

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Four bidders are shortlisted to take over the management of Bedfordshire and Luton Mental Health and Social Care NHS Partnership Trust**

Four bidders have been successfully shortlisted in the current bidding process for the management of Bedfordshire and Luton Mental Health and Social Care Partnership NHS Trust (BLPT).

The Trust is making history by becoming the first NHS Trust to put itself up for merger with an established NHS organisation. This will entail a detailed process that will see the continued development of top quality local mental health, learning disability and social care services by a successful and ambitious NHS organisation, which will also bring the benefits of Foundation Trust status to the local community.

Expressions of interest were received from 21 NHS organisations around the country; each of whose bids were judged against stringent criteria to ensure the quality of the bid and the services they wish to provide to the people of Bedfordshire and Luton.

The successful NHS organisations who have qualified to tender are:

- Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
- Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

Stephen Dunn, Director of Strategy at NHS East of England said:

“This process is a first for the NHS. It shows that in the east of England the NHS is prepared to try new approaches to ensure that the quality of services provided to local people are of the highest possible order.

“The quality of the proposals made by those who initially expressed an interest, and especially for those who have got through the first stage, was very high and we are pleased that whoever ends up running the services in Bedfordshire and Luton will have patients and staff front and centre in their proposals.

“We want this work to be done as soon as possible, currently expected to complete in November 2009, so that local people and staff can start to move forward together with a secure service.”

Alison Davis, BLPT Chair, said:

“We are delighted that such high performing NHS organisations are keen to work with us in bringing all the benefits of Foundation Trust status to the people of Bedfordshire and Luton. We are looking forward to a bright future!”

### **Notes for editors**

1. BLPT provides mental health, learning disability, substance misuse and social care for the 600,000 residents of Bedfordshire and Luton. For more information on the trust please visit <http://www.blpt.nhs.uk/>
2. BLPT was given a "good" rating for both its Quality of Services and Use of Resources by the Healthcare Commission in 2008/09.
3. BLPT's Board has put itself up for merger with an established NHS organisation to help develop services and bring the benefits of NHS Foundation Trust status to the local community.

4. NHS Foundation Trusts have greater freedoms to manage their own affairs and improve services. They have unique governance arrangements and are accountable to local people, who can become members and governors. Each NHS Foundation Trust has a duty to consult and involve a board of governors (comprising patients, staff, and members of the public and partner organisations) in the strategic planning of the organisation. They are set free from central government control and are no longer performance managed by strategic health authorities. As self standing, self-governing organisations, NHS Foundation Trusts are free to determine their own future. They have new financial freedoms and can raise capital from both the public and private sectors within borrowing limits determined by projected cash flows and therefore based on affordability. They can retain financial surpluses to invest in the delivery of new NHS services. They are overseen by Monitor.
5. The invitation to bid was open to suitably qualified NHS organisations. It was not open to the private sector.
6. The current BLPT Chair and Non-Executive Directors will carry on helping to run the day-to-day operation of the Trust while the process is taking place and will remain at the Trust until the handover to a suitable partner is completed.
7. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) will be published on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July with responses being received by 24<sup>th</sup> August. These will then be assessed by a broad panel of stakeholders led by NHS East of England and include all BLPT, local commissioners, service users and staff representatives

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