

South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group

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Media release



Pictured: Ken Bremner, Chief Executive City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (left) and Steve Williamson, Chief Executive South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust

Move to drive better hospital services for South Tyneside and Sunderland

Healthcare leaders in South Tyneside and Sunderland have taken an important step in further improving the delivery of patient care by agreeing to move to a joint management structure, with one executive and management team accountable for running all hospital and community services across both areas.

It is not a merger of the two organisations as each Board will maintain local accountability and independence and will hold the newly-formed joint executive and management team to account for each individual organisation. Both Trusts will continue to function as statutory NHS Foundation Trusts accountable to their local communities.

The Boards and the Councils of Governors of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust took the decision in the interests of delivering nationally recognised, high quality, cost effective, sustainable healthcare for the people they serve.

Earlier this year, the two Foundation Trusts formed an alliance and set up the South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group to look at jointly providing some clinical services. This latest announcement follows a 'memorandum of understanding' agreed by both organisations in April 2016 which confirmed their commitment to work closely together to ensure local communities across Sunderland and South Tyneside have access to some of the best hospital and community-based care in England.

Over the coming weeks, a high quality executive and management team will be developed drawing on the wide range of expertise and experience in both Trusts, making them well equipped to deliver the rapid transformation of services required over the next few years.



It is anticipated that creating a joint management structure will generate initial savings in excess of £500,000 and, by reducing duplication, it is expected that savings will increase considerably.

As well as significant financial savings through improved cost efficiencies in the way health services are managed, other advantages include:

- More focused leadership which will ensure a consistently high quality and safe service for patients
- Shared experience and learning across the two organisations
- Greater flexibility in managing pressures across the system, with improved resilience of services for local residents by sharing clinical expertise
- Support for the transformation of local services and empowering local people to stay well and be looked after outside of hospital

City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive Ken Bremner said: “We know how important it is to local communities to have access to a wide range of high quality health services, with the best possible health outcomes.

“It is, therefore, our collective ambition to ensure this vision is realised across Sunderland and South Tyneside with equitable access to the highest quality of care, regardless of where you live. It is my commitment to patients and staff alike that this joint executive management team will act, and act only in the very best interests of patient care.”

Steve Williamson, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust’s Chief Executive, added: “Across the NHS in England we are already seeing historical organisational boundaries being replaced with more collaborative ways of working to benefit patient care and provide staff with the best possible support. It is important that our collective joint management team builds on the many positive working practices which exist within both Foundation Trusts and shares this widely, especially for services that require improvements.

“Over the coming months, our organisations will work together to engage local communities and staff to listen to their views about local services and understand areas we need to improve to help inform our priorities for the future.”

Trust Chairs, John Anderson (Sunderland) and Neil Mundy (South Tyneside), said in a joint statement: “Our Trusts have been working well together as part of a Group structure since February. We feel it is now essential, as does our regulator NHS Improvement, that if we are to protect the future sustainability of health services for both our populations, we now move to a joint executive and management team as quickly as possible.”

BACKGROUND

The NHS across England is facing unprecedented pressures to sustain excellent health services.

An ageing population, increasing numbers of people accessing urgent and emergency care services and significant challenges around the recruitment and retention of specialist doctors and nursing staff – not only nationally but right here in the North East – means we must think differently about the way we plan and deliver services in order to create an NHS which is sustainable for the future.



In addition, there is a well-documented financial gap which means nationally the NHS must deliver efficiencies to the tune of £30 billion per year by 2020/21. Locally, it is anticipated there will be 15%-20% funding gap by 2020/21 for total healthcare spend across the whole South Tyneside and Sunderland health system, which will place enormous pressure on hospital and community services.

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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