

# Fears over future of mental health trust

■ **Bosses withdraw 'foundation status' bid**

■ **Group falls short of watchdog's benchmarks**

**LAMY GLEDINNING**

**T**HE future of mental health care in Manchester has been thrown into doubt after an NHS trust was unable to meet the financial or care standards to secure its long-term survival.

After four years' work Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust bosses have had to withdraw an application to get Foundation Trust status. The M.E.N. understands the

trust, which cares for 12,000 of the city's most vulnerable people, fell short of benchmarks set by health watchdog Monitor for financial management, the standard of care provided and the range of help on offer.

**'We have concerns about services for adults'**

All trusts must gain 'foundation status' to be allowed more autonomy in the services they offer and access to more funding by 2016, but must meet rigorous standards to quality.

The trust is expected to continue providing services for the next two years until its contract ends. A major review of the city's mental health care is due to outline the future of care later this year.

Manchester's Care Commissioning Groups, which decides what health services should be provided in the city, said it would continue to work with the trust - but warned there was room for improvement.

Dr Martin Whiting, chief clinical officer of North Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group, added: "We have concerns about services for adults of working age experiencing severe mental

health crises." "In addition, the balance of services between age groups is not well enough aligned to the pattern of local needs."

A spokesman for health watchdog Monitor said: "Moni-

tor worked closely with the trust as it underwent assessment for foundation trust status, but the trust recognises that it is unable to meet the threshold for authorisation and has decided to withdraw from the process."

The decision to scrap its application comes just a fortnight after staff from the trust, which runs mental health units at Wythenshawe and North Manchester hospitals, were still attending community events to spread the foundation trust message.

But bosses defended the project, started in 2009, as still being 'rewarding' as it drove up standards.

Trust chairwoman Wyn Dignan said: "The decision to step out of the process has not been taken lightly but we believe it is the responsible thing to do while we await publication of our commissioners' intentions for a best-in-class mental health system for the city."

"The Monitor process [to get foundation status] has been of value because it has helped us to continually review and develop robust systems of accountability and governance, which in turn enable us to improve the quality of care we provide to service users."

The decision is the latest in a string of controversies for the Trust, including being put on a 'critical' list by the Government in 2010 after tracking up debts of £4.5m.

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**▶▶ RUN BUDDIES** Nurses Lois Greenhalgh and Nicola McCormick are taking part in the Race For Life at Tatten Park

**Brave nurse and colleagues in cancer fundraising run**

A NURSE who is suffering from cancer and her colleagues are hoping to raise hundreds of pounds for research into the disease.

Around 20 nurses from St Mary's and Wythenshawe hospitals in Manchester will take part in Race For Life at Tatten Park.

The two groups were inspired to take part after nurse Nicola McCormick, 29, was diagnosed with non-hodgkin lymphoma last year.

Nicola - a former St Mary's

nurse now working as a sister in the neo-natal unit at Wythenshawe Hospital - is having radiotherapy at The Christie. She will take part in the women-only 5km run on June 30 along with best friend Lois Greenhalgh and colleagues. Nicola, a mum-of-one who lives in Edgeley, Stockport, said: "It's amazing that so many nurses from both hospitals have signed up to do it."

To sponsor the St Mary's nurses team go to [raceforlife.sponsorhome.org/nics-chicks3](http://raceforlife.sponsorhome.org/nics-chicks3).