

New chair in common appointed

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Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (BHRUT) and Barts Health group are delighted to announce the appointment of the Right Honourable Jacqui Smith as our new chair in common.

Jacqui is joining us at an important and exciting time in the development of our two organisations as, together, we strive to recover from Covid-19, tackle our waiting lists, improve our urgent and emergency care and respond to the stark health inequalities in north-east London that were exacerbated by the global pandemic.

Our two trusts have been working closely together throughout Covid-19. We have coordinated care for our critically ill patients and worked closely together to deliver our elective recovery programme.

In recent months, working under the umbrella of our integrated care system (ICS), we have been examining, with staff and stakeholders, the benefits of deeper collaboration and what more we can learn from each other. We have also been focusing on our place-based health and care partnerships with our respective boroughs. The appointment of Jacqui Smith is the next, significant step in building a closer partnership.

For the past eight years Jacqui has been chair of University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. In 1997, Jacqui was elected as the MP for Redditch and served for 13 years. She was one of the longest serving ministers in the Labour government and the first female Home Secretary.

Reacting to her appointment, Jacqui Smith said: “It is an honour, a privilege and a responsibility to become the first chair in common of Barts Health and BHRUT.

“I’m excited about getting to know BHRUT and Barts and helping them to build on their strengths and identify ways they can work more effectively together. I’m looking forward to joining the diverse and vibrant communities of north-east London and getting out to listen and to learn how the two trusts can play their full part as NHS partners.

“As we develop our closer collaboration, my guiding principles will be to ensure we bring people with us and that it delivers tangible benefits for our staff and for all the residents we serve.”

Jacqui Smith will take up her new position on 1 October 2021. The two trusts will remain separate bodies with their own boards.

Welcoming Jacqui’s appointment, Dame Alwen Williams DBE, group chief executive of Barts Health said: “I am delighted to welcome Jacqui and I look forward to working alongside her. Jacqui’s appointment means we can increase the pace of our collaborative working and deliver further improvements that will benefit our patients, staff and communities.”

Echoing these sentiments, Matthew Trainer, BHRUT’s incoming substantive chief executive, said: “With the help of Jacqui’s extensive experience, we are embarking on the next important stage in the history of our two organisations.

“At BHRUT we want to share our learnings in the areas where we excel and also learn from Barts Health in a way that can only benefit our patients.”

There are already a number of co-chair appointments between NHS trusts in London that are endorsed by national policy. Our closer working relationship is also endorsed by national policy and driven by the lessons learnt across the two trusts during the pandemic.

“I would like to welcome Jacqui to north-east London. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ian Peters for his leadership of Barts Health and for guiding us through one of the most challenging times faced by the NHS, and to Mike Bell for his leadership of BHRUT in recent months,” said Marie Gabriel CBE, chair of the North East London Integrated Care System.

Ian Peters is standing down to chair the new Health Security Agency. Mike Bell, BHRUT’s chair, will continue in his role as chair of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust to build a truly integrated system in south-west London.