



Quick catch-up on the proposed merger

The national NHS Five Year Forward View asks Trusts and commissioners to work together more to improve services; a direction which is also strongly supported by the Essex Mental Health Review and the Essex Success Regime.

Last year, NEP and SEPT worked together on specific projects and were successful in a joint bid to provide a new Essex-wide substance misuse service. Options for closer collaboration were discussed at both Trusts' Board meetings in September 2015. It was agreed to explore a potential merger, beginning with assessing whether this would be likely to increase benefits for patients, carers, staff and the wider community. Workshops were held with clinicians and managers from both Trusts. In December 2015, the Boards considered the exploration work and agreed to progress to "actively pursuing" a proposed merger.

An Outline Business Case (OBC) for merger was submitted to the NHS Foundation Trusts' regulator (then called Monitor) in January 2016. A summary of this document is available on both Trusts' websites. Monitor's review did not identify any problems that would stop proposals progressing to the next stage, so staff from both Trusts are now working together on development of a Full Business Case to go to both Trust Boards in November 2016.

NHS Improvement (the new name for Monitor) will review the Full Business Case from December 2016. They will give it a rating. The final decision rests with both Trusts' Councils of Governors, who will be asked to confirm they are happy their Trust Board has properly considered the merger with due diligence and taken action to ensure any risks are properly managed. It is anticipated that this decision would be taken in February/ March 2017. Subject to the outcome of this approvals process, the aim would be for a completely new NHS Foundation Trust to be authorised and operational from April 2017.

Both Trusts are firmly committed to acting only in the best interests of people using our services, their families and carers. This will be the deciding factor in any decisions. In the meantime, it remains 'business as usual' for all SEPT's and NEP's services for the foreseeable future.

What's been happening?

- The first step in a proposed merger is to carry out a risk-checking process known as 'due diligence'. Staff in each Trust have been working closely with their counterparts in the other Trust to share a significant amount of information about their services and to challenge each other, constructively, about the way things are done currently. All the information shared is now being analysed. How well the due diligence has been done – have all the right risks to the proposed new organisation been identified and managed? – is the basis on which our Councils of Governors make the decision whether to go ahead, so it really is a key part of the whole process and very important indeed to get it right.
- Senior clinicians and managers have been working on the service delivery options for the proposed new merged Trust which will, as the two Trusts do now, deliver the full range of mental health and community-based physical healthcare services. We must ensure that the service delivery model is safe and delivering high quality care that meets the expectations of service users. At the same time, we must be financially sustainable and meet the needs of our commissioners. At present the focus is on assessing the similarities and differences between the current services. Over the summer we will move onto identifying the clinical benefits of the proposed merger.
- Senior staff from both Trusts have been working together on ideas for key aspects of the proposed new organisation, including the vision statement, possible new name and other organisational developments. We will be sharing this information for wider views at the SEPT on the Spot meetings. See overleaf.



Do you want to put SEPT on the Spot?

We have a number of SEPT on the Spot meetings coming up in your locality and we would love to see you there. As well as focusing on a topic of interest to people who use our services, at the meetings you will have the opportunity to meet our Chair, Chief Executive and other Directors of the Trust and hear the latest news on our proposed merger with North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (or NEP as it's called for short!) At each meeting we will also be asking for your views on aspects of the proposed merger plans.

All the dates and times and details for your next and nearest SEPT on the Spot meetings are below. So please do come along.

SEPT on the Spot – Upcoming Meetings

16 August 2016

15.00

Beehive Centre, CVS Thurrock, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

Learn more about Dementia

24 August 2016

10:30 – 13:00

St Andrews Church, Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PF

Keeping people out of hospital

31 August 2016

13:30

Freight House, Pullman Suite, Bradley Way, Rochford, SS4 1BU

Safe services – protecting patients and staff

***1 December 2016**

10.30

Latton Bush, Harlow

***5 December 2016**

10.30

The Hub, Southend

***6 December 2016 15.00**

South Essex venue to be confirmed

***8 December 2016**

10.30

St Andrews Church, Kimbolton Road, Bedford, MK40 2PF

***13 December 2016**

14.30

The Hall, Beehive Centre, CVS Thurrock, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

***Topic TBC**