

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you consulting about this and why can't you just do it?

While not formally required to consult, we believe that following this process provides us with the best opportunity to hear from our people, communities and stakeholders and for them to meaningfully be able to help shape our proposal.

Has this happened anywhere else?

Yes. Across the country there are currently 70 CCGs considering proposals to merge into a total of 16 CCGs by April 2020. Locally this includes three CCGs across Coventry and Warwickshire as well as two CCGs across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. A few years ago, the three CCGs in Birmingham and Solihull also agreed to merge following a public consultation process.

Why is option one your preference?

Option one (to merge by April 2020) is the best way to deliver future commissioning across the combined Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP area. It may be disruptive in the short term, but it would allow us to fairly quickly move towards less bureaucracy and more capacity, leading to services that are consistent, fair and high quality; offering consistency for patients and reducing health inequalities.

Will this change the CCGs' commissioning intentions?

No. We are already working to a system wide plan; having a single commissioning voice will make it easier for us to achieve our objectives and commission consistently for patients.

Can you provide assurance that one area doesn't lose out to the other?

A single commissioning organisation will ensure that we are able to work more consistently and make our resources go further; delivering fair and equitable outcomes for patients.

We understand that there may be some concerns that local 'grass roots' engagement and relationships would be sacrificed. We would need to ensure that a consistent approach, based on best practice, was quickly implemented to ensure that this doesn't happen.

There are also some excellent joint working initiatives already taking place across the all four current CCGs, which reflect the needs of local populations.

What about seldom heard groups?

The CCGs have a legal duty, under the Equality Act 2010, to remove or minimise any disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics e.g. people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME), disabled people and people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) community. We work hard to fulfil our duty and this will continue to happen.

What is an 'Integrated Care System'?

Integrated care systems (ICSs) bring together local NHS organisations, often in partnership with social care services and the voluntary sector. They build on the learning from and early results of NHS England's new care model 'vanguards', which are showing benefits such as slowing emergency hospitalisations growth by up to two thirds compared with other less integrated parts of the country.

How would a single CCG fit within an Integrated Care System?

A single commissioning organisation would provide a consistent view across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire, regarding the principles and development of new models of care. The CCGs would become a more strategic and stronger commissioner, speaking with one voice, in line with the development of integrated care systems.

How will the new governance arrangements work for a single CCG?

A single commissioning organisation would have one Accountable Officer, one Chair, a Governing Body and a single Management Team. All statutory obligations, committees and functions would be retained.

Have you made your decision already?

No, not at all. Whilst we have a preferred option, we have been engaging with a wide range of people to get their views on this and the other options. We need this feedback to ensure that we're making the right choices and using their feedback to inform our thinking; it's important that people tell us what they think about our plans.

If the preferred option goes ahead, what will happen to staff?

If the preferred option is to merge the four CCGs by April 2020 this would mean reducing four Governing Bodies and the Executive Management Teams into one; there will naturally be some senior staff affected by this. However, it's too early to comment on this, as the decision hasn't been made on the future of the CCGs.

What we can say is that we would make every effort to avoid any redundancies as part of the process, and instead manage this through natural turnover and in some cases looking at opportunities for staff to change roles.

If the preferred option goes ahead, where will the new CCG be based?

It's too early to comment on this, as the decision hasn't been made on the future of the CCGs. However, there are currently three main office bases being used by the four CCGs (one in Bromsgrove, one in Hereford and one in Worcester) and we do not imagine that would change over the next few years at least.