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PRESS RELEASE

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Revamped playroom will help children with heart and lung conditions at Royal Brompton Hospital

Young patients being treated for serious heart and lung conditions at Royal Brompton Hospital will now benefit from a newly refurbished playroom following a £100,000 makeover.

The playroom on Rose Ward was given a revamp thanks to funding from The Brompton Fountain charity and the Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charity, as well as money raised by staff and donations from parents. The new facility will be used by play specialists on the ward to prepare children for their experiences in hospital and to help with their recovery.

New features include a modern sensory area for young patients, important because sensory play has a crucial role in children's development. It includes a flashing lightbox, infinity tunnel, bubble tube and interactive games. Another section of the playroom is aimed specifically at older children, with a large TV, PlayStation and DVDs designed to make teenagers feel more at home.

A sliding glass door leads to a special 'hub', allowing two children with cystic fibrosis to be in the playroom at the same time, with one in the hub and the other in the main area. Previously only one child with the condition at a time could be in the playroom, because of the risk of cross infection. The new feature allows children with cystic fibrosis to play safely while reducing their feelings of isolation.

Joanne Knowles has a two-year-old son, William, who has received care at Royal Brompton since birth. She said: "The new playroom is absolutely amazing – it's really bright and welcoming and feels twice the size as it did before."

Rabie Al-Aina's four-year-old son Omar is another patient. Mr Al-Aina added: "The playroom has been refurbished really nicely and the colours and decorations are

beautiful. We are due to go home soon but Omar doesn't want to leave – he's very happy playing here.”

Maxine Ovens, play service manager at Royal Brompton, said: “What we've achieved is amazing and we are so thankful for the donations that made the refurbishment possible.

“Having a welcoming, well-equipped playroom is so important for the children staying in the hospital. In addition to keeping children occupied and distracted from their conditions, play relieves anxiety and helps children to cope with their recovery.

“The playroom is a place where the hospital's dedicated play team can ensure that children are fully prepared for their experiences in hospital and help them to understand their illnesses and the importance of their medication in a relaxed, non-clinical environment.

“This is especially vital for many patients treated at Royal Brompton who spend a lot of time in hospital due to the serious nature of their heart and lung conditions. Everyone is very excited to make the most of the playroom's new features.”

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