

Monday March 10th 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Jimmy Armfield Opens New Haematology Unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital

JIMMY Armfield OBE, ex Blackpool and England football player, and his wife Anne, a trained nurse, officially opened the Haematology Unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital on Friday March 10th 2008.

Jimmy and Anne met with staff and patients and received a tour of the new unit before unveiling a plaque to commemorate its opening.

The refurbished and expanded unit opened in September 2007 following confirmation of the Trust's successful bid to become a tertiary haematology centre. Becoming a tertiary centre means that the hospital now treats patients with cancers of the blood from Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Chairman of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Beverly Lester, said: "We were delighted that Jimmy Armfield agreed to officially open the Haematology Unit.

"The opening of the unit is a tremendous development for the Trust. It offers specialised care in a much more appropriate environment - it is a terrific unit."

The centre now consists of a 20 bedded unit as well as 12 single rooms with en-suite facilities to treat patients with suppressed immunity. It now carries out high dose therapy, stem cell grafting and the intensive treatment of acute leukaemia, not only to local patients but patients from Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Jimmy Armfield, a previous Non-Executive Director of the Trust, has himself undergone chemotherapy and radiotherapy since he was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins lymphoma last year. Jimmy said: "I have witnessed first-hand the services that this unit offers. I could have been treated anywhere in the country, but I chose Blackpool, and I wouldn't have wanted to have gone anywhere else. The care I received was second to none.

"The unit has now moved to much greater accommodation, which I am sure will provide comfort and confidence to patients."

Patient of the Unit Diana Brown, aged 65 from Fleetwood who is being treated for leukaemia, was also at the opening to admire the new facilities. Diana

said: "I think the new Unit is wonderful and the extra side rooms are brilliant. The fantastic care I have already had will only get better."

For further information about this press release, please call Lyndsey Farnworth, Communications Officer, on 01253 306875.



Pic: Jimmy and Anne Armfield (left) unveil the plaque at the new Haematology Unit. Pictured with (l-r) Dr Mac Macheta, Consultant Haematologist, Dr Paul Kelsey, Consultant Haematologist and Beverly Lester, Chairman.