

28th September, 2012

Press Release

Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases Annual Members Day 2012

The Mineral Hospital held its 7th annual members day at the pavilion in Bath on Wednesday 26th September.

As a foundation trust the Min has a membership of 4000 led by a council of governors. Members come together once a year to hear about current issues and to express their views about how the organisation is run.

Chairman Peter Franklyn introduced the Annual General Meeting following which Medical Director Dr Bhalla and Dr Jim Hampton from Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group gave a joint presentation on inpatient and community care for rheumatology patients. The discussion addressed how patterns of health services were changing towards more services in the community and how GPs and the Min were working closely together on this agenda for the benefit of patients.

Chief Executive Kirsty Mathews described to members how the Min now intends to join with the RUH into a single organisation once the RUH has been authorised as an NHS Foundation Trust hospital expected in spring 2013. Members were able to put questions to the executive team and to discuss the issues and opportunities that the proposals bring. Ensuring patient quality is central to the plans for change was widely discussed.

Kirsty Mathews said "It is good news for all that a way forward for the Min has now been proposed. The Min is a very small organisation and has been experiencing financial pressures for some time. To remain viable and ensure services can be provided into the future we need to be part of a larger organisation. Joining together with the RUH will provide the financial security of a larger trust and provide a strong basis for the future of sustainable services.

Chief Exec of RUH James Scott said

"Both organisations are now working closely together on a transition programme to agree the best way forward. Our aim is to lay the foundations for an organisation which will continue to hold at its' heart high standards of patient care and clinical excellence".

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

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 significant financial pressures throughout 2011/12 and will continue to do so
- does not enjoy the economies of scale more commonly found in larger Foundation Trusts.