



Press release
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Hinchingbrooke hospital and Circle start their historic partnership

Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust and Circle today start their historic partnership; it is the first time ever that an independent provider will operate an entire NHS hospital.

The ground-breaking contract was signed in November 2011 following a robust, 13 month procurement managed by NHS Midlands and East (the strategic health authority for the region) and an extensive approval period by the Department of Health. Circle was selected as preferred partner following a process which included 19 initial potential bidders from the public and independent sectors.

Since the announcement of preferred partner, staff from Circle and Hinchingbrooke have been working closely to plan for the hospital's future, and today they published their plan for transformation. The plan is the first of its kind and everyone who works in the hospital was invited to take part in its creation. Over 1200 of the 1700 strong workforce attended one of 17 four hour 'partnership sessions', where they decided that their objective would be to become one of the top ten district general hospitals in the country by excelling in four areas: patient safety, patient experience, staff engagement and value for money.

Circle Chief Executive, Ali Parsa, said: "Today, an ambitious programme will be unveiled, to turn a hospital, once labelled as 'a basket case', into one of the top ten in the country. The plan came together in unprecedented sessions with 1200 NHS staff, who gathered to share their vision for their hospital's transformation.

"Like John Lewis, Circle are employee co-owned, and have a track record of creating best in class hospitals by devolving power to the clinicians and staff who are closest to patients. We are confident that we can do it again in Hinchingbrooke".

Dr Stephen Dunn, Director of Policy and Strategy at NHS Midlands and East, said:

“With the challenges the NHS now faces, new solutions are needed so services can be provided how and where patients want them, but at a cost which taxpayers can afford. Today heralds just that, a new chapter in creativity and partnership working.

“Without this franchise, the future of Hinchingbrooke could have been uncertain. We are not privatising, we are bringing in new management. The hospital can plan a future where its staff and assets remain within the NHS, energised by the innovation which its new partner will bring. NHS Midlands and East and its ground-breaking Strategic Projects Team are proud to have steered this opportunity, and we look forward to Hinchingbrooke going from strength to strength”.

Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust’s Chief Executive, Nigel Beverley, said: “Today marks the start of a new phase for Hinchingbrooke, its staff and its patients. Since the announcement of the contract signature, Circle representatives have met with the vast majority of our staff, whose hopes and ideas for the future of this hospital have been listened to and incorporated into our planning process.

“Patients can be assured that the quality of their care remains our top priority and we can now look forward to building a bright future for Hinchingbrooke.”

Dr Sushil Jathanna, Chief Executive of NHS Cambridgeshire and NHS Peterborough, said: "NHS Cambridgeshire looks forward to working with Circle as they take over the Hinchingbrooke franchise this week. This marks a fresh start for the hospital and NHS Cambridgeshire will continue to make quality a priority for the services it commissions from the hospital, now and in the future."

Notes to editors:

- A press conference is being held at the Partnership Centre at Hinchingbrooke hospital (previously the Hawthorn Ward) at 8:30am, where more information about the transformation plan will be available.
- Circle operate under a unique partnership model, where everyone from the consultants to the cleaners are co-owners in the business. They have a track record of turning round NHS services through clinical leadership and devolved decision-making, delivering over 20% productivity gains as well as 99% patient

satisfaction in their first year operating day-surgery hospitals in Nottingham and Burton. Circle's founding ethos was to be above all else the agents of their patients. Their social mission is to re-engineer the delivery of healthcare to make it better, simpler and smarter value for patients.

- Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust, NHS Cambridgeshire and NHS Midlands and East have been working together to find a new partner to manage Huntingdonshire's Hinchingsbrooke hospital. The clinical and non-clinical services at Hinchingsbrooke hospital - other than where identified below - will be provided, from 1 February 2012, by the Trust under the management of Circle, via an innovative franchise agreement. This arrangement ensures that a full range of high quality acute hospital services - including accident and emergency and maternity services - will continue to be provided for local people at Hinchingsbrooke, as agreed at the end of the 2007 public consultation, for as long as commissioners request it.
- Under the contract staff and assets will remain within the NHS, and patients will continue to receive NHS services.
- Hinchingsbrooke hospital, which opened in 1983, is a modern purpose-built building, with 247 general and acute beds providing quality up-to-date healthcare, with an additional 23 beds within the maternity unit, nine beds in critical care and 24 specifically for day cases, alongside 23 cabins located in the Treatment Centre, the £22million unit which opened in November 2005. More than for 161,000 people in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding areas rely on the hospital for a range of services.
- NHS Cambridgeshire commissions services at Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust.
- Services on the Hinchingsbrooke hospital site provided by other organisations, such as Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust, through contractual arrangements with NHS Cambridgeshire, are unaffected by this franchise.
- The Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps project has been managed by NHS Midlands and East's Strategic Projects Team (SPT) led by Andrew MacPherson, Director of

Customer Service Strategy and Strategic Projects. This team of specialists works in partnership to develop and deliver positive change for NHS services. Working closely with the healthcare marketplace and the stakeholders, it develops, supports and delivers transactions for the NHS that drive up the quality of patient experience, safety and care, clinical excellence, public service and value for money. The team received support from PricewaterhouseCooper and Wragge & Co. Since 2009, the SPT has managed nearly £2bn of innovative contracts and change.

- Further information about the Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps project can be found at www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects or by calling 0800 923 3001.

For more information please contact:

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