

16 September 2015

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Issued on behalf of Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

CMA gives final clearance to proposed hospital merger

Earlier today, September 16 2015, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) issued their final clearance for the proposed merger between Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Following an in-depth investigation and the publication of their provisional clearance last month, the CMA has now formally concluded that the proposed merger, if completed, will not give rise to a substantial lessening of competition for patients and means the Trusts are now able to move forward to the next stage. This represents the CMA's final decision on the proposed merger plans, with the full report available at <https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/ashford-st-peter-s-nhs-foundation-trust-royal-surrey-county-nhs-foundation-trust>.

Chief Executive of Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals, Suzanne Rankin comments: "Naturally we are pleased to receive the CMA's final report, which confirms their final position. We are particularly pleased that, following a really detailed assessment, the CMA has given us an unconditional clearance, with no suggested remedies or actions. This is an extremely positive position to be in and recognises both the benefits the proposed merger would bring to patients and the commitment to high quality care shown by the staff of our two organisations."

The next stage in the process will be for both Boards to consider the full business case and detailed financial plans for the proposed merger and to make their decision on the next step forward. Subject to their approval the process will then include an assessment by Monitor, the health sector regulator, and at a later stage, final approvals from Boards and Councils of Governors.

Nick Moberly, Chief Executive of the Royal Surrey County Hospital, adds: "Today's announcement, published ahead of the CMA's final deadline of 7th October, marks an important milestone in our planning and is a very positive step forward. Subject to approval by both Boards later in the autumn, we will then embark on a wide engagement campaign to ensure people understand what these proposals mean for both patients and staff, and to hear their views."

Subject to full regulatory, Board and Governor approvals, the earliest start date for the proposed new organisation would be Summer 2016.

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For more information please call the Press Office (ASPH) on 01932 722163 or (RSCH) on 01483 408337.

Notes to Editors:

1. The CMA's role is to examine the impact that a proposed merger could have on patient choice and the quality of healthcare services provided.
2. More information about the CMA and their statutory role can be found at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority.
3. More information on the role of Monitor, the health sector regulator can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/monitor.