



December 2017 – Edition 3

## **Stakeholder update on the proposal to merge Bedford Hospital and Luton & Dunstable University Hospital**

Good progress has been made to develop the Full Business Case (FBC) in line with new guidance\* published by NHS Improvement (NHSI) on 23 November. This outlines the financial impact of both Trusts carrying on as separate organisations and quantifies the benefits of coming together to form an integrated Foundation Trust in more detail. We are pleased to report that both Trust Boards have unanimously approved the FBC this week. It will now be submitted to NHS Improvement as planned, taking us into the formal approvals stage of the process where it will undergo an intensive review. A public summary of the FBC will be available in January.

To make sure we fully understand the implications of the proposed merger and to provide reassurance within both organisations and to our respective stakeholders, we have been undertaking due diligence. This work has looked at the risks, issues and liabilities involved with the proposed merger in line with NHSI advice and overseen by external advisors PwC and Capsticks. This exercise has been undertaken at both organisations to assure their opposite Boards that they are not entering into a transactional agreement without a full understanding of any existing risks - reputational, clinical, financial, contractual, compliance or operational.

It is very important that our staff and stakeholders are kept up to date on our developing plans and have an opportunity to be involved and share their views.

Since the announcement, we have had ongoing communications and engagement activities to raise awareness about the proposed merger and encourage internal and external stakeholder groups to get involved and give their feedback.

During November we held a number of staff, clinical and stakeholder engagement events which were attended by over 500 people in total.



*\*Support when considering transactions and mergers: Help for NHS providers navigating their way through a transaction such as a merger or acquisition.*

Staff attended briefing sessions led by their respective CEOs to hear about progress and have an opportunity to ask questions. Clinical engagement is crucial in the planning process and three clinical events brought together consultants and managers from both hospitals to consider the many benefits for their teams and patient care and how they might work together differently in the future.

There were also three public information events held for patients, public and other stakeholders in Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire. Many attendees felt reassured by our aim to build on the existing successful partnership between Bedford and the L&D and the commitment to keep core services such as A&E, maternity and paediatrics open on both sites. The main concerns raised by attendees were whether patients would have to travel further, if there were any plans to change services, the financial impact and whether future population growth had been considered.



### Next steps

We expect the NHSI approval process to take between 8 – 12 weeks and continue to progress our implementation planning, aiming for the merger transaction to take place in April 2018 (subject to NHSI approval). On Day 1 there will be one integrated Board to lead the Trust and all staff will be a member of the newly integrated Foundation Trust.

Work to consider the vision and values of the integrated Trust continues as part of our organisational development programme. This includes bringing teams together to understand what currently happens and then to consider where we can share best practice and adopt new ways of working.

A crucial part of the merger is that the newly integrated Trust will be a Foundation Trust and as such will have a membership and Council of Governors that represents the populations that both hospitals serve. At the end of November, we launched a campaign to recruit 2500 new Foundation Trust members from Bedford Borough to ensure that we have the right representation across the area. Once the members have been recruited, Governors can be nominated and an election to appoint 5 new Governors from Bedford will be held. For more information on becoming a FT Governor please email [merger@ldh.nhs.uk](mailto:merger@ldh.nhs.uk) or [click here](#) to sign up.

We will continue to maintain ongoing communications with our staff and stakeholders as we move forward with our plans. Information about the proposed merger can be found on both hospital websites [www.ldh.nhs.uk](http://www.ldh.nhs.uk) and [www.bedfordhospital.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordhospital.nhs.uk)

If you have any questions please email [merger@ldh.nhs.uk](mailto:merger@ldh.nhs.uk) . Otherwise, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support and to wish you and your loved ones a very festive Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best wishes,

**Stephen Conroy**  
Chief Executive, Bedford Hospital

**David Carter**  
Acting Chief Executive, L&D University Hospital

