

When Two Become One

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Blood and Transplant

Background

In 2019, City Hospitals Sunderland NHSFT merged with South Tyneside NHSFT to form South Tyneside and Sunderland NHSFT.

Acute services including emergency medicine and level 3 critical care have been maintained on both sites.

In terms of donation activity, Sunderland was a level 3 trust, and South Tyneside level 4.

Merging Trust Organ Donation Activity

Each legacy Trust had their own organ donation group, SN-OD and CL-OD.

We have merged to a single organ donation group and produced trust-level policies and standard operating procedures.

Challenges

Cultural norms needed a 'new normal' as the group formed, with a willingness to adapt.

In the early stages of the merger there was role duplication (site specific roles), risking an unwieldy group and maintenance of single site solutions.

The needs of each site need to be remembered – donation potential, staffing, geography etc differs between sites so solutions must be applicable to both.

Opportunities

Combined, the Trust is now level 2. This recognition of activity has opened opportunities including increased SN-OD resource, and greater research eligibility.

The pool of potential group members has increased, allowing vacant positions to be more easily filled.

The merger was opportunity to 'start again', considering the strengths of the legacy groups.

Top Tips

Chase the money – each group will have it's own historical budget, potentially with different flows – aligning these early is important.

Identify the issues that a single site has found historically difficult – the merger may provide a 'quick win'.

Keep your enthusiastic members but look critically at existing arrangements and practices.

Utilise any economies of scale but also identify any opportunities that size can bring.



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