

[News story: Manchester hospital trusts request fast track merger reference](#)

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The CMA has opened a phase 1 investigation into the anticipated merger between 2 hospital trusts in central Manchester.

Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) and University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM) have announced they are planning to merge.

UHSM includes Wythenshawe Hospital and Withington Community Hospital, and CMFT includes Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Altrincham Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, The University Dental Hospital and Trafford Hospitals.

The ability of patients and commissioning bodies to choose between hospitals gives healthcare providers incentives to improve the quality of their services for the benefit of patients.

Therefore, under the Enterprise Act 2002 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will now investigate the impact this merger could have on patient choice and the quality of healthcare services provided.

The CMA has also received a request from CMFT and UHSM to fast-track the investigation, and so it is today issuing an invitation for interested parties to [comment on the request](#).

The CMA is able to accelerate the referral of a merger case to an in-depth phase 2 investigation when requested by the merging parties. If the CMA proceeds with using the fast track procedure, it would expect to make a decision on referral within the next 15 working days.

The CMA and its predecessors (Office of Fair Trading and Competition Commission) have investigated a number of hospital mergers, most recently [Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#).