

NHS Cumbria appoints LIFT partner

NHS Cumbria's plans to build a new community hospital in Cockermouth and Health Centre at Cleator Moor are continuing to move ahead with the appointment last month of Express LIFT Investments Limited (ELIL) as our LIFT partner.

A new Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) company for Cumbria, to be named eLIFT Cumbria, is now being established to finance and redevelop the county's primary care buildings.

eLIFT Cumbria will now work with NHS Cumbria to finalise plans and manage the re-build of Cumbria's once-doomed community hospitals, building local supply chains where possible to deliver high-quality, flexible and sustainable healthcare facilities. The LIFT model will also allow a range of other buildings to be procured, from small GP practices to one-stop health centres, including the new facility at Cleator Moor.

Our new LIFT Company will work with local organisations to provide modern, tailor-made health buildings, involving the private sector where they can add most experience and value. Most importantly, it will provide investment in integrated primary care services in areas where patients most need it.

Currently around half of PCTs in England are using NHS LIFT to update facilities and build new, modern GP surgeries, health centres and walk-in centres. LIFT enables PCTs and local authorities to develop new capital schemes faster than traditional procurement methods and provides a framework for long-term partnership between the public sector and private sector developers.

These buildings are owned by the public-private partnership, run by the LIFTCo and leased or rented to service providers. LIFT has already delivered £1.5 billion of new primary healthcare buildings across England.

Unlike Private Finance Initiatives (PFI), the LIFTCo is not exclusively owned by the private sector. It is 40% owned by the public sector and 60% owned by a private sector partner. Representatives from NHS Cumbria will sit on the board of the company.

The re-building of Cumbria's once-doomed community hospitals is a central part of the primary care trust's drive to provide more health services, closer to where people live.

Following the appointment of ELIL, designs and costs are now being progressed to develop a building schedule for the redevelopment of Cockermouth community hospital, Cleator Moors new health centre, and the other prioritised community health facilities.