

# Securing the long term future of Queen Victoria Hospital



## About this booklet

This booklet sets out the key challenges for Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and how a merger with other hospitals could help us to secure our future and do even better for our patients and our staff.

# Who we are

QVH is England's **leading hospital for breast reconstructions** for patients who have had cancer, using the patient's own tissue not implants

We are the **fourth largest** head and neck cancer and orthognathic (corrective jaw surgery) centre in the UK

QVH has the **largest maxillofacial prosthetics laboratory** in Europe

Our sleep disorder centre is the **largest in Southern England** outside central London





Queen Victoria Hospital is a specialist NHS hospital providing life-changing reconstructive surgery, burns care and rehabilitation services for people who have been injured or disfigured through accidents or disease.

Our **world-leading clinical teams** provide specialist surgery and non-surgical treatment for people across the south east of England and beyond. We specialise in conditions of the hands and eyes, head and neck cancer and skin cancer, reconstructive breast surgery, maxillofacial surgery and prosthetics, sleep disorder.

In addition, the people of East Grinstead and the surrounding area benefit from our expert clinicians treating more common conditions in our areas of specialism. We also provide a **minor injuries unit** and **therapies services**.

We are a **centre of excellence**, with a proud heritage and an international reputation for pioneering new and innovative techniques and treatments.

National surveys show that Queen Victoria Hospital is consistently rated by patients amongst the top hospitals in the country for quality of care. In 2019, Care Quality Commission hospital inspectors rated Queen Victoria Hospital as '**Good**' with '**Outstanding**' care.

Queen Victoria Hospital is an **outward looking** organisation. We participate in national and international conferences to learn and to share expertise, and we work in strong partnerships across Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

We employ over **1000 skilled and committed staff**, dedicated to helping Queen Victoria Hospital provide the very best care for our patients, and we are the largest employer in the local area.

In our areas of specialist expertise we are a major player.

We treat about

87,000

patients a year on a budget of about

£71 million



# Why are we considering a possible merger with other hospitals?



We think **Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals (BSUH)** and **Western Sussex Hospitals** are the right partners for us to work with to continue to develop our world class clinical services and outstanding patient care, recognising that might eventually mean that we also join BSUH and Western in a single new hospital trust.

BSUH runs hospitals in Brighton and Haywards Heath. Western Sussex hospitals are in Chichester and Worthing.

**In the process of working closely together through the pandemic, BSUH and Western have agreed that they can see very real benefits in merging to form a single new organisation.**

Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH) is an exceptional hospital. We are the second smallest trust in England but our reputation stretches around the world. That is the result of the high quality services, innovation and partnership working at the core of our clinical work.

Care Quality Commission inspectors noted that staff were **highly motivated and inspired** to offer care that was exceptionally kind and promoted people's dignity; and that relationships between patients and staff were strong, caring, respectful and supportive. At QVH we work hard to promote and maintain this standard of care and our staff are rightly proud of the way they **genuinely go above and beyond for patients**.

Our clinical outcomes are excellent and our reputation helps us to attract the best clinical staff and deliver the very best care for our patients.

Our specialist focus, the extensive geography from which our patients come and our position as **one of the country's smallest trusts** also pose challenges for us.

We are considering a possible merger with BSUH and Western Sussex Hospitals because **we believe it will help us** to secure our future and do even better for our patients and our staff. We want to maintain the very best clinical outcomes while making sure we can run resilient patient-facing and back office services; ensuring our specialist services are backed up by the full range of support services, and optimising the use of NHS resources.



We already work closely with Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust to support the delivery of our specialised services, including a number of joint medical posts. Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is rated 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. We are working with these hospital trusts to look at whether formalising our partnership through a merger would benefit our staff, our patients and the wider NHS.

This document describes **the reasons why we think change is needed** and how a merger could address some of the challenges that we face.

The conversations about what a merger might look like for QVH are underway and we will carefully work through the potential benefits, opportunities and risks associated with this. At this stage no decision has been taken, but we are talking to our staff and stakeholders about the possibility of a merger.





# The services we provide

## Plastic surgery – repairing and reconstructing missing or damaged tissue and skin

Our plastic surgery team is one of the largest in the country. Our surgeons work with our specialist nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and psychological therapists to rebuild people's lives.

This is a vital NHS service to help people following illness or trauma, not to be confused with aesthetic or cosmetic procedures, which are not provided by the NHS or this hospital.

### We specialise in:

- Reconstructive breast surgery
- Burns
- Facial paralysis
- Hand surgery and trauma
- Reconstructive plastic surgery
- Skin cancer
- Plastic surgery for major trauma centre



## Head, neck, eyes, dental

QVH is the Kent and Sussex surgical centre for head and neck cancer and is recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons as a training centre for head and neck surgical fellows.

Our maxillofacial surgery department is one of the busiest in the country providing planned and emergency surgery. We have a regional dental training hub on our site following recent investment from Health Education England.

We also have the largest maxillofacial and general prosthetics laboratory in Europe supporting orthodontists and maxillofacial and plastic surgeons.

The QVH eye unit is a specialist centre for complex corneal problems and oculoplastics. We have one of just four eye banks in the country, using donated corneas for sight saving surgery.

### We specialise in:

- Skin cancer care and surgery
- Corneoplastics and ophthalmology
- Cataract surgery
- Glaucoma services
- Specialist cornea services
- Oculoplastic surgery
- Dry eye service
- Head and neck oncology
- Maxillofacial prosthetics
- Maxillofacial surgery
- Orthodontics
- Oral surgery and oral medicine
- Oral and maxillofacial trauma

## Sleep Disorder Centre



Our core work comprises adults with sleep disordered breathing at night where we treat patients successfully with continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) and non-invasive ventilation. We also treat movement disorders in sleep.

## Therapies



Our therapies department provides specialist services to support our surgeons and general therapy services for the local community. We have therapists who specialise in the areas of hand therapy, burns and head and neck cancer.

## Diagnostics



This includes MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanning; CT (computer tomography) scanning; Cone Beam CT scanning; general and dental X-rays; a specialised salivary gland service which includes stone removal and ductoplasty; musculoskeletal joint injection under ultrasound; barium examinations of the intestinal tract; video fluoroscopy and ultrasound scanning with colour Doppler (not maternity).

## Paediatrics



Across all our services we also treat children, and our paediatric inpatient services are the highest scoring in the country in the national survey of children and young people.

## Other expert teams



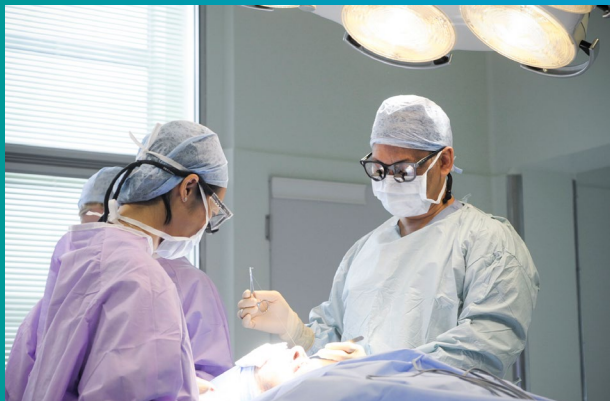
The services described above are supported by a range of other expert teams such as anaesthetics, medical photography and the specialist staff producing pressure garments and surgical appliances.

We carry out work on our main site in East Grinstead and at **12 other hospital sites** across Kent, Surrey and Sussex with the main sites being Medway Hospital and Darent Valley Hospital.



# The challenges we face

We face three key challenges all of which are related to our size as one of the smallest NHS hospital trusts.





## Challenge 1

# Reliance on key individuals



Our size means that in a number of areas we have just one person who is responsible for a role in the organisation. This provides us with challenges to cover periods of work pressure, annual leave, sickness and gaps between members of staff leaving the trust and new recruits coming in.

### Key facts

QVH is an attractive place to work, our staff survey results are very good and we are able to attract the very best clinical staff.

**92%**

of our staff would  
**recommend QVH  
to a friend**  
or relative needing  
treatment



**88%**

agreed that **care  
of patients**  
is the organisation's  
**top priority**

**72%**

would recommend  
QVH as a place  
**to work**



(Source: 2019 national staff survey)

In areas of national workforce shortage, such as specialist diagnostics and theatres, staff recruitment can be a challenge at QVH as it is nationally across the NHS.

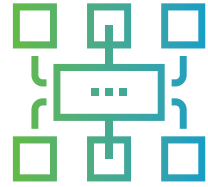
### Addressing the challenge

Working as part of a new larger organisation could give key individual staff the back up of a wider team, working with colleagues across partner hospitals. It could also provide more opportunities for staff who want to progress in their careers, and gain experience of a broader range of services. We could attract staff from other hospitals, who would benefit from the experience of working at QVH on a rotation basis. There could be benefits for education and training from working more closely with Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals, a teaching hospital trust.



## Challenge 2

# Synergies between services



For some services, particularly those treating very unwell patients, it is important that a wider range of other clinical services are available swiftly if needed. As a small specialist hospital, QVH has high quality, safe services but does not have the full range of clinical services that would be found in a large teaching or general hospital. In planning for the future, we need to consider what services benefit from co-location and how to ensure we meet national clinical quality standards for services.

### Key facts

#### Burns

We are contracted to provide care for burns inpatients by NHS England specialised commissioning. **We provide an excellent service** but we do not meet the National Burns Care Standards specification and since 2013 we have been working with an agreement about the level of burns we can treat to ensure the highest possible level of care is provided for these inpatients.

In 2019 we took the decision that children who are so badly burned that they need to stay overnight in hospital should receive their inpatient care elsewhere so that they have access to paediatric intensive care on site if needed. This was a clinically-led decision; only the larger burns need inpatient care and children can deteriorate very fast. As an **interim measure** these children are now treated in London or Chelmsford whilst a permanent solution is found.

We are currently looking at the future of both adult and children's burns services with NHS England specialised commissioning. One of the options we are considering is whether in the longer-term people who need to stay overnight in hospital for burns treatment should be treated in the **major trauma centre** in Brighton.

#### Other services

We provide a range of services at our hospital and on other hospital sites to patients across Kent, Surrey and Sussex. These services have developed over time and are available to patients in some parts of the southeast and not to others. **This is an opportunity** to think about what are the right services for QVH to focus on and where should we be providing them.

### Addressing the challenge

We are working with the other Sussex hospitals on a Sussex Clinical Strategy, which will help us be clear which services should be on each hospital site. We will keep our Kent patients central to our thinking throughout this process too. QVH could support other hospitals with rapid diagnostics such as CT and MRI scanning. We already have a number of joint consultant appointments with other provider organisations across Kent, Surrey and Sussex; a merger could support our services on site and provide more opportunities for our specialised work.





## Challenge 3

# Getting value for money



The care we currently provide is outstanding with excellent clinical outcomes. We want to work to protect and maintain that.

As a **stand-alone organisation** we must meet the same requirements for standards and reporting as a much larger organisation. This leads us to having a disproportionate level of overhead costs for the income we receive for the services we provide.

Historically we have met our financial targets but in recent times this **has become more challenging**. Given the small size of the organisation, fluctuations in the money we receive for services provided (tariff), workforce costs and a change in number and type of patients we see, can disproportionately affect our ability to meet our financial plans.



### Key facts

In 2018/19 we reported a deficit of £4m, and we have reported **a deficit of £9.2m** for 2019/20. That means we spent more money providing services than we received in income. In 2018/19 this was the result of several factors including workforce challenges meaning we had to pay higher costs for temporary staff from agencies and the cost of additional operating theatre sessions to treat patients more swiftly. In 2019/20 pensions tax has meant some of our most senior staff are not doing their usual extra clinical sessions and some significant changes in tariffs have also affected our income.

Our deficits are covered by NHS loans, but **long term strategic decisions** have to be made with our NHS partners to deliver a financially sustainable future.

These decisions will involve Specialised Commissioners and will cover: providing more certainty about demand for our services, ensuring capacity is fully aligned and optimised, and having contracts that adequately cover the cost of provision and share risks fairly.

### Addressing the challenge

Being part of a new larger organisation could help with our long term financial sustainability. We are already working hard to make sure we are efficient, for example running virtual clinics online so patients do not have to travel. We are working to make sure our clinics and operating theatres are fully used and that we have contracts with our commissioners that cover costs and share financial risks fairly. We could work together to make greater use of technology, address the workforce issues described earlier, and take a strategic approach to which services are best provided on which hospital site.



# Next steps

We have been discussing these challenges amongst local NHS and social care organisations and with our staff and governors for some time.

As we have been thinking about the future of QVH over recent years **we have listened** to what our staff, governors, partner organisations, local communities and patient groups would like to see happen. This includes making sure that any changes:



- **maintain and build** on our excellent record for patient experience, clinical outcomes and safety;
- **support us to recruit and retain staff**, providing first class training, career and personal development opportunities;
- **continue to deliver** world class research and innovation;
- **help us to improve** our efficiency to benefit patients and make best use of assets such as our operating theatres;
- **secure the future** of the hospital in East Grinstead providing services such as the minor injuries unit for local people;
- **are aligned with our values** and meet the needs of our patients.



## Our future

**Being part of a new organisation with Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals (BSUH) and Western Sussex Hospitals, could help us** to continue to develop our world class clinical services and outstanding patient care.

There is a great deal of detailed work to be done on what that would look like, but we believe that QVH could be stronger in partnership with BSUH and Western Sussex Hospitals, recognising that might eventually mean that we join BSUH and Western in a single new hospital trust.

We see the possibility of joining BSUH and Western Sussex Hospitals **as an opportunity** to work with our partner organisations to develop the future for Queen Victoria Hospital, making sure we continue providing services for our patients at the highest possible standard of care.

In the future, working with these other hospitals could also **help us to make changes** to services for the benefit of patients. We would seek the views of the people who use those services and other stakeholders before making any decisions.

**No service changes are planned at this stage.**





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