



News Release

17 February 2020

New fundraising initiative launched by Friends of Dorset County Hospital

A new fundraising initiative at Dorset County Hospital will help provide earlier diagnosis for patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Friends of Dorset County Hospital have pledged to raise £20,000 for a new ultrasound machine for the Rheumatology Department.

The machine will be able to assist in the early diagnosis and treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis, an autoimmune condition where the immune system attacks healthy tissues causing pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints.

Rheumatoid Arthritis affects around 400,000 people aged 16 and over in the UK with the team at DCH seeing around 4,000 patients a year with 160 patients referred every month.

Scans can be used to check for joint inflammation and damage, to diagnose the condition and to check how the condition is developing.

The new ultrasound scan will allow a picture of the patient's joints to be created using high-frequency sound waves.

The new fundraising initiative follows on from the Friends raising £17,000 for an ultrasound machine for the Trust's Respiratory Department last year.

Matron for Specialist Medicine Julie Knight said: "Rheumatoid Arthritis can be difficult to diagnose as the diagnosis is based on a whole package of tests. An ultrasound scan is an important part of this package.

"We do have ultrasound scans in the hospital but none that are readily available to the Rheumatology Department. By having our own dedicated machine we will be able to make treatment decisions more quickly.

"Early diagnosis is very important as the condition can rapidly worsen so early intervention can help to avoid long-term problems.

"We are really grateful to have the support of the Friends and to be chosen for their new fundraising initiative."

Chairman of the Friends Barbara Purnell added: “We saw what a difference our purchase of an ultrasound machine made to the Respiratory Department so when we were approached by the Rheumatology Department for a similar piece of equipment, we were only too delighted to make this our new fundraising initiative.

“We are very excited about this new project and we hope the community will get behind us as before and help us to raise the much-needed funds.”

For more information about the initiative, or to support it, contact the Friends team on 01305 255896, email friends@dchft.nhs.uk or visit www.friendsofdorsetcountyhospital.co.uk

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PHOTO: Matron for Specialist Medicine Julie Knight with Sharon Merritt, Barbara Purnell and Sue Mason from Friends of Dorset County Hospital

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