

Working together for a healthier Croydon: A Summary

Building on the success of recent collaborative working, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust and NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are planning how they can work closer together across many of their core functions to remove duplication and free-up resources for reinvestment on the frontline.

What is happening?

For the past few months, the Governing Body of NHS Croydon CCG and the Trust Board of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust have been considering creating a new partnership between the two organisations.

The next phase of this partnership will include:

- Shared forums for certain key functions, such as finance and quality;
- Shared functions and/or roles that are employed jointly by both organisations, as well as joint executive posts;
- Shared strategic priorities and a single delivery plan;
- A single budget and financial plan.

Why is this happening?

Both the Trust and CCG want to make services better for local people, and make it easier to get high-quality care closer to home with faster access to diagnostic services and treatment. We also want to create greater opportunities for healthcare staff in the borough by breaking down boundaries between both organisations to deliver more joined-up care.

Forming a closer partnership will also help the Trust and CCG respond to the challenges the NHS is facing nationally and Croydon is no different.

➤ **Providing the best quality services**

We are committed to improving services and delivering the highest quality care for local people. We want to focus on proactive and preventative care, helping people to stay well and supporting them to stay out of hospital wherever possible.

We know that 30% of patients treated in hospital are more suited to a community or home setting, while large numbers of patients are currently leaving the borough to receive elective care elsewhere.

➤ **Complex health needs**

We are one of the fastest growing boroughs in London with the largest number of young people in the capital and a rapidly growing number of older people. There are significant health inequalities in Croydon, with life expectancy in the most deprived areas of the borough ten years lower for men and six years lower for women when compared to the least deprived areas. The local population also faces complex health needs including high proportions of obesity, long-term conditions and mental health problems.

➤ **Financial pressures**

Both the Trust and the CCG have savings targets to deliver and we must spend the Croydon pound as efficiently as possible to get best value for money for local residents and make NHS funding go further in the borough.

➤ **Workforce pressures**

There is limited availability of some clinical staff across the country and in London, which means we need look at ways we can cover gaps to strengthen our care workforce in Croydon. By removing duplication between the Trust and CCG we can free-up more time, energy and resources to help our staff cope with the demands of this growing and ageing population.

A record of collaboration

Croydon has a strong track record of collaborative working. The 'One Croydon' Alliance brings together the Trust and CCG with South London and the Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM), Croydon Council, the Croydon GP Collaborative and Age UK Croydon. The Alliance has focussed on improving the quality of care provided to the over-65s, and as a result of its work there has been a 15% reduction in unplanned admissions amongst the over-65s at a time when unplanned admissions across the total population have risen.

Benefits of partnership working

The Trust and CCG have already formed one shared safeguarding team – bringing together the combined expertise across both organisations to strengthen protection for children and vulnerable people.

Shared appointments like Croydon's Chief Pharmacist show how seamless care can be provided between hospital and primary services, saving time and money, whilst giving people a more coordinated service.

Most recently, the Trust and CCG have appointed a Joint Chief Nurse to lead nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals across both organisations to improve the consistency of care and health outcomes for people in Croydon.

Our ambition is to appoint a single leader for the Trust and CCG. It will create a stronger, consistent voice for health, as we continue to work closely with GPs, social care, mental health and the voluntary sector.

NHS Long Term Plan

Our partnerships in the borough are in the same direction as the NHS Long Term plan (published January 2019) which sets out a vision Integrated Care Systems (ICS) across the country. As part of this plan, it is likely that NHS Croydon CCG, along with five other neighbouring clinical commissioning groups, will become part of one CCG for South West London. Our plans fit well with this direction of travel and will place Croydon in a strong position to take devolved autonomy and budget from a South West London Integrated Care System, ensuring that over 80% of decisions affecting people in Croydon are made here in Croydon.

What does this mean for me?

People tell us they get good quality care in Croydon, but their experience is often disjointed. Our proposals will improve this by helping us to deliver more joined-up care closer to home and in hospital.

Having shared functions, plans, resources and a single budget will help us to reduce duplication and work more efficiently. This will release time and effort that can be used to support clinicians on the frontline and deliver continued quality improvement. Aligning the two organisations will also help to reinforce the financial future for healthcare in Croydon and allow us to share best practice and remove barriers between our organisations that arise from having conflicting priorities.

It is important to stress that **this is not a formal merger**. The CCG Governing Body and the Trust Board will continue to exist and be held accountable for their statutory duties. However, all key decisions relating to strategy, transformation and finance will be taken at a committee in common made up of executives, NEDs and lay members of both organisations.

To manage any conflicts of interest, responsibilities related to commissioning, procurement and contracting will remain a CCG only function. The risk of potential conflicts of interest would also lessen if there is a merger of CCGs in South West London.

Wider partnership working

The alignment between the Trust and CCG does not lessen our commitment to wider partnership working and we would expect that over time we will need to consider how to reflect the One Croydon Alliance Partners and the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board in these new governance arrangements.

The Trust and CCG's partnership is the next step in providing a fully joined-up approach for the people of Croydon.

Key Milestones

A decision will be taken at our Trust Board and Governing Body meeting on Tuesday 14 May 2019.

Approval from our regulators will be sought in July 2019 and would aim to appoint a single leader for the NHS in Croydon by October 2019, when the partnership would formally begin. It would be fully implemented in April 2020.

Get involved

If you would like more information on these proposals or if you have any questions, please contact us at Croydon-GetInvolved@swlondon.nhs.uk

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

www.croydonccg.nhs.uk

Twitter: [@croydonhealth](https://twitter.com/croydonhealth) / [@nhscroydonCCG](https://twitter.com/nhscroydonCCG)