

To: David Clayton-Smith (Chair)
Matthew Bryant (Chief Executive)
Dorset Healthcare University NHS
Foundation Trust

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

cc. Jonathan Higman, Chief Executive,
NHS Dorset ICB

27 May 2026

Sue Doheny, South West Regional
Director, NHS England

Dear David and Matthew,

Application for advanced foundation trust status

We are pleased to inform you that NHS England has reviewed your trust's application to become an advanced foundation trust and is satisfied that it meets the relevant criteria set out in the [Advanced Foundation Trust Programme - Guide for Applicants](#) (version published for consultation on 12 November 2025).

Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust is therefore approved as an advanced foundation trust and as of 1 June 2026, you will be able to exercise the freedoms and flexibilities set out in the Advanced Foundation Trust Programme Policy Framework, which will be published separately.

As set out in the Guide for Applicants, we remind you that advanced foundation trust status will not be static, with the possibility of removal where standards and, critically, provider capability drops in the future. The advanced foundation trust designation is also subject to review every 5 years, to help incentivise continuous improvement, or earlier if triggered by a material and ongoing deterioration in delivery and/or capability.

Advanced foundation trusts will be subject to a rules-based, capability-focused oversight approach which will provide greater operational autonomy for trust boards with less central oversight. Advanced foundation trusts will also have greater financial flexibilities to use their surpluses to support revenue or capital spending, subject to the arrangements set out in the Advanced Foundation Trust Policy Framework and any supporting guidance. In return for

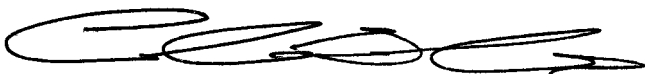
these freedoms, we expect an open and transparent relationship, with advanced foundation trusts informing the centre of any material concerns on a 'no surprises' basis and unless there are serious concerns requiring immediate attention, advanced foundation trusts will have more time to address operational issues.

We expect advanced foundation trusts to demonstrate how they are using their freedoms to deliver improved care, be local leaders and actively drive the three shifts – prevention, digital and community-based care. This will inform the oversight relationship.

As mentioned in the application kick-off meeting, we welcome the opportunity to carry out a two-way feedback session to seek your views on the advanced foundation trust process itself and for the team to provide further details on improvement areas identified during the course of our review. A member of the assessment team will contact you soon to arrange a time to discuss feedback from the review.

Finally, I would like to recognise the significant commitment and professionalism shown by you and your team throughout the assessment process. Congratulations on achieving advanced foundation trust status. I look forward to seeing how you use the freedoms this confers to lead innovation, strengthen outcomes and deliver lasting improvements in population health for the communities you serve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen Burley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Glen Burley

Deputy Chief Executive,
NHS England