

Royal Edinburgh Hospital staff launch walkways project



NHS Lothian today (20 November 2013) celebrated the opening of a new project marking out walking routes around the Royal Edinburgh Hospital site.

Patients and staff came together to celebrate the launch of the 'Walkways Project' which aims to encourage patients, staff and visitors to boost their well-being by walking in the hospital grounds.

The collaborative project has involved NHS Lothian staff designing walking routes which accommodate varying levels of mobility and fitness of patients and employees.

The green, blue and red walks take between 15 and 30 minutes and pass through the extensive grounds; including areas of historical interest such as the old curling rink, the Hive and the farm. There are wayward markers along the site, and maps have been erected on the grounds as well as on each ward, along with accessible brochures which point out areas of interest.

Patients drew the original walkways maps and, with support from Artlink and the Volunteer Hub, patients have also been involved in painting the bollards and taking photos on site for the brochure.



Laura Hamilton, Senior Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Lothian, said: "Taking part in regular physical activity has an abundance of health benefits, from the treatment and prevention of a range of illnesses including diabetes, cancer and dementia to reducing levels of anxiety, depression and

stress.

“Activity that raises your heart rate and gets you feeling a bit warmer is the most benefit to health, which also includes boosting self-esteem, getting a better sleep and increasing feelings of overall well-being. A great way to achieve this is a brisk walk on the walkways; and by sitting less and walking more. Starting out walking for 10 minutes at a time to build up to 30 minutes a day is the right step forward to meeting the physical activity recommendations.

“We have really valued working with all of our partners on this project and thanks to go them as well as colleagues and patients who have all contributed to the project’s success. We look forward to staff, patients and visitors experiencing the benefit of using the grounds in a therapeutic way by including a walk in their day to day activities.”

Kevin Lafferty, Health and Recreation Advisor, Forestry Commission Scotland said: “This is a brilliant project which actively encourages more visitors, patients and staff to get some gentle exercise in the surrounding green space and woodland.

“Being more active really can help with improving your health and simply getting out for some fresh air and relaxation can be just the tonic needed. Woodlands and green space are the natural health service.”