



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2014**

**£80m NHS merger announced for the North West**

**An £80m merger bringing together two of the NHS’s biggest professional services suppliers has been announced today.**

The Commissioning Support Units of Greater Manchester and Cheshire & Merseyside will come together, creating a new organisation spanning a population of more than five million across the North West.

The move will bring together the expertise, experience and learning from both teams to develop improved services for their many clients.

And it will secure the long term future of the two organisations, which offer expert professional services at a large scale to the NHS and other parts of the public sector and have bases in Salford, Warrington, Chester, Liverpool and Nantwich.

The two organisations’ portfolios are extensive, providing business, clinical and commissioning support to NHS commissioners, hospitals, local authorities, GP practices, NHS England and others.

Together they have a combined income of more than £80m and have secured new business opportunities worth around £10m since they were formally set up in April 2013.

They cover a population of 5.1m, with 24 CCGs, 898 GP practices, 3 Area Teams, 19 Local Authorities and 18 Acute Trusts – seven of which are specialist trusts and five Mental Health Trusts.

Their work includes (see notes at end for more details):

* An internationally recognised team working with hospitals and community trusts across the UK to review health systems, helping spot, analyse and monitor problems
* The delivery of a £5.4m transformation programme to integrate IT across Greater Manchester
* The management of contracts with hospitals and other NHS trusts worth up to £3 billion
* Working with other CSUs to deliver a patient and public engagement programme across the North of England

Leigh Griffin, Managing Director of Greater Manchester CSU said: “This is an ambitious move which will secure our place as a significant player in the North West health and social care economy and a give us a formidable national presence.

“There is great opportunity now to bring together our expertise, experience and learning so we can help support our clients to transform the health and social care sector to meet the challenges it faces.”

Tim Andrews, Managing Director of Cheshire and Merseyside CSU, said: “Our clients are at the forefront of some of the most challenging issues the NHS and social care have ever had to face.

“The exciting and innovative changes they’re pioneering in the way services are delivered will improve the quality and effectiveness of care, as well as ensuring much better coordination and collaboration across different organisations.

“The merger of our two organisations means we can help answer this challenge much more effectively by drawing on the considerable combined talents of the teams across the region.”

The two CSUs already work with all 24 clinical commissioning groups in the region, as well as NHS England area teams, many local authorities and hospitals. They believe the merger will enable the potential for large scale transformational support across a historic and familiar North West footprint.

They also believe it will allow them to grow in to new markets and attract investment and partnerships. They are currently in advanced conversations with high profile commercial organisations working in the national and international healthcare arena.

The CSUs’ current clients also welcome the move, believing it will further strengthen the support to them.

Denis Gizzi, Managing Director of Oldham CCG, said: “We are a relatively small organisation in terms of management infrastructure, with around 45 staff, yet we’re accountable for spending approximately £400m to look after the health of 230,000 people.

“The CSU helps advise and support us so we can focus our leadership on securing the best outcomes for patients and improving the quality of services.”

The two organisations will move towards a merged single organisation in a measured way over the coming months.

The first step is the creation of one single Executive Director Team by April 2014. Each executive director will have a portfolio across both organisations. This will enable clear, consistent and focussed leadership during a managed move towards one single organisation.

The CSUs are assuring clients that it will not impact on the nature of the services they receive, nor the way in which they are delivered.

Both organisations are committed to retaining the best of what they offer and also exploiting the benefits that a larger commissioning support organisation can offer, including a wider range of services and skills.

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors**

**About CSUs**

Commissioning Support Units have a crucial role in the new NHS. They provide expert, affordable, support services, enabling clients to focus their expertise and leadership on securing the best outcomes for patients and continuing to improve the quality of NHS services.

The services include: medicines management; human resources; complaints; finance; contract management; redesign of services; governance; information management and technology; procurement; emergency planning; Utilisation Management; communications, engagement and marketing.

The competitive advantage of CSUs lies in their breadth of skills, experience, and expertise – and the affordability they can bring by delivering this wide range of vital professional services, at scale.

They were established in April 2013 against the backdrop of the government’s health reforms. The 18 CSUs across the country have a combined budget of £750m and have secured £40m of new business since they were set up. They are, by far, the largest provider of support to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other public sector clients.

**About GMCSU and CMCSU**

Collectively the two organisations have a combined income of more than £80m, with around 1,000 expert staff based across the region (Salford, Warrington, Chester, Liverpool and Nantwich).

They have long standing, established relationships with clients which have been built over many years, pre-dating the current organisations. They worked with many of their current clients to co-design services; their separate visions and values confirm their focus on enabling their clients to achieve their own goals and priorities.

They already work with all the region’s CCGs, as well as local authorities, Area Teams of NHS England, wider NHS England teams, GP practices and health and social care providers across the region.

Both organisations have a track record of delivering tangible results through a variety of delivery models; this includes embedding staff in clients’ offices as well as offering support and expertise from central bases.

Crucially, they also have a unique and in-depth knowledge of the North West and the people of this region which they share with their clients.

Some detailed examples of their work include:

**Greater Manchester CSU**

**Utilisation Management – managing system pressures** GMCSU’s nurse led Utilisation Management (UM) team is unique in offering an approach to analysing care systems nationally and internationally that has been endorsed by the Royal College of Nurses.

They work with a range of organisations to provide real time operational support – identifying issues and providing information, insight and clinical-impact analysis combined with practical support. Their approach helped secure a range of clients nationally in 2013/14 with additional contracts worth collectively around £200,000.

One example is the UM ‘Daily Pressures Reports’ provided to organisations in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside and Northern Ireland, which enables UM to alert clients to system pressures and failures.

**Transforming data storage across Greater Manchester** A major programme of work is under way to improve how data is stored for GMCSU and our clients.

This involves decommissioning 17 data centres inherited from Primary Care Trusts and transferring the data and systems to GMCSU’s brand new data centre in Wigan. Managed by our Information Management and Technology team, it will bring significant benefits including increased resilience, additional security and improved back up and restoration times.

**Securing a cancer information service for Bolton** GMCSU has been instrumental in helping Bolton CCG to secure funding for a much needed cancer information and support service. It will give the people of Bolton greater access to: information about cancer prevention and early diagnosis; a support service for patients, carers family and friends; a benefits advice service, a telephone advice line; and self-help support groups.

GMCSU’s Service Redesign team worked with strategic partners to develop a funding bid for the CCG, which was used to successfully secure funding from Macmillan Cancer Support to support the service for a three year period.

**Salford integrated care record** The Salford Integrated Record (SIR) is a system designed to provide high quality cost effective care to patients suffering from long-term conditions. A key component is the provision of information relating to the patient’s health at any time to everyone involved in their care – including the patient.

Salford CCG commissioned GMCSU to progress development of the integrated care records to improve the care of older people in the community. This involves GMCSU’s IT project management office introducing a new information feed into the existing system, which will link up with systems across all associated provider organisations – to improve patient care.

**Cheshire and Merseyside CSU**

**NHS England Field Force – Patient and Public Voice and Patients in Control** Two NHS England funded programmes of work which Cheshire and Merseyside CSU will be offering to CCGs and Area teams across the North if England to support commissioners in good practice models of work.

The programmes are: Patients in Control, focussing on individual involvement in shared decision making about personal health care and Patient and Public Voice for collective involvement in commissioning planning and shaping local health service changes.

**Commissioning Policy review** Undertaken by a multidisciplinary team from across CMCSU, the commissioning policy review is being delivered to all 12 local Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The project, updating procedures of lower clinical value so they are in line with NICE guidance, includes a full 90 day public consultation and liaison with CCGs across Cheshire and Merseyside.

**Supporting the Connecting Care across Cheshire Pioneer Integrated Care programme** This Government-backed initiative will involve trialling new models of care which reduce duplication between organisations and provide more joined-up support to individuals and their families.

Cheshire is one of 14 areas selected for the Pioneer Programme following applications from more than 100 areas across England, having been chosen by an internationally renowned panel of experts.

The Connecting Cheshire application was submitted on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council, East Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group, South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group, and West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

These areas will build on the strong local partnerships already in place to join-up services, providing a much more efficient, responsive and customer-focussed service for local people.   While the principles of integration will be applied to all services, there will be a particular focus on older people with long-term conditions and families with complex needs.

The lessons learned from this new approach will be shared with other areas across the country.

**Contacts**

Leigh Griffin and Tim Andrews, MDs of GMCSU and CMCSU respectively, are available for interview. Head and shoulders pictures are also available.

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