

PRESS RELEASE

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Six potential partners identified to operate Hinchingsbrooke hospital

Exciting innovation looks a step closer as six organisations are shortlisted to operate the franchise of Cambridgeshire's Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust. Hinchingsbrooke is making history as the first Trust for which both NHS and Independent Sector providers have been invited to apply for such a unique operating franchise in the NHS¹.

A new partner is being sought to ensure the continuity of services at the hospital, in a way which is financially viable and sustainable over the long term. The successful partner will take over the operation of the hospital, with staff and assets remaining within the NHS.

The successful organisations which have qualified are:

- Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Care UK (Partnership Health Group Limited)
- Circle Health
- Interhealth Canada (UK) Ltd
- Ramsay Health Care UK
- Serco Health

¹ This unique process proposes that the clinical and non-clinical services at Hinchingsbrooke hospital - other than where identified below - will be provided via an operating franchise agreement with an experienced healthcare provider from the NHS or Independent Sectors. This proposal will ensure 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 public consultation process on Hinchingsbrooke in 2007. Services on the Hinchingsbrooke hospital site provided by other organisations, such as Cambridgeshire Community Services through contractual arrangements with NHS Cambridgeshire, are unaffected by this franchise offer.

As part of the process, each of the organisations shortlisted has had to demonstrate that they have appropriate experience of offering acute services, including emergency and maternity care. Experience could be either in their own right or through a formal partnership arrangement with a high quality provider from the NHS or Independent Sector.

This significant development in the franchise process is being mirrored with the launch of a second public involvement opportunity, outlined in the latest edition of 'Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps News'. The newsletter maps out the tender process, answers the latest questions raised by the public and explains what happens next.

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

"We want to make sure that the best partner is found for Hinchingsbrooke hospital, and that's why we cast our nets wide to pull in the best possible expertise. This process is a first for the NHS, and we're very pleased with the high level and quality of interest received so far".

Mark Millar, Chief Executive at Hinchingsbrooke hospital, said:

"Patients and staff should be reassured by the level of scrutiny that potential partners are being subjected to. It is imperative that the right partner is found as patients deserve consistency and the very best services."

Maureen Donnelly, Chair of NHS Cambridgeshire, said:

"As the main commissioner of services at Hinchingsbrooke hospital, NHS Cambridgeshire is carefully examining the bids to ensure patients will get the right services that are good value for money for the NHS and for the taxpayer".

All six qualifying organisations will now be invited to participate in a first stage of competitive dialogue; the results of which are expected to be known by February 2010.

Notes for editors

- Eleven organisations from England and abroad submitted a Pre Qualifying Questionnaire (PQQ) by 16 November 2009, giving written reassurance of their eligibility and credentials. Each of these questionnaires was judged against stringent criteria, and six have passed on to the next stage - the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (ITPD). This is a two stage process where shortlisted organisations are individually invited to discuss possible solutions to the management of Hinchingsbrooke. The formal Invitation to Tender (ITT) will subsequently be published on 12 July 2010 with a response deadline of 26 July. Tenders will be assessed by a broad panel of stakeholders led by NHS East of England's Strategic Projects Team and includes Hinchingsbrooke hospital, local commissioners, patient and staff representatives.
- Hinchingsbrooke hospital, which opened in 1983, is modern and purpose-built, with 369 beds providing quality up-to-date healthcare - including accident and emergency and maternity services - for approximately 161,000 people in Huntingdon and the surrounding areas.
- The Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps project is being managed by NHS East of England's Strategic Projects Team led by Andrew MacPherson, Director of Strategic Projects. This team of experts works in partnership to develop and deliver positive change for NHS services in the East of England. Working closely with the healthcare marketplace and the stakeholders, it develops, supports and delivers transactions that drive up the quality of patient experience, safety and care, clinical excellence, public service and value for money. Further information about the Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps project and Next Steps News can be found at www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects or by calling freephone 0800 923 3001.

For more information please contact the NHS East of England Press Office:

Telephone 01223 597545

Email pressoffice@eoe.nhs.uk

Pager 07699 727 918

Website www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects