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Dear Partner

Update on the merger of ²gether and Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trusts

It has been some months since we provided you with a written update on our work to bring Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust and ²gether NHS Foundation Trust together.

Merger Business Case

Over the past few months, we have continued to work with our regulator, NHS Improvement (NHSI), on our proposals to integrate community physical, mental health and learning disability services in Gloucestershire. We submitted our strategic case to NHSI in November and members of our Board have been formally interviewed on the detail within it. NHSI has been very supportive of our plans and we await their formal feedback with interest. In the meantime, we continue to prepare our full business case with a target date for our formal merger of summer 2019. We know, however, that the transformation of our services, which is at the heart of why we are bringing the Trusts together, is likely to take many months and years.

Combined HQ and Shadow Board

One immediate change we are now making is to co-locate many of our corporate services. This will allow our corporate teams to work more effectively and efficiently side by side in support of our clinical services as we work towards our formal merger. This means that, as of December 5, the ²gether Executive Team has moved from Rikenel, in Gloucester City Centre, to Edward Jenner Court (EJC), in Brockworth. EJC is now the new registered Headquarters of ²gether.

In the meantime, we are in the process of recruiting to our Shadow Board. The Shadow Board will oversee the merger (in conjunction with the two current Boards) and then become the full Board when the merger is complete.

Joint Chair: Ingrid Barker Joint Chief Executive: Paul Roberts

This brings us on to sharing the news that Professor Jane Melton and Dr Mike Roberts have made significant personal decisions about their own futures which have implications for these executive appointments.

Prof. Jane Melton, Director of Engagement and Integration, 2gether NHSFT

Jane's planned date of retirement from the organisation will fall within a few months of the merger date. With this in mind and after discussion with her family, Jane has decided that she will not be putting herself forward for the executive director selection process for the new organisation. Instead she will do all that she can to support the new Board in the initial months of our new organisation. I am fully supportive of this decision which I know was made after a great deal of thought.

Jane said: "I am really proud to be part of the services that we deliver in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and I feel fortunate to work amongst colleagues who are motivated to deliver outstanding care. As we approach the merger and beyond, we will want the great work that we do for and with service users and carers to continue to thrive. Going forward, engagement, communication and integration with our colleagues at Gloucestershire Care Services is of key importance to take us forward."

"I remain completely committed to my support of the merger, passionate about the delivery of best patient experience and dedicated to ensure that people who use our services are involved in shaping the future. In addition, I continue to support the development of research and evaluation and I am excited about the leadership contribution that Allied Health Professionals and Clinical Psychologists make to recovery, rehabilitation and new ways of working alongside other health and care colleagues."

Jane has a huge contribution to make in the lead up to the new organisation and in its early months, particularly in the leadership and integration of AHPs across the two organisations. We are currently in the process of agreeing the specific responsibilities post the merger transaction and as soon as this information is available it will be shared with you.

Dr. Mike Roberts, Medical Director, Gloucestershire Care Services NHST

Similarly, following a great deal of thought and discussion with his family, Mike has decided for personal reasons to retire from GCS as Medical Director at the end of January 2019. Although Mike is stepping down from GCS he will be making an increased leadership contribution to his GP practice, Rosebank, in Gloucester, over the next few years. Mike has been at the forefront of primary care in Gloucestershire for many years and will continue to be so from within his practice.

Mike said: "I would like to reassure colleagues that I am resigning for personal reasons and without any negative feelings about the proposed merger which I fully support. I will remain fully committed to the Trust until I finish at the end of January and will help in any way I can to hand over the reins to my successor."

We are hoping to appoint to the Medical Director post for the Shadow Board and the new organisation in January after which we can agree cover arrangements following Mike's retirement.

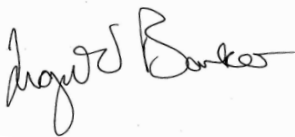
Jane and Mike are distinguished servants of local healthcare and have significant roles to play in the future but I fully respect their personal decisions.

Finally, we are also consulting colleagues from both Trusts and ²gether's public members on what our new organisation should be called. We will be in touch with you again very shortly to seek your views!

We hope you will agree that this is a very exciting time for our Trusts and also our wider health community. The benefits of bringing physical and mental health services together are becoming more and more evident. Our focus is firmly on providing better care for people in our communities, as well as addressing the health inequalities experienced by many of the people we already support and will support in the years ahead.

We will be very happy to hear from you if you have anything you would like to discuss. Please do feel free to contact us at any time.

With best wishes,



Ingrid Barker
Joint Chair



Paul Roberts
Joint Chief Executive