



[Daily Insight](#)

Daily Insight: Leadership pangs on the Peninsula

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Although the Cornish NHS was spared the worst of the pandemic pressures that have overwhelmed other parts of the NHS, it's been a rocky ride for leaders on England's peninsula.

HSJ has revealed that Phil Confue, the long-serving chief executive of the county's community and mental health provider Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust, has resigned – [and his departure comes shortly after two external leadership reviews](#).

The complete picture has not yet emerged but *HSJ* has learned that a review by Carole Taylor Browne last autumn unearthed allegations of governance and financial issues at CPFT.

HSJ understands a Fit and Proper Person Test was subsequently carried out into Mr Confue early this year, which has been completed and received by the trust's acting chair Margaret Schwarz.

On Friday last week, the trust's staff were told Mr Confue had resigned and would be retiring from the NHS on 7 April. His replacement, Matthew Patrick (formerly CEO of South London and Maudsley FT) started work at the trust today on an interim basis.

HSJ also revealed that CPFT issued a full apology to its finance director after she was suspended following allegations made – by staff at the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust – which turned out to be unsubstantiated.

With RCHT last month being [warned by the Care Quality Commission over a spate of never events](#) last year, it is clear there is much tidying up ahead for Cornwall's health chiefs.

The Boris boost?

The competition for capital funding to redevelop (or build new) hospitals has intensified for trusts on the government's priority list.

Initially, six trusts' major capital schemes were announced as priorities for completion by 2025, but [two more trusts have quietly been promoted to this exalted group](#).

Manchester University Foundation Trust and The Hillingdon Hospitals FT – in Boris Johnson’s constituency – have been added to the list of “frontrunners”, which are in contention for a share of £3.7bn to fund their new builds. Both trusts’ plans were seen as advanced enough to earn promotion from the group of 21 trusts expecting funding between 2025 and 2030. Hillingdon also has one of the highest backlog maintenance costs of all trusts.

However, £3.7bn is unlikely to be enough to fund all eight projects, and two of the trusts on the list – Barts Health and West Hertfordshire Hospitals – expect their scheme to stretch beyond 2025.

At an event last week, senior responsible officer for the New Hospital Programme (more commonly known as the “40 new hospitals” programme) Natalie Forrest said decisions had not been made over the order in which trusts would receive funding.

This seems to leave open the possibility of some of the frontrunners being at risk of waiting until more capital funding is announced for the hospital building programme – likely to be in 2025 – before putting spades in the ground.