look so animated and back to themselves."

A recent clip of Frankie playing to a patient on the RUH's Older People's Unit caught the attention of the online community and clearly demonstrates the physical and mental health benefits of providing music in hospitals.

Frankie said: "It was a busy day on the ward and so the patient was brought down to me so she could hear me singing. She requested 'Rock Around the Clock' and I began to sing it and she started dancing! It was the most beautiful thing."

Dr Milbourn added: “Just a small amount of time in bed can mean real loss of muscle bulk and so a patient can take longer to recover and spend more time away from home. So it’s really important to get up and moving and music is a brilliant vehicle for this.”

Ends

Notes to Editor:

About the Soundbite Music Programme

The Soundbite Music Programme brings a varied line-up of music to patients, staff and visitors at the RUH; this involves live musical performances as well as interactive music visits for patients by our Musician in Residence. Soundbite creates an uplifting and positive environment for patients, visitors and staff, as well as providing students and emerging musicians with the opportunity to gain experience of music facilitation and performance in a health care setting supported by our professional musician in residence.

Soundbite has been funded by the Friends of the RUH for 2024/25.

Soundbite Musician-in-Residence, Frankie Simpkins, has been with the RUH for 12 years, specialising in singing for health and music in acute hospital settings.

To find out more: <https://artatruh.org/participate-music/>

To donate: <https://ruh.org.uk/having-an-impact/our-campaigns-and-projects/art-at-the-heart/?form=FUNUCRAMPVT>

About the Friends of the RUH

The Friends of the RUH provide much needed support by helping patients and their relatives throughout the hospital in a variety of ways. Our work is funded from both much needed donations and profits from both the Hospital Shop and Friends Coffee Shop.

To find out more including how to support the Friends through volunteering: <https://friendsoftheruh.org.uk/>

About the RUH

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.



Royal United Hospitals Bath

NHS Foundation Trust

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