



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is this a merger?

No, this is not a merger. The five Trusts will remain independent NHS bodies.

2. Will Trusts be required to join every initiative in the Collaboration?

No, each Trust will choose whether to join any particular initiative.

3. Are people going to lose their jobs because of this Collaboration?

No, the focus of the Collaboration is to improve delivery of care for our patients and communities.

4. What does it mean for me as a staff member? What does this mean for me as a patient?

The initiatives of the Collaboration will focus on improving patient care and supporting staff in the delivery of our services.

As staff:

The Collaboration will create opportunities for staff to input on the development of initiatives across Ambulance Trust borders. As is typical of projects, we will be engaging with staff to seek their views and input and there will be regular communication through individual Trust communication routes and via a Southern Ambulance Services Collaboration website.

We will be seeking to improve the way we do things in all areas of our operations. Changes to working practices may arise from learning from others, sharing our own best practices and working with colleagues in other Trusts to co-design solutions to the challenges we face.

There also may be opportunities to work in other services, either as operational staff members or as part of a Collaboration project.

As patients:

We are determined and committed to improving our services for patients, whether through increased resilience or through assessing our current working practices to



find
the best solutions to your varied needs. When the opportunity arises, we will actively involve patient representatives in the change process.

5. What do you think will be the benefits, and when do you think you will see them?

Whilst the specifics of the benefits are not yet finalised; we expect that through effective collaboration the benefits for patients and staff will emerge in all areas of our work. Some projects will be designed to deliver early benefits, whilst other projects will take longer to deliver and realise the full benefits.

Current ideas for driving progress include: shared procurement to reduce costs, harnessing technology and AI to improve our services and care, identifying where we can learn from each other (particularly in the 999 operations and contact centre environments), training and education, and staff well-being.

6. Is this about saving money or improving services?

The core purpose of the Collaboration is to improve the care we provide to our patients, while exploring opportunities to do this at a lower cost.

7. How is this being funded?

To establish the Collaboration and fund a small Collaboration team, each Trust has made a small contribution. We have learned from other collaborations that if we don't have a small team to drive initiatives forward then we are unlikely to realise the benefits.

8. Why these five?

The five Southern Ambulance Services share boundaries and similar challenges and the Boards and Executive teams are "like minded" in their desire to improve services for people across the South of England. All are now in a position where they are in the process of transforming their services and setting out a new strategic direction to deal with their respective challenges.

The Northern Ambulance trusts already collaborate under the Northern Ambulance Alliance.

SCAS will represent the Isle of Wight Ambulance Service and ensure that they are included in relevant discussions and updated through regular communications.

9. Why not AACE?

Collaboration is about delivering improvements in care for five Trusts which face similar challenges and operate in a similar geographical area. AACE is a membership body representing the interests of all the UK's ambulance services and all five Trusts are already members. AACE is fully supportive of this Collaboration.

10. What examples of best practice does each Trust have?

One of the first pieces of work will be to identify which Trusts perform certain functions particularly well and where shared learning can make a real difference to the care we provide and to our staff's working lives.

There is not always "one right answer" and we will recognise this in our discussions, particularly when we are developing initiatives and scoping projects.

11. Is this a move to shared services? Does this mean resources / teams will be shared?

The focus of the Collaboration will be to leverage our collective knowledge and scale to improve our individual services. While there is a possibility in the future to share some services across Trusts, this will be undertaken only when there are clear operational/ clinical advantages for all participating Trusts.

Some Trusts already share/ outsource certain services to other NHS organisations. If this is the case for our 5 organisations, we will be looking to establish sustainable capacity and expertise.

All staff will be asked for their input and consulted widely before any changes are made and each Trust Board is ultimately responsible for the way in which services are provided.

12. What are the risks?

- a) Overstretching?
 - b) Reducing capacity to focus on individual trust priorities or concentrating expertise in one geographical area?
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- a) We must be conscious of the demands we place on our staff and we will continually monitor and manage these accordingly. If at any time staff feel they are overstretched, they should raise this with their line manager or HR colleagues.
 - b) All the members of the Collaboration recognise the need to maintain a focus on their own Trust priorities. It is where these priorities are aligned and there is an opportunity to work together that the Collaboration will focus its efforts. Each Trust can opt out of initiatives if they feel that it is not the best solution for them.

13. How can I get more information?



For
further
information please visit your local Trust's website or contact your local Trust's media
enquiries department.