

Media Release

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Patients set to benefit from new proposals around NHS community services in Liverpool and Sefton

Patients across Liverpool and Sefton will benefit from continued NHS provision of community services in new proposals, announced today.

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust are the preferred providers of Liverpool Community Health (LCH) NHS Trust services from April 2017, NHS Improvement has announced.

Under the proposed change, Bridgewater will run the Trust's Liverpool services as the contract holder in partnership with Liverpool City Council and Liverpool General Practice Provider Organisation, and Mersey Care, in partnership with 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, would run its Sefton services. Bridgewater will also run the community dental contracts currently covered by LCH subject to final agreement.

NHS Improvement will now undertake detailed financial and regulatory checks on both Trust's plans before confirming the new arrangements before April next year.

Today's announcement follows LCH's decision in January 2015 to halt plans to become a Foundation Trust and instead focus on hiring extra nurses and providing better out-of-hospital.

In March (2016), LCH published an independent Quality, Safety and Management Assurance Review which showed that the way the Trust went about its bid to become a standalone Foundation Trust had been one of the factors behind an unsafe drive for savings and a chronic shortage of frontline clinical staff which regulators identified in January 2014.

NHS Improvement's decision to select Bridgewater and Mersey Care as the preferred providers of Liverpool Community Health's services was determined after the national body and local Clinical Commissioning Group put applications from local NHS organisations through a robust and rigorous process.

As part of the same process, local commissioners also identified a small number of more specialist services currently provided by LCH which were given the flexibility to find a different NHS home from the bulk of the Trust's services. The new homes for most of these specialist services have also been confirmed today.

Earlier this year, the Care Quality Commission found that LCH had recruited more front-line clinicians to ensure safer staffing levels, and praised 'significant improvements in the culture of the organisation'.

The findings echoed the conclusions of the review published in March 2016, which judged that the Trust had 'turned an important corner' following several years of deep-rooted problems.

Moira Angel, LCH's interim Director of Nursing, said: "Today's announcement decision will bring further clarity and certainty for our staff as we move forward and I very much hope that the final decision next year will ensure the progress they have made will be sustained and taken forward in the years ahead."

NHS Improvement's Executive Regional Managing Director for the North, Lyn Simpson, said: "I am pleased that Bridgewater and Mersey Care will now take forward a plan for more joined-up NHS care and want to thank all our local partners for their help in bringing about the progress we have made to date."

Colin Scales, Chief Executive for Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have been selected as the preferred provider for the services across the city of Liverpool. We look forward to welcoming LCH's Liverpool-based staff to Bridgewater and working in partnership with the Liverpool GP Federation and Liverpool City Council to deliver more joined-up care with the local hospitals for local people. By bringing together these organisations we will be able to deliver services that are more integrated and matched to the expectations of people living in a modern and dynamic city."

Joe Rafferty, Chief Executive of Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust said: "I'm absolutely delighted that we have been chosen to deliver these important services for the people of South Sefton in partnership with 5 Boroughs Partnership. The tender process has created an ideal opportunity to further develop and improve the way we work with partner organisations and we are grateful that Sefton commissioners have had the foresight to build a truly integrated community physical and mental health service. We very much look forward to building on our already strong relationship with local commissioners, Sefton Council, Aintree Hospital, general practice and of course the South Sefton residents to build world class care as close to home as possible."

Katherine Sheerin, Chief Officer of NHS Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "Making more care available in communities, closer to people's homes, rather than in hospital, is a key part of our Healthy Liverpool programme. This is already starting to take shape across the city and today's decision will help us accelerate these plans."

"In Liverpool we will have a unique partnership between Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool City Council, and Liverpool General Practice Provider Organisation. By bringing together health and care services in this way we have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of local people."

Dr Andy Mimmagh, chair of NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "We are pleased with the outcome of this process and believe that Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust will provide our patients with continued high quality community services that, over time, will be more responsive to their individual needs and work together more seamlessly"

with the other health and social care services involved in a person's care because they are better joined up. Our residents have told us that this is what they expect and this has been integral to designing our Shaping Sefton vision of community centred health and care, and we are delighted that Mersey Care will progress the work we've already begun with LCH towards this vision, with wider partners, when it takes over the running of these services from [1 April](#) 2017."

Today's announcement means NHS Improvement, NHS Liverpool CCG, NHS South Sefton CCG, NHS Southport and Formby CCG, Bridgewater and Mersey Care can now complete financial and regulatory checks before the new arrangements are confirmed early next year.

ENDS

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Notes to editors

1. See the attached briefing note for a full list of the Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust services to be transferred from [1 April 2017](#).