

18th July, 2012

Press Release

RNHRD RECEIVES NATIONAL SPECIALIST COMMISSIONING FUNDING TO LEAD NEW REHABILITATION SERVICE FOR WOMEN WITH RADIATION-INDUCED INJURIES

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust (RNHRD), known locally as the 'Min' has secured funding from the National Specialist Commissioning Team to provide a Breast Radiotherapy Injury Rehabilitation Service for women who have suffered radiation-induced injuries following breast cancer treatment.

Around 250 women in the UK suffer with severe, chronic and complex conditions arising from these radiation-induced injuries, including continuous pain and a loss of arm movement, breathing difficulties and damage to bone or soft tissue. The risk factors that led to these injuries are well understood today and are now carefully avoided.

The Bath based RNHRD will lead this new service and work in conjunction with the Royal United Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Bath, Bart's Health NHS Trust, London and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester. Together they will provide long term rehabilitation support, including specialist intensive therapies for the complex healthcare needs of this group of women.

This service is endorsed by the National Cancer Action Team and Macmillan Cancer Support, who have worked with the patient support group Radiotherapy Action Group Exposure (R.A.G.E.) to conduct a lengthy campaign for the provision of appropriate healthcare for this client group.

Professor Jane Maher, Chief Medical Officer at Macmillan Cancer Support and Chair of the Maher Committee for the Department of Health, said: "R.A.G.E. are to be congratulated for continuing to lobby for specialist services to meet the needs of those they represent - I am delighted that they have finally achieved this."

The RNHRD is a national centre of excellence for the provision of this type of highly specialised, multi-disciplinary care for people with complex rehabilitation needs. The oncology expertise of the three collaborating NHS Trusts will ensure the service is embedded within the Cancer Networks and that knowledge gained from this service will inform future Cancer care.

Janice Millington, from the patient support group R.A.G.E. said: “We welcome this announcement; these are women who have suffered with a wide range of rehabilitation needs for the past 20 to 30 years.

“Although this is a rare condition the physical and mental impact over this time cannot be underestimated, and as these women get older their problems are increasing and being complicated by other chronic illnesses.

Janice continued “No two patients have the same symptoms, so this multidisciplinary approach is essential. The new service will ensure these women can have regular and quick access to a highly specialised team who understand their condition and healthcare needs. This should have a positive, long term impact on the health and quality of life of these women.”

Professor Candy McCabe, Consultant Nurse at the RNHRD said “The new service was piloted by the RNHRD in 2011 and feedback has been extremely positive with patients appreciating a tailored service that meets their specific healthcare needs and the ability to talk to clinicians who understood their problems.”

The new service is now open, referrals should be directed to Professor Candy McCabe, Consultant Nurse, Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath.

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Notes for Editors:

- **Patients available for further comment/interview if required**
- **Professor Candy McCabe available for further comment/interview if required**

The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people, the trust has expertise in general and complex:

- Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
- Neurological rehabilitation
- Chronic pain management
- Fatigue Management
- www.rnhrd.nhs.uk

About Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer, providing practical, medical, emotional and financial support. Working alongside people affected by cancer, Macmillan works to improve cancer care. More than one in three of us will get cancer. Two million of us are living with it. If you are affected by cancer Macmillan can help.

Questions about cancer? Call Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00 or visit www.macmillan.org.uk.

- <http://www.ncat.nhs.uk/>
- <http://www.christie.nhs.uk>
- <http://www.bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk>
- <http://www.rageuk.org>