

16 May 2012 Lambeth and Southwark Overview and Scrutiny Committee

King's Health Partners: Development of a Strategic Outline Case

The organisations that make up King's Health Partners have a long history of working together and of working with our commissioners. King's Health Partners was accredited in 2009 as an Academic Health Sciences Centre (AHSC) to enhance our collaboration, recognising the benefits that could be achieved by closer working between health in the community and in hospitals; between physical and mental health; and between those that provide care and those that are researching the treatments of the future. All of this is enhanced by the nature of the population we serve with its incredible diversity and marked inequalities.

It is important to recognise that King's Health Partners is unique, both in a UK and a global context. In the UK we are the AHSC that spans the widest range of specialities at the highest levels in both service delivery and research. We also serve a most diverse and challenged population. Having mental health as a leading part of our centre and seeking the benefits of collaboration across the physical and mental health in treatment and research is unheard of elsewhere, at the level we aspire to.

In order to achieve our aspiration to be world class; in the day-to-day care we provide to our communities; in specialist services; and in research and teaching; we want to build on the benefits we have seen from three years of being an AHSC. To do this the four organisations that make up King's Health Partners (South London and the Maudsley, Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts and King's College London) have decided to look at the case for creating a single academic healthcare organisation. No decision has yet been taken on moving in this direction.

At the end of June the King's Health Partners Board will consider a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) which it may then recommend to the boards of the trusts and the council of King's College London to consider at their July meetings. If the SOC was agreed we would move to develop a full business case for an organisational integration.

We are now at the stage of engaging with stakeholders better to understand their perspectives and concerns as we consider the issues that need to be addressed in the SOC.

We recognise that key tests of any new organisation would be that:

- It was established to take advantage of an opportunity or answer a threat that could not be better met in other ways
- It was responsive to its local communities and provided services that understood and met local needs
- Performance on key metrics, such as financial performance and waiting would need to meet or exceed standards
- The organisational structure would need to be devolved enough to give appropriate accountability to communities and commissioners, yet unified enough to deliver on cross organisation imperatives

We know that our SOC needs to set out a strong case for whatever form of organisational change we may decide will best help us achieve our aspiration. We also need to show why that change cannot happen without organisational change, if indeed that is our conclusion.

But in all of this discussion it is important not to lose sight of the potential gain. We believe that King's Health Partners is uniquely placed to be a UK healthcare organisation in the top 10 in the world; because of the strengths of its trusts; the link between mental and physical health; the strengths of King's College London; and the strengths of the population of South London.

For further information please contact:

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