

April 2018 – Edition 6

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

The joint Integration Board, consisting of executive representatives from both Trusts, met in early April to discuss the plans, possible timeframes and priorities for the merger of Bedford Hospital and Luton and Dunstable University Hospital going forward. Over recent weeks, we have been reminded of the strong support that this proposal has – from clinical and non-clinical staff, our patients, the public and local politicians – and acknowledgement that our ambition to merge makes good strategic sense and will benefit patients and staff. This has been really encouraging.

Both Trust Boards have committed to reviewing progress in June this year and agreeing the most likely date for the merger to proceed. It looks like the earliest possible date would be in the autumn but that would be dependent upon us receiving confirmation in early July from NHS Improvement (NHSI) that the capital is available to support our plans. The more likely scenario is that the national funding allocation is not announced until later in the summer and in this case, we would merge at the start of the next financial year (April 2019). This is because we are aware of the impact of undertaking major organisational change during the busy winter period. In both cases integration work will continue and we will use this additional time to further develop our plans and progress key activity. We will keep you updated throughout.

Clinical engagement

We were pleased to see the spirit of collaboration and enthusiasm for working together at a recent clinical leaders' event that was well attended by clinical directors, lead nurses and senior managers from both Trusts. Both organisations acknowledge the importance of having strong leadership across clinical service lines and took the opportunity to share current work and ideas for future collaboration in areas such as endoscopy and audiology, which was well received.

Leadership update

Since our last update there have been some announcements regarding key Trust leadership posts. The L&D Trust Board confirmed the appointment of David Carter as L&D CEO in February, following the departure of Chief Executive Dame Pauline Philip from the L&D (who stepped down to focus on her role as the National Urgent and Emergency Care Director for NHS England). David was managing director since 2011 and has been acting CEO since April 2017, so this appointment provides important continuity of leadership for the L&D.

Stephen Conroy has confirmed he will be staying on as Bedford Hospital Chief Executive until the merger is completed.

On 7 March, Cathy Jones was appointed Deputy Chief Executive at the L&D. Cathy has been acting into the role since April 2017, having held various managerial roles throughout the organisation since 2007. Working alongside Paul Tisi, Medical Director at Bedford Hospital, Cathy is leading on the clinical workstream for the merger and was previously leading the acute clinical review for the STP.

Ruth Harrison has taken up the role of integration director for the merger, leading on the work that PwC has been doing. Ruth joined Bedford Hospital in 2014, responsible for service delivery and transformation projects. She will now be splitting her time between the Bedford and L&D sites, driving forward integration projects to ensure that we will be in the best position possible to provide a smooth transition once plans are finalised.

Liz Lees has been appointed Director of Nursing (DoN) at Luton and Dunstable Hospital. Liz, a former cancer nurse, has a wealth of experience within senior nursing leadership roles and was most recently Acting Director of Nursing at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust. Liz is currently the interim DoN at Bedford Hospital and will be the lead for nursing on the merger Integration Board.

These appointments will help us to finalise the membership of the Board of the merged organisation, which will be known as the Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust¹. The final Director designates will be announced in the coming months and allow a 'shadow Board' to be in place in advance of the merger to continue the work of the Integration Board, ensuring continuity of leadership and that the interests of both Trusts and local residents are represented.

We will continue to keep you updated as work progresses and appreciate your ongoing support. If you have any questions you can email merger@ldh.nhs.uk

Best wishes,

Stephen Conroy

Chief Executive, Bedford Hospital

David Carter

Chief Executive, L&D University Hospital

¹ The new name of Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was unanimously supported by both Trust Boards in February 2018, following engagement with staff, public and stakeholders which showed that this was the preferred option.