

17th July 2012

Statement from Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust, Bath, known locally as the 'Min' is pleased to confirm its agreement in principle to join with the Royal United Hospital (RUH), also based in Bath.

We aim to achieve this by Spring 2013, once the RUH have achieved Foundation Trust status. The RNHRD Trust Board approved the decision at a board meeting on Thursday 28th June 2012.

As a result of its worsening financial position the RNHRD was directed by its regulator, Monitor, to provide a strategic solution for the future. Monitor did not identify any significant governance failing and the Care Quality Commission has no outstanding concerns regarding the quality of patient care at the Trust. Monitor acknowledged that the Trust has taken steps to reduce its costs and improve efficiency.

Kirsty Matthews, Chief Executive of the RNHRD said, "We are delighted that a way forward has now been described. The 'Min' is a very small organisation. We recognise that to remain viable and ensure services can be provided into the future we need to be part of a larger organisation and we have been intending to join with the RUH for some time. We are now working with our healthcare partners to identify the next steps."

Dr Bhalla, Medical Director at the RNHRD said, "High quality care is the number one priority of the Trust and we are proud of our research and high-quality specialist services. During the transition period the RNHRD remains fully operational; all patients are continuing to receive the high quality of care we are renowned for."

Chief Executive at the RUH, James Scott said, "The RNHRD and RUH have worked closely together for some time to agree on the best way for the two hospitals to come together, this agreement in principle is good news for patients, staff and the healthcare community."

During the period of transition the 'Min' remains fully operational and patients will continue to receive the high quality care and treatment they need in a clean, safe and welcoming environment.

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Notes

The RNHRD

- is a small specialist hospital in the centre of Bath; its core provision are services for rheumatology, neuro rehabilitation, chronic pain and fatigue management
- is a national hospital and admits patients from across the country
- has been an NHS foundation trust since 2005
- has an annual income of c. £20m
- has a staff of around 420
- has experienced a deteriorating financial position as referral patterns and tariffs have changed
- does not enjoy the economies of scale more commonly found in larger Foundation Trusts any adverse changes in levels of income and expenditure have a significant impact.

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