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14.11.16

Special measures Sussex trust signs partnership agreement

A new partnership agreement between Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUH) and Western Sussex Hospitals NHS FT (WSH), designed to help BSUH turn around its struggling services, has been announced.

The two trusts, along with NHS Improvement, have signed an interim agreement as a step towards a longer term partnership.

BSUH was placed in special measures by the CQC in August and in [financial special measures](#) by NHS Improvement in October.

Dr Gillian Fairfield, the trust's interim chief executive, said: "Since we had the CQC inspection in April, we have been working incredibly hard to stabilise the trust and to make the immediate changes and improvements needed.

"We have developed a comprehensive integrated recovery and improvement plan and have made significant progress in a large number of areas to ensure patients being cared for in our hospitals today are getting a better standard of service."

She added that it is essential that BSUH keeps up the momentum it has started and "this new arrangement with Western Sussex will help ensure this can be achieved both in the short term and the long term".

The intention is that the chief executive and chair of WSH, which has an 'outstanding' rating, will also carry out those roles for BSUH from 1 April next year. Other members of the WSH leadership team will also provide support at BSUH.

Marianne Griffiths, chief executive of WSH, reflected that the challenges faced by staff at BSUH have been well documented and she was very pleased that NHS Improvement had asked her trust to help overcome them.

"There are no easy answers but it is the people working in the hospitals in Brighton and Haywards Heath who are best placed to find and implement the solutions their patients need," she said. "We know the organisation has many great people in it already and the role of the team at Western Sussex will be to give them the tools, skills and support to make improvements."

An improvement oversight group will be set up to oversee the development of the long-term arrangement and set the pace for delivering sustained improvement across all services.

It will be chaired jointly by the leaders of Western Sussex and the south regional team of NHS Improvement.

Anne Eden, executive regional managing director for the south at NHS Improvement, added that NHS Improvement wanted to see improvements at BSUH that would provide "quality services for years to come".