

Frequently Asked Questions

Following the announcement of the proposal to merge Bedford Hospital and Luton & Dunstable University Hospital, we have collated a list of the most frequently asked questions to help better inform stakeholders. Please see below:

If you have any questions that aren't addressed in this document, please email merger@ldh.nhs.uk

Q. How will the public be involved and communicated with as this proposal develops?

A. It is very important that all of our stakeholders are kept up to date on our plans. There will be ongoing communications through Stakeholder updates, Media Releases and Public Information Events. Both hospital websites have a dedicated page for all merger information, updates and events (www.ldh.nhs.uk and www.bedfordhospital.nhs.uk) and you can email merger@ldh.nhs.uk with any further questions or comments you have.

Q: Will there be a public consultation?

A. We will be engaging with key stakeholders, our patients, the communities we serve and staff about the benefits a merger would bring and asking for them to identify concerns and queries. All feedback will be reported back to the Joint Integration Board which is made up of Board members from both hospitals. However, no formal public or staff consultation is required at this stage because there are no significant changes planned to the provision of clinical services.

Q: Will the hospitals keep their own name?

A. Yes both hospital sites will retain their individual names and identity however the integrated NHS Foundation Trust will have a new name. Both Trust Boards have discussed this and given that this integrated Trust will enhance services for the whole Bedfordshire population, we are considering Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as the new Trust name. We envisage that, as in the case of Addenbrooke's which is officially called Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Bedford Hospital and the L&D will continue to be known and referred to by these names in their local communities. We want to know what you think of the proposed name. Please share your views via this [online survey](#) or visit one of the hospital websites.

Q. Will the new integrated Trust be a Foundation Trust?

A. Yes. The new Trust will be a Foundation Trust and will require a Foundation Trust membership to represent the whole population the Trust serves. It will also have a Council of Governors elected to represent the membership. To find out more about what Foundation Trust status means please visit www.ldh.nhs.uk

Q. How do I become a Foundation Trust Member of the new hospital?

A. We are actively recruiting Foundation Trust members to ensure that we have the right representation across Bedfordshire in preparation for Governor Elections that will take place once the integrated Trust is formed. Foundation Trust membership is free and gives you a chance to shape services, access to very popular medical lectures and the option to stand as a Governor, so we would encourage you to sign up. For more information on becoming a FT Member please [click here](#). To sign up, please [click here](#).

Q. Who will be leading this process?

A. This is a highly scrutinised and challenging process requiring formal approval from our regulators, we have brought in external support, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), to manage the development of the Full Business Case (FBC) which will be submitted to the NHS Improvement Approval Process in December 2017.

Q. What's involved in preparing a Full Business Case (FBC)?

A. The Full Business Case (FBC) will go into much more detail about the proposed merger. It will capture the opportunities and risks for both staff and patients, as well as considering the financial and logistical implications for each team and department. Staff from both hospitals are contributing towards the FBC.

Q: Will each hospital have to stop doing any development / planning work for future improvements until we know what the future looks like?

A. No. Each Trust will continue to implement their existing operational and strategic plans however they will work together to ensure that any developments will also benefit the potential merger. There are significant developments underway in both hospitals such as improvements to IT systems, a new MRI scanner and the development of a new Theatre at Bedford Hospital. These and other projects will continue. As part of the agreement for the merger we are asking NHSI for a significant investment to enable both hospitals to do some much needed capital developments and refurbishments.

Q. Will patient choice be affected?

A. No – patient choice will remain as it is currently.

Q. Is it possible that some services might move to one site?

A. We don't envisage core services moving sites. However, where there are specialist services with relatively small numbers of patients (such as early pregnancy) and there is currently only capacity to provide services Monday to Friday at each site, we are exploring the possibility of extending service provision to seven days by working across both sites. We will be working closely with clinicians and looking for recommendations from the clinical teams.

Q. Is it possible that there will be changes to services after the merger ie. could we change our mind and propose closing A&E?

A. The driver behind the proposed merger is a strategic alliance. As one organisation we will be more resilient and ensure stability. There are no plans to make any significant changes to service provision, however if there was a proposal to change services by moving or closing them after the merger, then this would need to go through the formal legal public consultation process. Being one organisation does not make it any easier to change service provision.