



A proposal to create the UK's first

ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCE CENTRE

This document is intended to aid discussion
with interested parties prior to public consultation





World-class healthcare for our patients through excellence in research, education and training. That's the goal for Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust, St Mary's NHS Trust and Imperial College London.

The partners propose the creation of a UK first (provisionally called an Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC)) which would lead the world in improving human health.

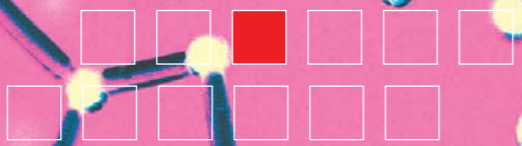
This concept represents a future that has captured the imagination and support of many, including the clinical leaders of both trusts.

The boards came to their conclusion after a detailed analysis investigated the most promising options:

1. Independent futures
2. Co-operation and collaboration between the two trusts
3. A merger of the two trusts to create a single legal entity
4. A merger of the two trusts and greater integration with Imperial College to create an AHSC.



Why change?



Over many years both trusts have established an enviable record on clinical quality, with particular expertise in treating patients with extremely complex health needs. The trusts have some of the very best outcomes and survival rates in the country for conditions such as:

- Heart attacks and heart diseases
- Kidney failure and transplantation
- Cancers, including breast, prostate, stomach, lung and colon
- Viral liver infections and pneumonia

Imperial College London is one of Europe's largest medical research institutions. It has a world-class reputation, confirmed by the Times Higher Educational 2006 World University Rankings, which placed the university fourth in the world for biomedicine and ninth in the world overall.

We wish to continue this outstanding record.

Centres of Excellence

We are increasingly required to harness the innovation and ever-expanding understanding in medicine. We need to ensure that we can both develop, and take advantage of, exciting clinical and technical advancements to provide the local community with the most modern healthcare available. We are failing our patients if we allow new advances, developed in west London, to be used first to help other communities in the UK or the rest of the world.

Rather than the two hospitals competing for patients to try and keep a specialist service open, there needs to be a concentration of expertise in centres of excellence with enough patients being treated by each specialty to ensure the service provides the best quality care.

Staff will benefit in many ways, for example through greater opportunities for development and promotion. The creation of an AHSC and the projected increased funding, research activity, development of new techniques and joint ventures could also mean an increased number of jobs both in the AHSC and the local community.

Patient Needs

There is a new focus on the needs and convenience of patients rather than NHS organisations and professions. More care will be provided in the community, by GPs, community nurses and in clinics closer to people's homes.

For more specialised services there will be more competition by hospitals keen to improve their own efficiency, attract greater numbers of patients and increase income.

Services for patients with common conditions that don't require an array of complex technology will remain local. We need to continue the drive to improve the service and patient experience by creating the best service configuration in an NHS where the income for services has a fixed price.

Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) and patients will be able to communicate with a single provider of services.

Teaching

The AHSC will provide a unique academic environment, fostering learning and the transfer of knowledge on effective means to improve the health of the population.

Research

Britain is already losing its pre-eminent position in clinical research. Other European countries and North America are establishing centres of excellence to meet the competition from Asian countries for limited research funding. The UK Government is restructuring its funding of medical research and development to ensure a more co-ordinated approach. Current funding is being withdrawn and hospitals are being asked to bid for specific grants.

An organisation where clinicians and researchers work side by side to understand the needs of patients means we can concentrate research on providing the latest and most effective treatments for residents of west London and beyond.

The Department of Health has awarded Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) status to the joint application by Hammersmith and St Mary's, in partnership with Imperial College. This is worth £19.5 million funding per annum. This creates a building block on which the ambitious AHSC programme can be built, but will still leave major financial pressures on the partners that we believe are better handled through an AHSC.



The Estate

The estate requires major overhaul. St Mary's and Hammersmith Hospitals Trusts have a great many old buildings designed for 19th and 20th Century hospitals. The trusts are unlikely to be able to generate the level of surplus funds that are needed to finance a major rebuilding programme even if they bid to become Foundation Trusts.

Patient choice is rapidly becoming a reality, with cleanliness and environment being high up patients' agenda.

To provide first-class modern care, new buildings are needed, enabling the use of medical and information technology, access to large numbers of single rooms and more extensive critical care facilities. The creation of an AHSC could enable the partners to source greater capital investment to improve the estate, and the pooling of budgets to increase the speed of change. New buildings will provide a better and safer environment for patients and will be far more economical to run and maintain.

Legislation

Legislation and new ways of working are increasing demands on employers. Workforce issues, such as restricting doctors' working hours, the European Working Time Directive and tougher training standards mean that we need to change traditional working practices and make better use of staff expertise.

A combined workforce will mean more flexibility in providing safe, efficient and responsive care.

Efficiency

We need to become more efficient. Over the past two years the hospital trusts have made huge efficiency savings whilst improving income revenue - making a difference of over £20m (2004/05) and over £30m (2005/06) to the trust accounts. But we now face even greater financial challenges and need to make combined savings of more than £25 million next year and £125 million over the coming five years just to break even.

A bigger organisation will be able to make efficiencies from economies of scale. This does not mean worse services – quite the contrary. Patients cared for on well-constructed plans benefit from timely care and shorter hospital stays.



Patient choice is rapidly becoming a reality. With cleanliness and environment being high up patients' agenda.



Benefits



Everyone will benefit from having a more efficient and effective hospital trust where expensive specialised services have enough patients to enable them to continue; where investment can be made to provide modern, clean and safe facilities; and where academic research meets clinical requirements to provide practical solutions where they are most needed.

The partners believe the AHSC also provides the best opportunity for:

The local community

- care from the world's best doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals
- the most advanced techniques and treatments developed in partnership with world class researchers
- a wide range of well-funded healthcare facilities and specialisms
- a more accessible and seamless service
- a greater focus on continuous improvement, through academic enquiry into current practices
- more modern facilities through improved capital investment

Employees

- greater opportunities for career development
- a more efficient and therefore more financially stable organisation
- an improved training programme
- the best arrangement for job security
- greater understanding between professions, and opportunities to work with the world's leading clinicians and researchers

Health partners

- a single, more integrated, partnership with primary care trusts, voluntary organisations, health commissioners and providers
- a more effective and efficient organisation that can more easily balance its books
- better support for new primary care services

Students

- working with the very best healthcare professionals, in a world-class environment
- a broader range of, and more tailored, courses
- greater exposure to a range of clinical specialisms

The local economy

- the AHSC will be a magnet for investment and would attract companies and new jobs to the area
- the partner organisations are already major international contributors to the development of biosciences and health care. By joining forces the three organisations will boost London and the UK's worldwide reputation



What is happening now?

The partners are developing the business plan and discussing the outline proposals with staff and other interested groups to ensure our plans include the best ideas from the whole health community.

The proposed timetable is:

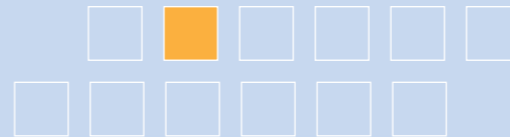
WINTER 2006 / 07	Discussion of proposals with interested people Partner Boards to reflect on discussions
SPRING / EARLY SUMMER	Public consultation
SUMMER	Results of consultation to partner Boards
SUMMER	Proposal to Secretary of State
AUTUMN 2007	New AHSC



If you would like to know more

If you have views on the Academic Health Science Centre then write to us at AHSC, 2nd Floor, Education Centre, Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Rd, London, W6 8RF or phone 0208 237 2018 or email AHSCprogrammeoffice@hhnt.nhs.uk

We will be advertising the consultation in local newspapers, on our websites and with promotional literature. If you would like to know more - or would like to register to receive a consultation pack, then please contact us as shown above, or log onto our website www.ahsc.org.uk



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