



BRIEFING – December 2010

Update on proposals to integrate Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust

Trusts endorse vision and rationale as integration plans progress

Plans to integrate the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust (ORH) and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust (NOC) are progressing. It was announced in September that both organisations would explore the option of combining into a newly named organisation to create a comprehensive provider of acute hospital services for Oxfordshire.

The development of the business case for merger is progressing well with both hospital Trust Boards endorsing the vision and rationale for merger at meetings on December 2. The two Boards are expected to approve the full business case early in 2011.

This is a major piece of work in which the benefits to patients, governance and financial issues are addressed. It is believed that the combination of the two Trusts would enhance the ability to achieve Foundation Trust status by 2014 in line with Government requirements.

The proposed integration is based on organisational change rather than any significant change in the provision of services. The business case identifies five main areas in which integration will benefit the populations served by the new Trust:

Patient outcomes and experience – Integration will enable improvements to pathways that currently cross Trust boundaries, identify the best treatment options more quickly and help overcome some of the barriers that exist when organisations are working separately.

Patient safety – An ageing population means that often patients have complex needs which require treatment in a number of service areas. Continuity of care will be easier to deliver in a merged organisation where joint working across service boundaries is the norm.

Education and research – Integration will maximise the opportunity of delivering innovation through translational research with our University partners. Clinical research, that delivers rapid benefits to patients through clinical trials and advances in new treatments, is of major importance.

Specialist services – Both the ORH and the NOC currently offer a range of specialist services that are not widely available in the UK and attract patients from beyond Oxfordshire. The integration offers a potential to grow these services so that more patients can benefit from the expertise Oxford's hospitals have to offer.

Staff development – Integration will enable more opportunities for career development, shared training programmes and a broader range of experience across different specialties. It will ensure Oxford continues to attract the best candidates for clinical posts and support staff retention.

The main purpose of merger is to deliver better patient care. By joining forces, the NOC and ORH will be better placed to improve care pathways and ensure patients receive access to the best treatments available. Both Trusts already have strong research partnerships and integration will strengthen the links between academic research, teaching and training and clinical service delivery.

The current four hospital sites – the John Radcliffe Hospital, the Churchill Hospital, the Horton General Hospital and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre – will retain their individual identities and their own names under the new overarching trust.





The ORH is currently completing a process of restructuring the management of its clinical services and has created six new clinical divisions each led by a senior clinician. The musculoskeletal and rehabilitation services provided by the NOC would naturally fit in as a seventh clinical division within the enlarged Trust.

A key aim is to create a trust that is able to achieve enhanced patient care and also the financial and operational stability which is necessary to achieve Foundation Trust status. The business case identifies the impact of integration on the financial position of both trusts and highlights potential cost savings and opportunities for income generation in the future. Reducing overlap and duplication of support functions and activities will help the merged organisation meet the challenge of continuing to deliver world-class, high quality care as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, in an environment in which resources are increasingly constrained.

The full business case is expected to be approved by both Trust Boards early in 2011. It will then have to follow an approval process, which, it is hoped, will lead to the integration becoming effective from the summer. The main themes have been described above and comments from patients, staff and members of the public are welcomed.

If you have any questions please let us know and we will try and answer them as comprehensively as possible.

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