

PRESS RELEASE

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PUBLICATION OF ACQUISITION PROPOSALS

Overviews of the proposals submitted by the three NHS Foundation Trusts (FTs) hoping to take over North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust have been published today.

The proposals have been published as over 90 staff, patients and members of the community attend a stakeholder event to play a vital role in the acquisition of North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust.

The three interested FTs are:

- The University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- 'A Partnership with Newcastle in Cumbria' (an alliance between Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust)

They have produced summary documents that outline their reasons for seeking to acquire the North Cumbria trust and their proposals for the new organisation.

The summaries are being made publicly available from today so that patients, north Cumbrian residents, GPs, hospital staff, and other interested people can get an outline of the three interested FT's proposals.

Caroline Griffiths, Director of Acquisition at North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "The summaries have been produced by the Foundation Trusts to give local people a flavour of their visions for healthcare in north Cumbria."

The stakeholder event has been organised by the Trust to involve and engage hospital clinical and non-clinical staff, unions and staff-side representatives, GPs and commissioners, patients and groups associated with healthcare. It is being held today in Penrith.

Margaret Nelson, a patient panel member representing West Cumbria, said: “We were really pleased to be invited and to be given the opportunity to take part in this event today and to be given the opportunity to ask any questions we had of the three interested Foundation Trusts.”

Alongside hearing presentations from the three FTs, the audience will also be able to ask questions on their outline proposals. Following this event, they will formally deliver their feedback to the Trust Board.

Tony Halsall, Chief Executive of the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We welcome the opportunity to meet with local representatives, receive their feedback and discuss further the future health needs of Cumbria.”

Jim Mackey, Chief Executive of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We welcome the opportunity to be part of this event and to engage with many key stakeholders in north Cumbria.”

Stephen Dalton, Chief Executive of Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust representing “A partnership in with Newcastle in Cumbria’ said: “We are pleased to take part today and look forward to working with a wide range of stakeholders”

The Trust Board of North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust decided in February 2011 that although services are performing extremely well clinically and the Trust has delivered over £33 million of efficiencies in the last three years, it would need to join with an existing NHS FT.

This is to ensure that the Trust’s two hospitals – the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle and Whitehaven’s West Cumberland Hospital remain clinically sustainable and financially viable in the future. Its decision was made in the interests of patient care in north Cumbria.

The interested FTs haven been asked to provide financial and non-financial information and this is being assessed as part of Phase 1 of the acquisition process.

The Trust Board expects to make a decision on 8 November on those organisations which will be invited to the second stage of the process which will conclude with the selection of a preferred partner by February 2012. The decision will take into consideration feedback from today’s stakeholder event.

Chief Executive of North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, Dr Neil Goodwin, said: “This meeting represents the approach we are taking of conducting an open, fair and transparent process and we felt it was important to release the overviews of the three interested FTs to keep everyone informed.

“The Trust is undertaking a very detailed evaluation of the interested FTs and this stakeholder event also enables us to hear and understand the views of our key stakeholders.”

ENDS

For any further information, please contact Rhia Whytock, Communications Officer, for North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, on 01228 814344 or 07825974114.

- 1. North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust is the managing Trust of the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven and the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle.**
- 2. North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS is committed to the NHS Constitution.**