# Press Release | 26 March 2025

**Mark Friend appointed as Hospitals Group Interim Chair**

Mark Friend has been appointed as Interim Group Chair of the newly formed Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group.

Mark, who is currently Chair of the James Paget University Hospitals (JPUH), will take up his post at the beginning of April.

His appointment, which was confirmed by the Councils of Governors at all three hospitals, means there will be a single Chair for the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals, The James Paget University Hospitals, and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn for the first time.

It marks the start of the hospitals’ transition to a group model of operation. In the coming weeks a substantive CEO will be appointed for the group. This will be followed by other appointments to the group executive team.

Mark said: “We are at the start of a new chapter in collaboration between the three acute hospitals in Norfolk and Waveney. It is a privilege to be starting as Interim Group Chair at a pivotal time and I’m excited to work with the leadership teams, getting to know staff across all three trusts and engaging with local communities across Norfolk and Waveney.

“We can build on the existing strengths of the three Trusts to make a real difference in health outcomes and realise the opportunities that all three trusts share to make a real difference to the communities we serve. I hope that my previous experience of leading service change and strategic transformation will help the fantastic teams in all three trusts on this journey to deliver for their local communities.”

Tracey Bleakley, Chief Executive of NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, said: “I want to congratulate Mark on his appointment, I know he will do a brilliant job. He has an excellent track record of managing changes to public services and his experience will help us through the next stages of forming the group model and improving services for patients.

“This is a really important point in the process, which ultimately will help us to tackle waiting lists and ensure people can be treated quickly in an emergency, while also improving efficiency and delivering better value for money.”

Mark spent many years as a senior executive in media, digital and the third sector and brings extensive experience in transformation, strategy and digital leadership. He has been Chair of the JPUH since October 2023 and is also a Non-Executive Director

at Provide CiC and Senior Independent Director at IC24. He was previously Senior Independent Director at North East London Foundation Trust. He chairs the Artis Foundation and has been a Trustee of the National Centre for Circus Arts since 2022.

The Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group model will see a single Chair, a single CEO, and a single set of Executive and Non-Executive Directors across the three acute hospitals. Each hospital will have an Executive Managing Director who will be a full member of the Group Board.

It is anticipated the transition to a group model of operation will be complete by October 2025.

**Ends. Notes to editors;** For media enquiries only, please contact Communications Team, [media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk) or 01553 613216. For all other enquiries, please contact QEH Switchboard on 01553 613613.