Foundations for the future
- our application to become an NHS Foundation Trust.
Consultation document
1. Building a brighter future together
Introduction from the CEO and Chairman

Welcome to Buckinghamshire Hospitals’ consultation on becoming an NHS Foundation Trust and thank you for taking the time to read our consultation document. Inside you will find out about our hospitals and why we would like to put forward an application to become an NHS Foundation Trust. There is information on what this means for you and for us as an organisation.

Buckinghamshire Hospital’s focus is providing quality care for our patients. Last year we invested time in developing our longer term plans and understanding more about what patients really want from their local hospitals. Our “In your Shoes” programme used the views and experiences of patients to help us agree five patient promises that will guide all our work over the next five years. We see becoming an NHS Foundation Trust as a real opportunity to help us deliver on our commitments outlined in our five patient promises (see page 4).

Whilst we are far from complacent, we are proud to say that we have already made great strides in improving care. Our efforts include working hard to reduce infection rates, so that we now sit amongst the best performing trusts in the country. We are ahead of the game in reducing waiting times for appointments and treatments, with the vast majority of our patients receiving their care less than 18 weeks from the time they are referred to us by a GP. This is a national standard that the Government expects NHS trusts to meet by December 2008 and which we achieved early in March. This and other patient benefits have been attained whilst balancing the books financially for the third consecutive year.

The ownership of local hospitals by local people, and the freedoms from central control that Foundation Trust status offers, will help us to drive the improvements in patient care to which we are committed.

Your views are genuinely important to us and we want to hear what you have to say. One of our main reasons for wanting to become an NHS Foundation Trust is to deepen and strengthen our relationship with you, the public, and increase our accountability to you. You can find out how to take part in the consultation and have your say at the end of this brochure. There is also information aimed at our staff who we really want to get involved and whose views we also want to hear.

We look forward to receiving your views and support for our application to become Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Anne Eden
Chief Executive

Bernard Williams
Chairman
2. Our vision, our patient promises

Buckinghamshire Hospitals is clear about its vision - to be the first choice hospitals for the people of Buckinghamshire and beyond, because in a Buckinghamshire hospital the needs of the patient always come first.

Our vision has been inspired by what patients told us were their aspirations for local hospital services at innovative workshops last year. The Trust Board has also spent time on developing a vision and from this combined process we have committed to delivering five patient promises. These promises will drive our work and plans for the next five years. They are to provide:

1. **Clean and safe hospitals** so our patients don’t need to worry unduly about hospital infections
2. **A caring, helpful, and respectful attitude** from all of our teams. We will listen to our patients, involving them in decisions about their care, ensuring they are clear about what to expect.
3. **We will respect our patients’ time**, so they spend as little time as possible in hospital, with a minimum of delays and cancellations.
4. **Comfortable modern facilities**, with healthy food, easy access and personal space.
5. **The best clinical care available** from top doctors and multi-professional teams.

We want to be ambitious for our patients and accountable to them. We believe that by delivering on our patient promises, we will ensure high quality care, a better performance, and consequently value for money and financial sustainability as an organisation.

To turn our vision into real action and improvement we have developed a framework which maps out how our promises will be delivered over the next five years. It details the key actions and improvements needed to meet our commitments and provides indicators of how success will be measured.

Becoming an NHS Foundation Trust is a key part of the process to deliver our patient promises and achieve our vision to become the hospitals of choice for our local population. It is a way of providing more meaningful relationships with the people we serve through membership, and will make us directly accountable to people through the Council of Governors. This depth of relationship and accountability will not be possible if we do not become an NHS Foundation Trust.

The application and authorisation process itself will provide a way to demonstrate our progress and performance, and we will only be successful if we can show that we are both clinically and financially strong.

**Consultation Question:** Are these the right priorities for the Trust in addition to meeting our patient promises?
3. Our hospitals

Buckinghamshire Hospitals includes three busy hospitals in High Wycombe, Stoke Mandeville and Amersham, and our staff had more than 585,000 contacts with patients from Buckinghamshire and surrounding areas last year alone.

We are home to the widely renowned National Spinal Injuries Centre and as well as providing a full range of general hospital services to the local population, we provide specialist services for Burns and Plastics and Dermatology to a much wider area.

We employ almost 4,700 people and in 2008/9 our turnover is £274 million.

Our hospitals are thriving and getting busier. We supported more births than ever last year with 5,570 babies born in our two maternity units. In February 2008 the Healthcare Commission found us to be “better performing” than other hospitals in its national maternity survey. Our A&E department saw more than 104,000 people and treated, admitted or discharged more than 98% of those patients in four hours or less. Our patients have among the shortest waiting times in the country for treatment following referral by a GP, and we are working hard to reduce this still further.

Our local public will know what a serious issue hospital-acquired infections has been for us and will be encouraged to hear that we have now reduced our rates to be amongst the best performing trusts in the country for Clostridium difficile and MRSA. Our experiences have provided lessons that are now benefiting the wider NHS and guiding best practice nationally. We have worked incredibly hard to make and sustain improvements and the most recently available national figures for Clostridium difficile show that in 2006 we had 1.42 infections per 1,000 bed days for patients 65 or older, compared to the national average of around 2.4 cases per 1,000 bed days. Whilst for MRSA in 2007/8, we had 0.92 cases per 1,000 bed days against a national average of 1.24. However, we are never complacent and continue to strive to bring infection rates down even further as one of our five patient promises.

We have also been getting serious about involving and engaging you, our patients and public, to inform and influence our priorities. We want to continue this journey, and becoming an NHS Foundation Trust is the next step.

4. Our people

We recognise that our greatest asset is our people and alongside Bucks County Council we are one of the largest employers in Buckinghamshire with almost 4,700 people working for us.

We employ over 600 medical staff and over 2,000 nurses and healthcare assistants. In addition to those who are paid, we have almost 850 volunteers who provide an incredibly valuable service supporting the work of the clinical teams and running a range of support services which help enrich the experience for our patients and visitors.

Together last year our teams provided the following care:
- 6,589 day case and 8,112 planned operations
- 87,522 outpatient appointments
- 5,570 babies were born
- 104,273 A&E attendances
- 30,319 emergency admissions
5. What is an NHS Foundation Trust and what are the benefits?

NHS foundation trusts were first brought into being in 2004 to bring greater public accountability to NHS organisations and provide the means for local people to have a much stronger influence on how their NHS services are run.

The primary purpose of an NHS Foundation Trust is to provide NHS services to NHS patients according to NHS principles and standards. The public still experience healthcare according to core NHS principles - free care, based on need and not ability to pay.

NHS foundation trusts establish strong connections between local hospitals and their local communities through membership. The membership community of each NHS Foundation Trust is made up of local people, staff, patients and their carers and partner organisations.

Whilst retaining a full role in the NHS, NHS foundation trusts have more freedom from direct central government control and from strategic health authority performance management, with a range of devolved powers to innovate for the benefit of their local community and patients. They are granted greater financial freedoms than non-NHS foundation trusts to decide for themselves what capital investment is needed in order to improve their services. They are also free to retain any surpluses they generate and to borrow money in order that investments can be made in the areas most important to our patients so that they benefit fully from the very best facilities and services.

Foundation trusts are independently authorised and regulated currently by an organisation called Monitor (known as the independent regulator) to make sure they are well-managed and financially strong. They remain subject to the same NHS standards and inspections as other NHS trusts by the independent watchdog the Healthcare Commission, including its Annual Health Check, and the NHS Litigation Authority who monitor clinical safety.

Buckinghamshire Hospitals wants to become an NHS Foundation Trust so that it can bring these benefits and freedoms to the people of Buckinghamshire. We want to have greater flexibility and autonomy to meet the needs of our local population and give them a stronger voice in how their services are run and how we go about meeting their expectations.

Better for patients

- **Delivering our vision** We strongly believe that being an NHS Foundation Trust is how we can best look after our patients’ interests. It forms a key part of how we deliver our new strategy to become the hospitals of choice for our local population and to make “where the needs of the patients always come first” a consistent reality and not just a promise.

  Our strategy evolved using patient views and our five patient promises are core to everything we do now. We want to continue making improvements by strengthening our relationship with the community and believe that being an NHS Foundation Trust will provide a more democratic and formalised way for people to have a say in how their services are developed in the future. Members will be invited to be involved with service areas of interest to them, to help shape and influence the future.

  Being an NHS Foundation Trust offers the genuine opportunity to be answerable to our members rather than to Whitehall and that is what we want.

- **Freedom to make local decisions** As self-standing, self-governing organisations, NHS foundation trusts have greater freedom and flexibility to respond to local priorities without the need for central Government authorisation. The Council of Governors will be able to advise and provide information to help our hospitals continue to offer healthcare consistent with the needs of our population.

  This means increased local decision-making powers with fewer delays because of reduced bureaucracy. We would be able to make better and quicker local investment decisions, and retain any financial surpluses. For example, the opportunity to generate surpluses is there by ensuring our services are as productive and efficient as possible. Any money saved could then be used, for example, to fund new state-of-the-art equipment, directly improving our ability to offer the best patient care (and sometimes over and above what the central NHS can provide).

  Foundation Trust status also gives us the opportunity to raise finance when needed to fund service developments backed by a sound business approach, and we would have more flexibility over how cash is managed. We believe these financial flexibilities would help us to better serve our population and run our organisation more effectively.
6. How will the Foundation Trust be run?

Membership
Central to us becoming a successful NHS Foundation Trust is to recruit a membership which provides strong links with our local community. Members are at the heart of the NHS Foundation Trust and consist of local people, patients, carers and staff.

The membership is split into different groups called constituencies and we propose having constituencies covering public and staff membership. These can be thought of as the body of voters who elect a representative for their area to sit on the Council of Governors.

We are currently recruiting members to the Trust, who will transfer across to become members of the NHS Foundation Trust upon authorisation.

Public membership
We propose that the public constituencies reflect the four districts of Buckinghamshire, which are:

- Wycombe
- Aylesbury Vale
- Chiltern
- South Bucks.

We also serve people who live in neighbouring counties and further afield and value very highly the work of our specialist services. So we also want to encourage membership from these people. To do this we propose a “Rest of England” constituency. This would mean even people who live some way from the hospitals but have an ongoing interest in our specialist services - such as the National Spinal Injuries Centre - would be able to become members.

Membership will be open to all those aged 16 or over and who live in these constituencies. Membership is free and people who become members will have the opportunity to:

- Elect governors to the Council of Governors
- Stand for election as a governor themselves
- Be eligible for appointment as a non-executive director of the NHS Foundation Trust (subject to meeting skills and attributes criteria)
- Influence the Trust’s strategic plans through their elected governors
- Attend meetings and events
- Receive information about the Trust and attend seminars and workshops about the hospitals’ services
- Work with the Trust by taking part in surveys and projects, offering views on proposed service developments and any plans for change.

Consultation question: It is Government policy that all hospitals will eventually become NHS foundation trusts. Do you support our application to become an NHS Foundation Trust?
We want to develop a membership that is representative of the communities we serve and encourage as many people as possible to apply to become a member using the form enclosed at the back of this document or via our website www.buckinghamshirehospitals.nhs.uk/foundation.

Consultation Question: Do you agree that we have proposed the right public membership constituencies?

Consultation Question: Do you agree with a minimum age of 16 for membership?

Staff membership
We want all our staff to become engaged with governing the NHS Foundation Trust and influencing the services that they provide. To avoid bureaucracy and encourage staff to join we are proposing automatic membership for all current and future staff. Anyone who does not want to be a member can opt out and will not be treated any differently from those who stay as members. Staff who do opt out will not be able to vote in elections for staff governors.

All our staff can be members as long as they:
- have a contract of employment which does not have a fixed term, or
- have a contract of employment with a fixed term of at least 12 months or
- have been continuously employed for 12 months.

Volunteers, those on honorary contracts working for the Trust and staff employed at our hospitals through independent contractors such as Medirest and Sodexo are also invited to become members if they meet the eligibility criteria. This is if they have provided continuous services to the Trust for at least 12 months.

There will be four classes of staff membership
- Registered medical practitioners and registered dentists
- Registered nurses, registered midwives and health care assistants
- Other clinical staff (including all allied health professionals, scientists and assistants)
- All other staff.

Being eligible to join the staff constituency means you are not able to join the public constituency.

Each staff class will have one elected governor on the Council of Governors.

Consultation Question: Do you agree with our plans for staff membership?

7. The Council of Governors

NHS foundation trusts have two key governing bodies and these are:

The Council of Governors
The Board of Directors

The NHS Foundation Trust Chairman chairs both bodies.

Through the Council of Governors, members have influence over the Board of Directors in relation to the performance and development of services at the Trust. The Council of Governors is not responsible for the day-to-day running of the hospitals but is there to strengthen links with the local community and provide knowledge on the needs and wishes of local people.
The Council of Governors’ role is to:

- Appoint (or remove) the Chairman and the non-executive directors
- Represent the interests of members and local stakeholders and provide the perspective of the wider community
- Hold meetings in public at least three times a year, and an Annual Members’ meeting once a year.
- Approve the remuneration and allowances, and other terms and conditions of office, for the non-executive directors
- Appoint or remove the auditors of the Trust
- Be presented with the Trust’s annual report and accounts
- Approve at a general meeting or otherwise, the appointment of the Chief Executive
- Give the views of the governors to the directors for the purpose of preparing forward planning documents for the Trust, which will be given each financial year to the independent regulator Monitor, as well as providing a statement for inclusion in the Trust’s Annual Health Check declaration
- Develop the membership strategy and represent the interests of members
- Ensure that governors effectively represent our membership and partners.

Make up of the Council of Governors
There will be 23 governors elected to the Council of Governors.

Subject to some eligibility criteria any member from within a constituency can stand for election. All members have the opportunity to vote and elect a governor from their constituency to represent them on the Council of Governors.

Public
The number of public governors for each area will be proportional to the population served and so we propose three governors each for Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale, two for Chiltern and two for South Bucks. There will also be two governors for the “Rest of England”. The public governors form a majority on the Council of Governors.

Staff
There will be four staff governors, elected to represent the four professional classes within the staff constituency:

- Registered medical practitioners and registered dentists
- Registered nurses, registered midwives and health care assistants
- Other clinical staff (including all allied health professionals, scientists and assistants)
- All other staff.

Partners and stakeholders
In addition to the elected governors there will be a number of places on the Council of Governors for partner and stakeholder organisations. These governors are appointed rather than elected and include Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust who we have to include by law. We also propose to have representation from GPs, voluntary, academic and charitable organisations.

Consultation Question: Do you think we have the make up of our Council of Governors right?
8. Your views

From 28 July to 19 October 2008 we will be asking everyone who lives or uses our services in the county of Buckinghamshire, patients who use our services from outside the area, our staff and volunteers, what they think of our plans to become an NHS Foundation Trust and our aspirations for hospital services in the future.

We will be contacting community, local and voluntary groups to offer them the opportunity to come and discuss our plans. We will also continue to work with our Patient Experience Group, which is made up of key patient and public representative groups. In addition, we will be approaching local people, patients and staff for their views through meetings, written materials, our website and the local media.

We have also arranged public meetings around the four county districts, where we will be outlining our plans for becoming an NHS Foundation Trust. We look forward to meeting as many people as possible there.

Public meetings
- Marlow, Sir William Borlase’s Grammar School
  Tuesday 5 August, 5pm to 6pm
- Wycombe, Wycombe Hospital Lecture Theatre
  Tuesday 19 August, 7pm to 8pm
- Aylesbury, Civic Centre
  Friday 22 August, 3pm to 4pm
- Amersham, Council Chamber
  Friday 8 August, 12midday to 1pm
- Buckingham, Villiers Hotel
  Wednesday 20 August, 11am to 12midday
- Gerrards Cross, Memorial Centre
  Tuesday 26 August, 12midday to 1pm

If you are a community or social group and you would be interested in us coming to talk to your group about our plans please get in contact on 01494 734149 or ft@buckshosp.nhs.uk. Your feedback will help us shape our application to become an NHS Foundation Trust, and our plans for the future. And choosing to become a member will give you even greater involvement in the development of hospital services in the future.

How to respond
We hope that after reading this consultation document you have a better understanding of the role of NHS foundation trusts, why we want to become one and what the changes will mean for patients, staff and the public.

We welcome your views. Please respond by completing and returning the consultation questionnaire freepost to us, or using our email address ft@buckshosp.nhs.uk to make comments. All comments should be received by 19 October 2008. A membership registration form is also included in this document if you would like to sign up to become a member.

Next steps
- 28 July – 19 October: public consultation on our proposed application
- Mid-November: meeting with the Strategic Health Authority to review application
- December: formal request to the Secretary of State for Health for support for the application
- January: Monitor’s authorisation process
- April 2009: earliest possible authorisation from Monitor

9. Foundation Trust membership registration form

Members of the Public. All people aged 16 and over and living in the four districts of Buckinghamshire are eligible for membership. In addition to the local population served, the Trust also has a “rest of England” constituency to provide membership to people from outside its immediate boundaries who use the Trust’s services.

Staff: Please note that if you are a member of Buckinghamshire Hospital NHS Trust staff you do not need to complete this form.

Constituencies are:- Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chiltern, South Bucks, Rest of England.
It should be noted that an individual cannot be a member of more than one constituency.

Please become a member - we appreciate your support

Contact Details
Title    Mr    Mrs    Ms    Miss    Dr
First Name
Surname
Address
Postcode
Telephone
Mobile
E-mail
Have you ever attended any of our hospitals?    Yes    No (Amersham, Stoke Mandeville, or Wycombe)
What is your preferred method for us to contact you?    Post    E-mail    Telephone (environmentally friendly)
Council Authority Area
(to which you pay your Council Tax. This will help us identify your constituency)
About You
We aim to ensure that our services are fair, equitable and inclusive. We want to build a membership that reflects our community. To help us do this, please complete the following questions:-

Gender:    Male    Female
Date of Birth
Ethnicity
White British    White & Black African
White Irish    Other mixed background
Other White    Black Caribbean
White and Asia    Black African
White & Black Caribbean
Chinese
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Other Asian
Any other ethnic group
Black African

Where the needs of the patient always come first
Disability and special needs
Knowing about your disability or special need could help us communicate with you better
Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes □ No □
If yes please specify □ a sensory disability □ a physical disability □ a learning disability
□ a mental health problem □ other special need
Do you have any special information requirements? □ Audio tapes □ Large print
Other?

As a member would you like to
□ Receive a newsletter/information
□ Take part in focus groups/workshops
□ Become a volunteer
□ Comment on service developments and improvements
□ Meet and engage with the Governors

Do you have any special interests in particular care areas?
□ Medicine e.g. Medicine for Older People, Rehabilitation, Neurology, Rheumatology, Dermatology,
  Emergency, Medicine, Cancer Care, Cardiology, Respiratory, Diabetes and Endocrinology
□ Women’s Health e.g. Maternity, Gynaecology, Neonatology
□ Children’s Services e.g. Paediatrics,
□ Surgery e.g. General Surgery, Orthopaedics, Burns, Plastics, Oral Surgery,
  Ear Nose and Throat, Urology, Ophthalmology
□ National Spinal e.g. Spinal Cord Injury, Rehabilitation/Injuries Centre
□ Outpatient Services e.g. Physiotherapy, X ray, dietetics, occupational therapy
□ Other Support Services e.g. Cleaning, food, parking, buildings

Data Protection
In compliance with current UK Data Protection legislation, any information you provide to us on this form
will be kept secure, treated confidentiality and only used for the purposes of developing and maintaining
the Foundation Trust.

Public Register
The Trust is obliged to maintain a public register of its members. This register only gives a member’s name and
their constituency. No other information will be available publicly.
□ I do not want my name to appear on the public register of members.

SIGNATURE: ______________________________ DATE: ______/_____/_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form and for becoming a member.
Please return to:- FREEPOST RRYG-JYEC-BSJB, Foundation Trust Office, Amersham Hospital, Whielden Street,
Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0JD

Consultation Question 1: Do you think there are other priorities for the Trust in addition to meeting our
patient promises?
Please add any further comments

Consultation Question 2: It is Government policy that all hospitals will eventually become NHS foundation
trusts. Do you support our application to become an NHS Foundation Trust?
Please add any further comment

Consultation Question 3: Do you agree that we have proposed the right public membership
categories?
Please add any further comment

Consultation Question 4: Do you agree with a minimum age of 16 for membership?
Please add any further comment

Consultation Question 5: Do you agree with our plans for staff membership?
Please add any further comment

Consultation Question 6: Do you think we have the make up of our Council of Governors right?
Please add any further comment

Please include any additional comments here

Return form to FREEPOST RRYG-JYEC-BSJB, Foundation Trust Office, Amersham Hospital, Whielden Street,
Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0JD
Consultation responses will be used to inform the governance arrangements for the Trust prior to submitting
our application to become an NHS Foundation Trust.
We will be publishing a summary of comments received on our website
www.buckinghamshirehospitals.nhs.uk/foundation after the consultation period has ended.
Buckinghamshire hospitals are contactable by post or telephone, or by emailing buckshospitals.info@buckshosp.nhs.uk.

Amersham Hospital
Whielden Street, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0JD
Telephone: 01494 526161