

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Intranet

SubCo Board decision

Trust Board decision

Following months of detailed work to determine the desirability and feasibility of establishing a subsidiary company (known as SubCo), the Board of Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHNHSFT) met yesterday (Wednesday 28 February) to consider these plans.

The Board has approved the plans to establish a wholly owned subsidiary company (SubCo) effective from 1st April 2018. The company will employ around 675 support staff from estates and facilities, sterile services and materials management functions.

The Board was clear that it could only approve the proposal if the evidence pointed to long term benefits for staff and patients, which it resolved was the case. The Board concludes that the new organisation will deliver a wide range of benefits and will address many of the challenges it is facing, through the focus that will come from establishing a subsidiary company whose primary purpose is to deliver truly excellent support services to NHS patients and staff. The proposal also demonstrated how the model will deliver better value for money to the Trust thereby supporting its aim to deliver higher quality services at lower cost.

A key characteristic of this subsidiary company is that it will continue to serve the NHS and patients at the Trust's hospitals. This new way of working will allow the new organisation concentrate on delivering valuable support services to our hospitals that are more innovative and responsive to the staff and patients who they support, resulting in a workforce that even more engaged and satisfied.

In reaching its decision the Trust Board took into account the views of staff who were consulted with extensively as part of the process; the questions and concerns raised by staff during this period have significantly shaped the final proposal.

We have recognised that for those affected this has been an anxious time. These staff told us that they place huge value on being part of the NHS and are concerned that this move ends this important connection. We have been able to reassure them that this new organisation will be wholly owned by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust and staff will continue support and work alongside all of their current NHS colleagues, delivering or supporting care to NHS patients. Very importantly, they will retain their current terms and conditions, including their NHS pension and access to other benefits NHS staff enjoy.

Staff Sessions

Executive-led sessions for staff are being held across both sites today (Thursday 1 March). These sessions will provide further information on next steps for those staff who will be transferring and provide reassurance to the wider organisation that from day one, this is very much business as usual but the start of a journey towards even better support service. Staff are welcome to attend.

Date	Time	Location
Thursday 1st March	8am - 9am	REC: Lecture Hall
Thursday 1st March	11:30am - 12:30pm	REC: F9
Thursday 1st March	8am - 9am	SEC: Lecture Hall
Thursday 1st March	1.30pm – 2.30pm	SEC: Lecture Hall

Myth busting

We are concerned about the impact on staff as a result of misinformation that has emerged across both sites from UNISON. We understand that staff are anxious about some of the proposals being considered, which is only natural, so we thought it would be useful to summarise answers (see below) to some of the misinformation that is being circulated.

Will my terms and conditions of employment (Ts&Cs) remain the same?

Yes, and we have pledged that this will be for the duration of your contract either with us or with the new SubCo. We have assured you that this will not be eroded over time as can sometimes be the case with TUPE transfers.

Will my salary remain the same?

Yes, your pay will remain the same, as this is part of your Ts&Cs.

Will I take my pension with me?

Yes, your NHS pension will transfer with you to the new company, as this is part of your Ts&Cs.

Will my holiday entitlement remain as it is currently?

Yes, your holiday entitlement is part of your Ts&Cs, so will remain the same.

The documents talk about being part of the 'NHS Family'. What does this mean; technically, am I still part of the NHS?

You are still part of the NHS family as the new Subsidiary Company is wholly owned by GHNHSFT so there are no other shareholders, private or otherwise. A key characteristic of subsidiary company is that it will continue to serve the NHS and patients. Staff will continue to work alongside their front line colleagues, to deliver high quality care.

You can still access our [full Q&A sheet](#) and our consultation page.

In the media

You may have seen stories in the media about our proposals to establish a SubCo. Our most recent response is [detailed here](#)

Staff Consultation

Since we launched the [consultation](#) on 4th December we have seen more than 70% of staff across a number of departments. The consultation is now closed. The sessions were both positive and well-attended. These meetings were scheduled to ensure all staff groups had a dedicated meeting time. Running alongside the staff consultation were HR clinics/surgeries - these are also now closed. The full consultation programme that was set out in the table below. Any members of staff who have been unable to make the scheduled meetings but would like to learn more are being encouraged speak to your manager or email Ghn-tr.subcoandme-hr@nhs.net for more information.

We have been gathering all the questions asked at these sessions and answering them and have provided the following [Q&A document](#). We have rounded up the themes that emerged in the consultation in the section below.

Many of the questions link to the future identity of SubCo and that of its employees. In particular many of you have expressed a preference to retain links with the NHS. With this in mind we want to explore this further and are planning a number of sessions across both sites over the coming weeks (see table: Brand identity/new name below). The purpose of these sessions is to understand better from you some of the themes that matter to you in the name of any new organisation. We would like to warmly welcome you to these sessions.

There has also been some scepticism that the decision to proceed with SubCo is still a matter of Board debate and not simply a foregone conclusion. We want to remind staff that Board have reserved the right to make the final decision at the end of February 2018 and this hasn't changed. It is important the Board hears from staff and representatives during the consultation period to enable it to make an informed decision on the best way forward.

While work continues to develop, design and create SubCo, the Board has not yet reached a final decision on whether to proceed with the plan or not. To this point it has been convinced of the merits that such a model would bring which is why work is progressing.

In terms of steps to create SubCo you will recall the Trust's commitment to ensure that terms such as NHS pension are protected in SubCo. To achieve this there are a number of practical/technical measures that must be taken which includes registering a name for the organisation at Companies House. This has been done. We are now working with staff to help us devise a new brand identity/name for the organisation and we would like to warmly welcome all staff to the sessions set out in the table below (brand identity/new name).

If you have any queries, issues or concerns please contact 0300 422 5360 (HR Service Centre), email Ghn-tr.subcoandme-hr@nhs.net or speak with your line manager.

Staff groups affected are: Estates, control centre (EFD admin), medical engineering, catering, domestics (GRH only), monitoring, linen, porters, post room, security, switch board and helpdesk, transport, waste collection, sustainability, materials management, receipts dispatch and sterile services.

HR surgeries

In addition to the planned consultation meetings over December and January, [HR surgeries](#) were also available to staff. These have now closed.

Consultation session Themes

The sessions held over December, January and February have been positive and the sort of questions being asked by staff often relate to one of the following

- **NHS identity:** Staff really value their NHS identity. This is the single most persistent theme at all meetings. We have received lots of questions about what it means to be part of the NHS family and whether they will retain their NHS uniforms, ID badges, payslips. This detail is being worked through by the workforce and governance workstream.
- **Staff benefits:** Staff really value their NHS benefits. We have been able to cover most questions re travel, parking, nurseries in the meetings but further clarification will be provided around benefits such as car insurance, mobile phone, blue light card and other discounts available to NHS staff. This is being picked up by the workforce workstream.
- **TUPE and the Trust commitment to protecting AFC T&Cs:** Staff have asked lots of questions in relation to this commitment and how robust it is. They have generally been reassured by our confirmation of the Board commitment and the fact that this is clearly stated in the Consultation document and would be in any letter of transfer.
- **SubCo contract:** The length of the SubCo contract with the Trust and concerns about the long term future, specifically whether SubCo would be 'sold off' to another provider at any point in the future. These concerns have been issued and the length of SubCo contract will be a matter for the Board to agree upon next year. Contracts can be for up to 25 years.
- **SubCo trading arrangements/relationship with the Trust:** Staff have been interested in how this will work and about the impact on relationships. Staff have stated that they are used to working in a 'helpful' way with their Trust colleagues and are concerned that these well established relationships and ways of working may be compromised in a more commercial climate. We have allayed concerns that this would be so and the benefit of the commercial relationship will be a consistent approach to service delivery.
- **Transfer date:** Staff have asked about the anticipated transfer date and the reasons for it being the 5th March. We have explained that the Trust have selected this date to try to realise benefits as quickly as possible.

Overview: programme timeline

Key stages	Dates
Formal Consultation Period	4 th December – 5 th February
Consultation launch meetings/events	4 th December – 20 th December
HR clinics/surgeries	18 th December – 24 th January
Review number of staff who have attended consultation meetings/HR clinics weekly	

	21 st December – 25 th January
Assessment of Consultation period/issues/risk/alternative proposals – review if any action required i.e. extension of Consultation period	By the 30 th January
Consultation ends	5 th February
Formal Consultation Review	6-12 th February
Board Seminar – present Consultation review	20 th February
Council of Governors – present Consultation review	21 st February
February Board Decision	TBC
Agree Transfer date/Implementation plan – subject to Board approval	Anticipated date - 5 th March 2018

Brand identity/new name

All Staff

(Estates and Facilities, Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD), Materials Management and Receipt & Distribution)

Date	Time	Location
Monday 29th January 2018	1.30pm – 2.30pm	SEC: Lecture Hall
Tuesday 30th January 2018	9.30am – 10.30am	REC Lecture Hall
Monday 5th February 2018	1.15pm – 1.45pm	REC: G1
Monday 5th February 2018	2.30pm – 3.30pm	SEC: Lecture Hall
Tuesday 13th February 2018	1.30pm – 2.30pm	SEC: Lecture Hall
Wednesday 14th February 2018	10.15am – 11.15am	REC: G1

Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD)

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 30 th January 2018	11am – 12noon	GRH: CSSD staff room
Wednesday 31 st January 2018	12noon – 1pm	GRH: R&D stores meeting room

Materials Management and Receipt & Distribution

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 6th February 2018	9am – 10am	CGH: R&D stores meeting room
Tuesday 6th February 2018	12noon – 1pm	GRH: R&D stores meeting room

Online Survey

We want to know what's important to you in the new name of SubCo. Please complete this [very short online survey](#) to have your views.

More Information

If you have any additional questions that haven't already been covered in the [staff Q&As](#), please do email ghn-tr.subcoandme-hr@nhs.net and we will respond to you.