

19<sup>th</sup> September 2013

## **Press Release**

### **RNHRD SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF FIBROMYALGIA**

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust (RNHRD) has joined with other organisations in supporting Fibromyalgia Awareness this September. Bath based hospital, known locally as the 'Min' runs a Fibromyalgia Coping Skills Programme to help people self-manage their condition.

Fibromyalgia, also known as Fibromyalgia Syndrome, describes a collection of symptoms which affect the soft tissues, muscles, tendons and ligaments, resulting in widespread and variable pain throughout the body.

Julie Russell, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist and joint service lead for the Fibromyalgia Service at the RNHRD explains further "As well as the difficulty of the pain itself, the discomfort can lead to poor, unrefreshing sleep which in turn contributes to an ongoing cycle of chronic pain and fatigue, making it hard to carry out even simple, everyday tasks."

Julie continues: "Fibromyalgia can be a difficult condition to diagnose because the symptoms can be similar to other conditions and no two sufferers will have the same experience. "

"Although there is no simple cure for Fibromyalgia, there are ways of managing your symptoms, and effective treatment can make a huge difference."

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Focusing on raising awareness of Fibromyalgia during September offers an opportunity to find out more about the condition, how it can affect you and what you can do to help yourself if you have the condition. Non sufferers can gain an insight into how the condition can affect quality of life. Fibromyalgia is sometimes described as an 'invisible disease' as people can look fine on the outside, but suffer from considerable pain.

Charlotte Cavill who attended a coping skills course at the RNHRD last year says: "The coping skills programme helped me accept that I have a Fibromyalgia and gave me the information that I need to help those around me understand the condition. I have a three year old daughter and work part-time so pacing has helped me to minimise the boom-bust cycle that was making life unbearable."

Charlotte continues: "I started the course very scared and isolated and thanks to the course now feel confident that I am not alone, can manage the symptoms and know what I can do when I have a flare. This course has given me my life back."

It is estimated that Fibromyalgia affects nearly 1 in 20 people worldwide. In England and Wales, there could be up to 1.76 million adults with the condition.<sup>1</sup>

Anyone can develop the condition, it can occur in people of any age although in most cases it develops between 30 and 60 years of age and it affects more women than men.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Fibromyalgia/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

A dedicated Fibromyalgia Coping Skills (FCS) Programme lead by Specialist Rheumatology Therapists and supported by the Rheumatology medical team is provided by the Bath based RNHRD. This is a Fibromyalgia specific group education programme, provided on an outpatient basis.

## **ENDS**

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## **Notes to Editors**

- 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
  - Chronic pain management
  - Fatigue Management (CFS/ME and cancer survivorship fatigue)
  - [www.rnhrd.nhs.uk](http://www.rnhrd.nhs.uk)
- The Fibromyalgia Association UK is a non profit making registered charity which aims to raise awareness of the condition and provide information and support to those with the condition and their families, as well as providing a national helpline and medical information for professionals
- <http://www.fibromyalgia-associationuk.org/>