

Press Release
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Cheadle Royal Hospital announces partnership with UNISON

A leading independent mental health hospital has demonstrated its commitment to effective employee relations by announcing a groundbreaking Recognition Agreement with UNISON.

The senior management team at Cheadle Royal Hospital in Cheshire and senior stewards from UNISON signed a Recognition Agreement on 11 August which will help provide a continuing professional service for staff and patients.

Cheadle Royal Hospital, operated by Affinity Healthcare, offers a full range of mental health services to the NHS and is one of a few independent hospitals to enter into this type of agreement with UNISON. The Recognition Agreement is a significant step forward for both the union and the independent sector.

UNISON, which is Britain and Europe's biggest public sector union, representing services such as local authorities, the NHS, the police service and schools, will work closely with Cheadle Royal Hospital to help sustain good employee relations resulting in the best possible service to patients receiving care at the hospital.

Sarah Humphreys, Human Resources and Development Manager at the hospital, said: "UNISON first approached us over 12 months ago and we're delighted to have been able to negotiate an agreement that will benefit both staff and patients. The agreement means that we'll consult with UNISON on matters affecting the majority of our staff which includes pay, policies, holidays, facility time and shift patterns."

Frank Jeffers a UNISON senior steward said: "We will work on behalf of our members to develop and improve wherever possible the services that we're proud to provide, working closely with managers at every level to achieve this through good communication and organisation within the workplace."

As part of the Agreement, both parties have signed up to a number of performance objectives to ensure that good employee relations are maintained. The aim is to have seven accredited UNISON representatives at the hospital, which will mean that staff will have access to an accredited union representative 24 hours a day. The representatives will also help undertake health and safety inspections on a quarterly basis. The objectives and performance against them will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Commenting on the new working partnership Cheadle Royal's Hospital Director, Ian McComiskie, said: "We are committed to positive communication with all staff and welcome the agreement that has been reached. We are looking forward to working in partnership with UNISON."

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Notes to Editors:

Affinity Healthcare operates two growing hospitals Cheadle Royal Hospital near Manchester Airport and Middleton St George Hospital in Darlington. It provides a full range of complex mental health services to the NHS and is developing new services on both sites to provide a whole system pathway of care for patients with mental health problems.

Services currently include:-

- Male-only Psychiatric Intensive Care
- Female-only Psychiatric Intensive Care
- Low Secure Rehabilitation
- Rehabilitation in a 'step-down intensive' therapeutic environment for men
- Female specific rehabilitation and complex care
- Complex low-stimulus rehabilitation for men
- Community-based rehabilitation
- Eating Disorders Services
- Young People's Services
- Primary Care Therapy Services
- Dual Diagnosis Service

www.affinityhealth.co.uk