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Ms Joanna Simons CBE
Chief Executive
Oxfordshire County Council
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Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust application

Thank you for kindly sharing with us the paper that is to be submitted to the County Council Cabinet recommending support for our Foundation Trust application. We also appreciate the acknowledgement that is given to the significant progress that we have made as an organisation in recent years.

I am happy to confirm in this letter the Trust Board's full and active commitment to the principles set out in your report.

The bedrock of the Trust's mission is the provision of high quality services to all our patients. In this respect, we do not make a distinction between local services and specialist services. This commitment is captured in the work we have been progressing under the banner of "Delivering Compassionate Excellence" to ensure that the values and behaviours that underpin compassionate excellence are at the heart of all our activities. We recognise that we can only fulfil our wider role as a major University Teaching Hospital if that role is based on the foundations of providing high quality local services for local people. We place a high priority on the care of frail older people. The redesign of our acute general medicine service and the introduction of a fully integrated psychological medicine service are two recent examples of this commitment to seek to improve, on a continuous basis, the way we deliver our local services.

We recognise that we only provide one piece of the jigsaw of care and support for the local population and that to provide high quality services requires all partners to focus on the whole patient and the full patient journey. This necessitates active and effective partnership working

From the Chief Executive's Office
Oxford University Hospitals

across all organisations. Nowhere is this more important than the difficult area of delayed transfers of care, where we are fully committed to working with the County Council, Oxford Health, General Practitioners and other key partners to address effectively this hitherto intractable problem within the Oxfordshire health and social care system.

In collaboration with other partners, if we are to respond effectively to the challenges that we collectively face, we need to redesign our joint approach to the delivery of health and social care. We recognise that this will require the development of service models that will shift care and treatment out of our hospital setting into the community, closer to patients. This direction of travel is fully reflected in our strategy and in our financial plans. The work to establish a supported discharge service that we have progressed recently and the joint establishment of emergency medical units out in the community are two examples of our support to this approach.

While our primary focus is acute care, the boundaries between different levels of care and different organisations need to be redefined. As one of the County's largest employers and delivering approaching one million patient contacts per year, there is enormous potential for us to play a significantly larger role in the wider public health agenda. This needs to be a key element of the redesign of the local approach to the delivery of health and social care in Oxfordshire. Moreover, we also need to exploit the strengths of the research being driven forward locally in collaboration with our academic partners to help facilitate this redesign. The research collaboration between ourselves, primary care and the University that is supporting the use of phone "apps" in the monitoring of people with long term conditions, is a concrete example of the potential for moving work out of the acute sector and promoting a more engaged self-care agenda which delivers better patient outcomes, higher patient satisfaction and financial savings.

As an integrated part of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, the Horton General Hospital has a significant and vibrant contribution to make to the achievement of our overall strategic vision. This contribution entails the maintenance of a broad range of services on the Horton site. This does not mean that there will not need to be changes at the Horton, as is the case at each of our other sites. However, these changes, which will need to reflect the strategies of our commissioners, will be based on firm clinical evidence and will be progressed in a full and transparent manner with the key stakeholders, as was done recently with the well received changes to the gynaecology service at the Horton. The new model of paediatric services, the expansion of chemotherapy services and the establishment of a Renal Dialysis Unit at the Horton are examples of the Trust Board's strong commitment to the future vision for the Horton General Hospital.


Each of the principles outlined in your recommendations, to which I have responded in the above paragraphs, were discussed in a very full and constructive manner at the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 September 2012. At the meeting Dame Fiona Caldicott and I welcomed the opportunity to be able to reaffirm in public the commitments given in this letter.

Foundation Trust status is not an end in itself but we do firmly believe that it will enable the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust to continue to work with our patients and our stakeholder partners much more effectively to provide high quality health and social care in a very challenged environment. We welcome the fact that this view is shared in the report that is to be submitted to your cabinet.

**From the Chief Executive's Office
Oxford University Hospitals**

Thank you once again for sharing the report with us.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon M', written in a cursive style.

Sir Jonathan Michael FRCP
Chief Executive