

# **ASHFORD & ST PETERS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST AND ROYAL SURREY COUNTY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST MERGER INQUIRY**

## **Summary of individual responses to the issues statement**

### **Background**

1. As part of its investigation into the proposed merger, on 2 April 2015 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published an [issues statement](#) on its webpages. The issues statement identified the key questions the inquiry is examining and gave members of the public the opportunity to make comments on the proposed merger.
2. The CMA gave an initial deadline of 16 April 2015 for responses, extending this to 30 April. The CMA received 47 emails and letters of response.
3. Four responses expressed that the NHS should not be subject to competition law and a further four expressed that the inquiry was incorrectly concentrating on cost and financial information whereas they believed the focus should be on the effect on quality issues and patient benefits.
4. The majority of the responses were from members of the public with nine declaring that they were a member or governor of the hospital trusts. Two responses were from an individual doctor and consultant of the hospital trusts. The clinical neuroscience teams at both trusts also responded.
5. Eleven responses (including three members/governors and a doctor) noted that there was either a lack of detail about the future provision of services or where they would be located or a lack of financial detail.
6. Nine individual responses (including one member/governor and a consultant), as well as the clinical neuroscience teams at both hospital trusts, expressly supported the merger. Express opposition was raised in 18 responses (including three members/governors and a doctor) and the remaining 18 (including five members/governors and a doctor) either provided general comments or caveated their opinion that it depended on what services were delivered from what locations post-merger.

## **Summary – support**

7. There were six positive responses that the merged trust would benefit from its larger size and the expected financial benefits in terms of stability and ability to invest.
8. In addition, the response of the clinical neuroscience teams identified the population size of the merged trust as being of the right size to sustain a sub-regional neuroscience unit, provide stability and expand service.
9. Some emails identified that a merged trust would benefit in attracting and retaining staff (three responses), the range, quality and choice of services would improve (five responses) and that local services would improve (three responses).
10. Three responses expressed that a reduction in the range of services and specialisation at the separate locations would be a benefit.

## **Summary – oppose**

11. Twenty-two responses expressed concern over the ability to physically access services, highlighting how journey times would be affected if a service was transferred from one hospital to another. Traffic congestion and weaknesses in the local infrastructure and of public transport were highlighted as issues.
12. Responses also commented that the merged trust would not benefit in attracting and retaining staff (two responses), the range, quality and choice of services would reduce (nine responses, including four members/governors) and that local services would suffer (three responses).

## **General issues**

13. Three members/governors were concerned that there was insufficient time to properly consider the issues statement before the closing date for responses – the closing date was therefore extended from 16 April 2015 to 30 April 2015.
14. Three respondents identified that there had been a lack of engagement or consultation with users/the public by the hospitals regarding public needs.