

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

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Part of:

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](#).

Injured finless porpoise found, in stable condition

After three days of searching, an injured finless porpoise was finally discovered Thursday afternoon in the Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater lake.

Finless porpoise protection volunteers in Jiangxi Province discovered a large fishhook on the back of the endangered animal, using a long-focus lens on Feb. 5, but the the animal disappeared before they could help.

Jiangxi Provincial Fishery Department initiated a search for the animal after being informed by volunteers. Hydrobiology experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences also joined the search.

Experts said the porpoise seemed to be in stable condition, and are making plans to capture the porpoise to offer it assistance.

Zhan Shupin, a department employee, said it was hard to catch it since it was in a water channel 400 meters wide and 20 meters deep.

Rarer than China's giant panda, the finless porpoise is a mammal similar to the dolphin, and now teeters on the brink of extinction, with a population of around 1,000. About 450 live in the Poyang Lake.

£20m to build homes fit for the future

The programme, which will initially be funded by £20m over the next two years, will contribute to the 20,000 affordable homes target the Welsh Government aims to provide over this term of government. The innovative homes, which will help to significantly reduce or eliminate fuel bills, will inform the Welsh Government about the type of homes it should support in the future.

The Cabinet Secretary made the announcement at the Innovative Housing Design Conference at the Cardiff City Stadium, jointly hosted by the Welsh Government, The Welsh Local Government Association and Community Housing Cymru.

He said:

“The housing sector in Wales is facing many challenges. We know we need to build more homes, quickly. We know the homes we build have to be cheaper to heat, more environmentally friendly and more

capable of responding to the demographic challenges ahead.

“I’m looking for new ideas, new ways of doing things, both in terms of what we build and how we build them. We need to start looking at more innovation, at homes that can be built faster as panels in factories or whole units delivered to site on lorries. We need to look at what homes are made from and what else they offer in terms of fuel bills, carbon emissions, jobs.

“Building homes delivers important benefits beyond simply putting a roof over people’s heads. Alongside the well-documented health and education benefits that good quality housing provides for children and families, building homes of all tenures has a significant positive impact on the Welsh economy and on our communities. We can use the Welsh supply chain to unlock massive opportunities for growth and innovation in housing.

To qualify for support under the programme, homes must:

- be deliverable quickly
- be affordable and meet housing need
- create jobs and training opportunities, supporting Welsh businesses wherever possible
- significantly reduce or erase fuel bills and carbon emissions
- be healthy and comfortable to live in, reflecting the needs of the occupant
- be certified for quality.

“My ambition is to start changing the type of homes built in Wales. Homes that are capable of being delivered at speed and cost and recycled, not just reused, if needs change. Homes that help to meet the challenges of climate change, fuel poverty and changing demographics with the huge pressures that puts on our health and social care budgets.”

Community Housing Cymru’s (CHC) Chief Executive Stuart Ropke said:

“CHC welcomes this latest investment by Welsh Government into innovative solutions for the housing crisis in Wales. Housing solutions need to be adaptable and flexible so that the sector can continue to provide a wide range of options for more people, and funding from this programme to turn aspiration into delivery will be key to this. The sector is up for the challenges set out in the Housing Supply Pact announced last December and we will continue to work with Welsh Government and WLGA to meet the 20,000 target.”

The WLGA’s spokesperson for housing, Councillor Dyfed Edwards, said:

“Local authorities have a full role to play in enabling and delivering the homes we need across Wales, and it is important that with this increased focus and investment in housing we do not miss the opportunity to explore new models of housing that deliver more efficient and affordable homes.”

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