

The 'Hinchingbrooke Next Steps' Project – Information for Applicants

Hinchingbrooke is part of an innovative process being led by the NHS East of England Strategic Projects Team to find a new partner to run the hospital under an operating franchise which will commence in June 2011, which is called the 'Hinchingbrooke Next Steps' project. For more on 'what is an operating franchise?' see below. The main points about this that you should know are:

- The organisation that wins the franchise – the franchisee – will be required to continue to deliver the services that are currently provided at the hospital, and there are no plans for this to change.
- Hinchingbrooke will remain an NHS hospital, its buildings and assets will remain in the NHS.
- Hinchingbrooke staff will continue to be employed by the NHS, retaining their NHS terms and conditions, under the 'Retention of Employment' model.

The following facts about the project were published in the May edition of the project newsletter 'Next Steps News', which addresses the key issues and concerns raised by the public:

Top ten facts about Hinchingbrooke Next Steps

1. Hinchingbrooke is not being closed; there were no plans to close it in 2006, and there are no plans to close it now.
2. Hinchingbrooke is not being privatised. What is being offered is a franchise to operate the hospital.
3. Patients will continue to receive NHS services, free at the point of delivery.
4. Staff will continue to be employed by the NHS, retaining their NHS terms and conditions.
5. Hinchingbrooke's buildings and assets will remain within the NHS, as will any benefit derived from them.
6. The public is being involved in the process. There are three waves of public engagement, spanning the entire Hinchingbrooke Next Steps project, and numerous ways in which people can feed in their ideas and practical suggestions.
7. A&E and Maternity are not earmarked for closure.
8. Treatment for NHS patients is the priority. This is about NHS patients.
9. The successful franchisee will not be making a profit at the expense of patient care. They will be subject to the same clinical and operational scrutiny as every NHS hospital.
10. The franchisee will operate as if it is the Trust. All accountabilities and governance will remain as they are now, without change.

Hinchingbrooke Next Steps Project timeline (updated 28 June 2010)

Quick Timeline Refresher	Date
Phase 4 – ITPD2 (invitation to participate in dialogue 2)	
ITPD2 issued	12/04/10
ITPD2 submission deadline	26/06/10
ITPD2 evaluation	27/07/10 – w/c 27/09/10
Confirmation of bidders recommended to proceed to ITT	w/c 27/09/10
Phase 5 – ITT (invitation to tender)	
ITT issued	04/10/10
ITT submission deadline	18/10/10
ITT evaluation	18/10/10 – 04/11/10
Preferred franchisee appointed	w/c 15/11/10
Phase 6 – Approvals (subject to approvals & public involvement process)	
Full business case/ approvals	30/11/10 – 31/01/11
Contract award & signature	01/02/11
Service commencement	01/06/11
Staff and public involvement	Ongoing

What is an operating franchise?

An operating franchise can be summarised as the grant of a right to provide all the services currently being provided by an NHS Trust (including clinical services) using some or all of the assets and employees. Identifying an organisation to operate the franchise involves a competitive process, open to both the NHS and the Independent Sector, to ensure that the best deal is identified for patients and the taxpayer – delivering safe and sustainable services to the people of Huntingdonshire. It will also ensure that both staff and assets are protected.

The organisation that wins the franchise, the franchisee, is required to continue to deliver the full range of services that are currently being provided for as long as they are commissioned by NHS Cambridgeshire. The franchisee will also need to offer flexibility to accommodate evolving needs and requirements. Services provided by other organisations on the Hinchingbrooke site, under contract to NHS Cambridgeshire, such as Cambridgeshire Community Services, are not included in the franchise. Any changes in the scope of services will be subject to separate public consultation.

More information

For more information on the project, please contact the East of England Strategic Project team on www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects or call freephone 0800 923 3001

A copy of the latest Next Steps News newsletter published by the Strategic Project team is also available on the Hinchingbrooke Trust website home page, www.hinchingbrooke.nhs.uk, and copies are also kept on the NHS jobs website.