

Briefing for Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee**19 November 2013**

<p>Title of Update Merger between The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>Contact Name: Deborah Matthews, Acting Director of Service Development Contact address: The Royal Bournemouth Hospital Email: Deborah.matthews@rbch.nhs.uk Tel: 01202 704284</p>
<p>Proposed merger between Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (PHFT) and The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (RBCHFT)</p> <p>The Competition Commission recently announced its final decision to prohibit the proposed merger of the foundation trusts. The decision is really disappointing given the great efforts that we have made in focusing on the benefits for the population in east Dorset and the support we have received from our commissioners.</p> <p>We began this process for the right reasons and believe merger would have been the best option to ensure we can continue to provide high-quality hospital services to local people. The benefits of the merger, which included increased access to consultant care and new patient facilities, will now be much more difficult to deliver, which is disappointing for both our patients and staff.</p> <p>However, our priority and focus for both foundation trusts remain to provide the very best quality health care for patients. This means working closely with the wider health community, which we are committed to doing in earnest.</p> <p>We recognise that the Competition Commission has a statutory role to perform in the merger of NHS trusts, and specific criteria which it must use to assess benefits, but we believe that the outcome of this process is fundamentally wrong. The assessment of the merger was always weighted to put competition ahead of benefits to patients and we do not believe the NHS is best served in this way.</p> <p>We have held discussions with senior health officials and their teams regarding the merger process. There is recognition nationally that there is a need to change and refine the current process, reflecting wider concerns about the time it has taken and the fact that local plans and decisions to invest</p>	

in services have been prevented due to competition concerns. We do therefore believe that we will see a greater role for Monitor, the regulator for health services, earlier in the merger process for health organisations wishing to take this approach in the future.

Our future

We have worked extremely effectively with Poole Hospital colleagues over the last two years and we will continue to build on this and explore areas where we can work in partnership. However, this will not be to the scale we had hoped.

Partnership working across the Dorset health community will be essential. Longer term we believe that the reshaping of local health services across the whole health care system, led by commissioners, is needed in Dorset to secure the provision of high quality and sustainable services for our local population. This will need to be done with pace and in full engagement with you, our patients and health partners.

In the meantime, for The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, work starts now on developing our clinical strategy, vision and plans for the next three years, with providing quality care at the heart of every decision we make. We will continue to ensure the safety of our patients, a good patient experience and clinical effectiveness. We will be working with staff to achieve this as the need to retain and develop staff and maintain staff morale is crucial during this period. We recognise our responsibilities to both our patients and staff and our commitment to quality will constantly shape everything we do.

We are a high performing Trust. Our patients continually tell us this, through feedback on their experiences, and our staff survey is one of the strongest in the south west. However, we know that improvement is always possible so we want to build on the excellent foundations we have going forward.

We would like to thank the Committee and other health partners for your support over the last two years. We would be happy to share our Clinical Strategy with the Committee at an appropriate time in the future.

Deborah Matthews
Acting Director of Service Development
The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust