

# Our Integration: FAQs

## Version 2: May 2012

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust (The Ridgeway Partnership) are integrating to create a single NHS organisation. We believe that this will make things better for service users and also make us stronger and more secure.

Although it will be some months before we are legally one organisation, we are already working closely with each other at many levels and with the Strategic Health Authority. By doing this we will be in a very good position to start working as an integrated organisation once the legal process has been completed.

We hope to integrate towards the end of 2012.

### Why are we integrating?

The Government wants all NHS health and social care providers to be Foundation Trusts. For Ridgeway, the best solution was to join with an established Foundation Trust.

In 2011, Ridgeway asked Trusts who were interested to submit their plans for a future partnership, with the intention of choosing the most appropriate Trust to bring Ridgeway services into its organisation.

After careful consideration of the plans, Southern Health was chosen as the most suitable Foundation Trust to adopt Ridgeway services, and it was announced as the 'preferred bidder' in March 2012. Southern Health clearly showed that it put service users at the heart of what it does, and had the right culture that was a close match to that of Ridgeway.

### What are the benefits of integration?

Through combining our learning disability and social care services, and pooling our resources and expertise, we hope to realise the following benefits:

- More choice and involvement for service users and carers
- More holistic and joined-up care
- More opportunities for staff
- Closer working with our partners
- A more secure future



Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust (The Ridgeway Partnership) are integrating their services. This process is being supported by NHS South of England.

#### Find out more:

[www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/ridgeway](http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/ridgeway)  
[www.ridgeway.nhs.uk/our-future](http://www.ridgeway.nhs.uk/our-future)

#### Get in touch:

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## **How will Ridgeway services change and what will structures look like?**

We want to quickly agree how structures in the new organisation will look. We understand that staff need to know this.

We do not plan to make changes to how service users are looked after, or the people who look after them, other than where we would want to improve them.

All Ridgeway staff will have the right to transfer into the new organisation. This will happen under a process known as 'Transfer of Undertaking, Protection of Employment regulations' (TUPE).

## **Now the decision has been made, what is stopping us just getting on with it and merging now?**

There are many legal hurdles that we have to go through to ensure that everything is correct and in place. But this gives us time to plan and get it right for when it happens.

## **How will Southern Health taking on Ridgeway's services impact on carers and people who use services?**

Service Users and their carers should not see a difference; they will receive the same services as they are currently receiving. Any changes that we make in the future will be to improve the quality or efficiency of our services.

## **Ridgeway has spent a lot of time developing quality services – will these be retained?**

Quality is very important to Southern Health and we constantly strive to ensure this is maintained by being very self-critical and carrying out regular reviews, such as mock Care Quality Commission inspections. We are also investing heavily in staff development and technology. We ensure we do this whilst maintaining a healthy balance sheet.

## **How are you involving people across the Ridgeway geography?**

We are aware that Ridgeway's services are spread over a wide area and this brings big communication challenges.

Ridgeway already runs a service user and carer group and we want to build on the great work that Ridgeway has been doing to involve local people. We also recognise that we need to provide even more ways for people to get involved and we would really like to hear your ideas as to what would work best for you.

## **What are your intentions regarding governors, constituencies?**

With the increased size of the Trust, new governors will be required. We will need to go through an election process once the transaction is complete to ensure we have additional governors who live locally and are able to represent people use services locally. We are delighted that there is such an active membership at Ridgeway, amongst whom some will stand for election. All Ridgeway members will be transferred to Southern Health at the end of the transaction.

## **What does the Southern Health budget look like, and how does it compare to Ridgeway?**

Overall, Southern Health has 8000 staff and an annual budget of around £320 million.

Within this:

- £8.5 million is to provide LD Health services
- £30 million is to provide Social Care services

In Ridgeway £20 million is available for LD services and £20 million for Social Care services.

In Southern Health, our LD health services budgets are broken down into £6 million for community, including teams and intensive support, and £2.5 million specialised services (including in-patients). When integrated with Ridgeway, we will have a total of around £80 million to provide LD and Social care services – which is fantastic and will help make a real difference for the people we serve.

## **How will the integrated organisation face the economic and competitive challenges facing the NHS?**

Before we decided to bid for Ridgeway, we built a comprehensive model. We have identified significant economies of scale, with social care and rationalisation of premises. As a Foundation Trust we have more economic autonomy and have built a health surplus in the last year, but we still had to convince Monitor that our model was achievable.

Although Healthcare money per head has reduced over the years, in reviewing our services, especially in partnership working, we have taken action to make us much more competitive and are winning business. We achieved savings by looking at terms and conditions in Social Care; by introducing a flat rate, which is slightly more than the Agenda for Change rate, we were able to make significant savings. Only new staff are put on these rates, but all staff were given the option and some decided to make the change as it suited them better and it has not had any effect on staff recruitment and retention. We have also almost wiped out use of agency staff, making further significant savings.

## **What would you like the integrated organisation to look like in a two years time?**

More than what our services look like, we would like to think about what things will be like for people with learning disabilities in the future. In two years time we only want to be involved when people really need us because hopefully other types of services in the community will be supporting people with a Learning Disability. We want to build relationships with other organisations and create a seamless system of support and care for people which never acts as an obstacle to them. So as well as providing world class learning disability services, we want to enable others to do the same.

## **Will there be any job losses?**

We do not plan on any job losses for front line staff.

Bringing together our corporate teams will most likely lead to some duplication which could result in a small number of job losses. For example, in one organisation we will not require two executive teams.

We are currently reviewing the impact of the Ridgeway acquisition on corporate functions and the need for these structures to change in the new integrated organisation. We are in the process of identifying workloads so that when we enter the consultation period with staff we can be clear about the shape of the proposals for the new structures.

Of course, in all cases our aim will be to minimise the number redundancies and to redeploy staff wherever possible. We will also be sharing our plans and consulting with staff on any changes that will affect them.

### **What will happen to the Ridgeway identity?**

We haven't yet reached a decision about how the Ridgeway name and brand will be used. It is possible that the Ridgeway brand may be retained in some way, but these issues will be discussed over the coming months. We are happy to hear your views about this.

### **Where will our funding come from in the new organisation?**

Ridgeway services will be funded exactly as they have been – by commissioners in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Swindon and Wiltshire. Southern Health already works with personalised budgets for social care clients and we aim to do more of this once integrated. We believe that working together will mean working cost-effectively but where we have identified savings, these are not from job losses which would impact front line care.

### **What will happen to Ridgeway's members?**

We hope that staff and service users / carers will want to become members of Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust. Membership costs nothing and does not require you to carry out any duties, but it enables you to stand as a Governor, nominate a Governor, or vote for a Governor who can represent your wishes and hold the Trust accountable.

### **How will you involve me in this process?**

We aim to maintain the excellent work that Ridgeway has been doing to involve people with an interest in Ridgeway services, because we know it has been very helpful and successful so far.

As a Foundation Trust, Southern Health is committed to including staff, service users, families and carers in the work we do and we'd like to hear what families care about, and value in the services they receive.

We will be holding more events over the coming months, and you can get in touch with us at any time to share your views or ask us questions.

### **What happens next?**

When one NHS organisation acquires another, there are a series of approvals needed before they can join together as one – these will take a few months.

We will consult with staff about transferring to Southern Health via TUPE. This process will take place during the summer. We will also consult with staff about future structures.

We will consult with service users, families and stakeholders about how services will be run in the future and to hear their views and opinions. We will include the unions in our discussions and make sure that our plans are clearly understood.

We will continue to host events for staff, service users, carers and our stakeholders throughout the integration period.

### **Will we be having a party to celebrate our successful integration?**

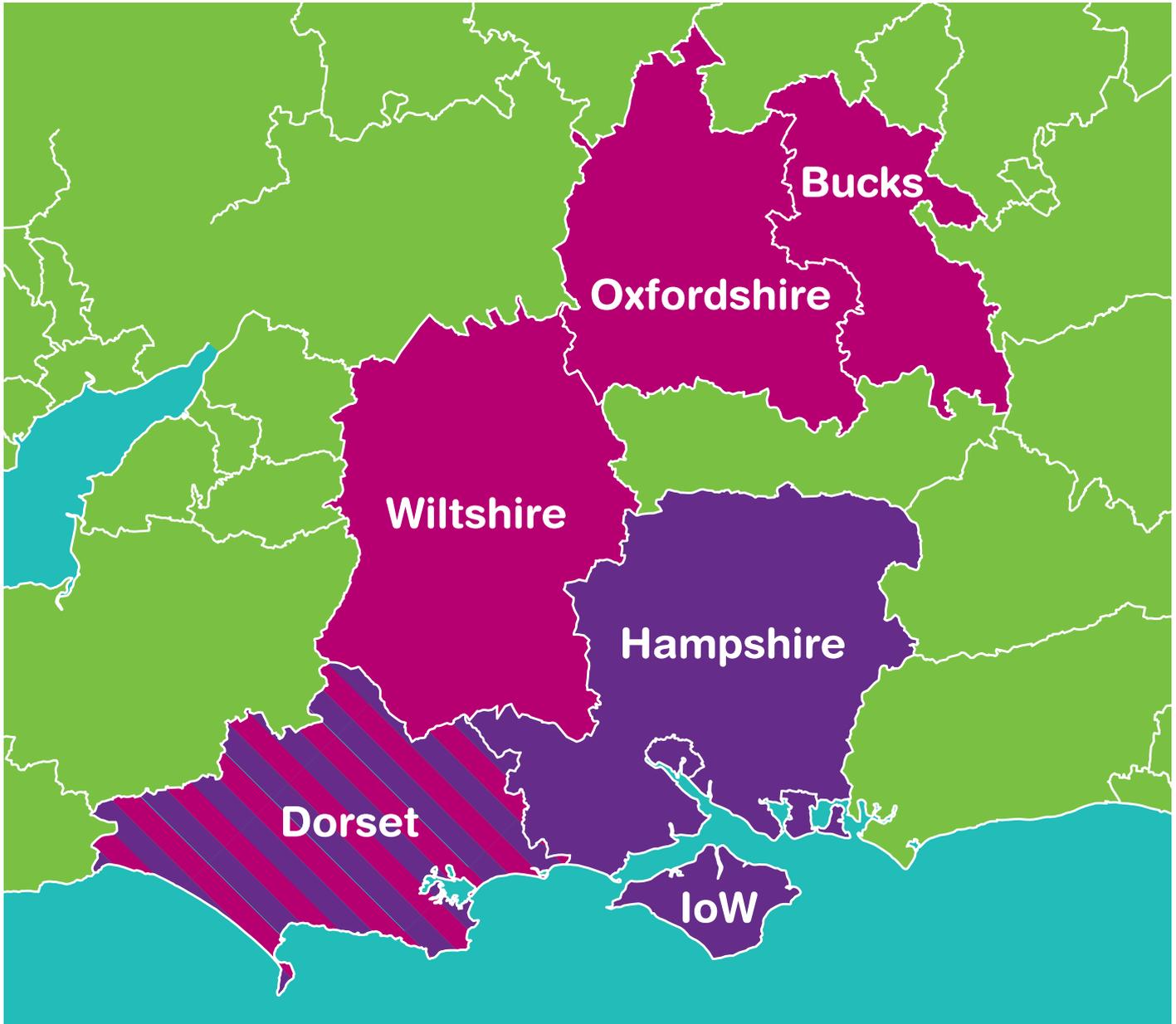
We are really excited about marking the occasion and thanking the people who use services, their families and carers, staff and others who have been involved and helped us to join together. We have a lot of work to do before then, but we will definitely be having some kind of celebration once we are one organisation. Watch this space!

**These FAQs will be regularly updated as questions are asked over the coming months. Be sure to check the integration webpages / intranet pages for the latest version, and do get in touch if you would like to ask a question yourself.**

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The combined area that our services will cover:



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