**Message from Gillian Norton, Chairman: New group model formed between Epsom and St Helier and St George’s**

Dear all,

As you know, I am committed to ensuring both Epsom and St Helier and St George’s progress and improve as organisations, and plan for the long-term. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of collaborating with our partners in Surrey and south west London to keep pace with new challenges.

We believe there are real advantages and opportunities to closer working between the two Trusts. This has been evident throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, but more so in the recent proposals to bring together renal inpatient services from both Trusts into a brand new renal unit; Epsom and St Helier joining the South West London Pathology Partnership; the establishment of interoperable Electronic Patient Record systems for the two Trusts; and working together for the future of patient transport services.

There is a lot to be proud of in this work, and the commitment to joint working is in line with the direction of travel for the health service nationally.

**Agreement of a group model**

As a result, the two Trust Boards have agreed to formalise these closer working arrangements and to form a group model. A group model means that the two Trusts will share a Chief Executive and a number of other key senior leaders, as well as my role as Chairman in Common. It allows for more joined-up, consistent care for local patients, who will have better access to a wider range of services, including specialist care.

By sharing skills, expertise and resources, we can also create a larger, more resilient workforce, better meet the growing demand for our services, and collaborate further on research, education, training and staff development.

Group models are already working well in a number of areas across the country, and it is important to stress that each Trust will continue to have its own Board. The organisations are not merging, and both Epsom and St Helier, and St George’s, will remain as statutory organisations in their own right.

For the overwhelming majority of staff, there will be no change in their employment by either Trust. Initially, a small number of very senior joint posts will be created to lead teams across both Trusts. There will, however, be more opportunity for staff to share skills, expertise and resources. Both Trusts have incredibly innovative clinical leaders creating new ways of delivering care, and by working together these can be adopted more quickly and widely.

Both Trusts will continue to work closely with local health and care partners, involve local stakeholders in how services are developed, and continue to be involved in the development of the wider health and care system. The development of the new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital at Sutton, and related changes to Epsom and St Helier hospitals, will continue and will be a priority for the new group.

**Group Chief Executive**

I’m delighted to announce that Jacqueline Totterdell, Chief Executive of St George’s, has been appointed Group Chief Executive following an interview yesterday.

Jacqueline is an experienced and accomplished leader, having led a number of NHS Trusts, and most recently taken St George’s out of quality and financial special measures, also leading the south west London acute hospitals system during the COVID pandemic and subsequent recovery.

As you may know, Daniel Elkeles, Chief Executive of Epsom and St Helier, recently accepted the role of Chief Executive with the London Ambulance Service. Daniel has played a key role in developing the collaboration between the Trusts, working closely with me, Jacqueline and the ESTH Board. Having been asked to go to LAS he decided he didn’t want to apply for the Group CEO role and is delighted that Jacqueline has been appointed.

As Group Chief Executive, Jacqueline will work closely with staff, leaders, clinical and corporate teams, and stakeholders at both Trusts to confirm new senior leadership structures, develop detailed plans for the group, and start to deliver the benefits of this new way of working. We will keep you, our patients, and staff engaged in the details of this work as it progresses.

I am also pleased to confirm that the Surrey Downs place based board, which has membership from all organisations and sectors across Surrey Downs, has elected Thirza Sawtell, Director of Integration at Epsom and St Helier, to replace Daniel as their place-based leader. Thirza will combine her Trust executive role with leading the place of Surrey Downs and membership of the Surrey Heartlands executive team.

It is clear to me – and the Boards of both Trusts – that we can achieve more by working together, and today’s announcement means we can maximise these benefits for patients, staff, and the communities we serve.

Thank you,

**Gillian Norton OBE DL**

**Chairman**

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