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**SOUTHAMPTON HEART EXPERT APPOINTED GOVERNMENT TSAR**

A leading specialist based at Southampton’s university hospitals has been appointed national heart tsar by the Department of Health.

Professor Huon Gray, a consultant interventional cardiologist at Southampton General Hospital, will take up the post of national clinical director for cardiovascular disease later this month.

His role will include development of the government's new cardiovascular disease outcomes strategy, which aims to improve treatment and care for patients with heart, stroke and circulatory diseases across the country.

“My extensive experience has taught me how important cardiology services are to patients throughout England and I am looking forward to working to improve the treatment of heart patients across the country,” said Prof Gray, who is also a clinical adviser to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and is chairing the development of NICE’s guidelines on STEMI (heart attack).

“Although there has been significant improvement in the treatment of some heart conditions, there is still more to do and we will be looking at this as part of the development of the cardiovascular disease outcomes strategy.”

He becomes the second University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust national clinical director following the appointment of Martin Stephens, associate medical director for clinical effectiveness, as hospital pharmacy lead in 2008.

Commenting on both Prof Gray and Dr Damian Jenkinson, who has been named national clinical director for stroke, Andrew Lansley, secretary of state for health, said: “I know that both of these highly experienced doctors are committed to making a significant difference to improving outcomes for heart and stroke patients, from prevention right through to long term management in the community.”

**Ends**

**Photographs**

A photograph of Professor Gray is attached to this email.

**Notes to Editors:**

1)            University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest acute trusts in England and operates at three sites across the city of Southampton. It provides hospital services for 1.3 million people living in Southampton and southern Hampshire and specialist services including neurosciences, cardiac care and specialist children’s services to more than three million people in central southern England and the Channel Islands.

2)            Every year more than 7,500 staff at the trust see 420,000 people at outpatient appointments, deal with 110,000 attendances at the emergency department and treat 115,000 inpatients and day patients. Providing these services costs £1.3 million per day.

3)            At the last planned review, independent watchdogs from the Care Quality Commission found Southampton General Hospital compliant with all 16 essential standards of quality and safety.

4)            University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust has over 20,000 members – ranging from patients, local residents and staff – who have registered an interest in the development and progress of their hospitals. More information on becoming a member is available from [www.uhs.nhs.uk/members](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/members) or from the membership office on 023 8079 5199 or email ft@uhs.nhs.uk.

5)            University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust has a Twitter page. Twitter is a form of microblogging which enables you to keep up-to-date with the people or organisations in which you are interested in headlines of 140 characters or fewer. Sign up to follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/uhsft> to make sure you know about all our latest news.

6)            As well as fundraising for ward and department charity projects across UHSFT, a major fundraising Red & White Appeal has been launched by Southampton Hospital Charity to raise £2.2 million to create the transplant treatment centre of choice for patients with leukaemia and other blood disorders from Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Dorset, West Sussex and the Channel Islands. For more information, please contact the charity office on 023 8079 8881, email charity@uhs.nhs.uk or visit [www.uhs.nhs.uk/charity](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/charity).

**For more information contact the communications team on 023 8079 8756.**

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