Early Market Engagement Brief

**Kingston & Richmond NHS Foundation Trust**

**Assisted Conception Unit Joint Venture Partner**

# Introduction

## About Us

### Kingston and Richmond NHS Foundation Trust (“the Authority”)

Kingston Hospital provides a full range of acute services and Teddington Memorial Hospital provides short-stay rehabilitation services.

Community careis provided directly by the Authority in the London borough of Richmond, and the Authority works in partnership with *Your Healthcare*to provide community care in Kingston.

The Assisted Conception Unit (“ACU”) at Kingston Hospital currently delivers c. 500 cycles p.a., of which c. 72% are NHS funded and c. 28% are self-funded on NHS terms and service levels (Based on 2024 Trust Data).

The Authority does not have its own embryology lab and uses a ‘Transport IVF’ model whereby eggs are collected at Kingston Hospital and taken by a partner, friend or family member to Kings Fertility Clinic, Denmark Hill. The ACU does not extensively market itself to generate additional referrals but given the catchment area and other available research, the Authority believes that considerable incremental private growth would be possible if the Authority had a better equipped ACU with its own embryology lab and if it were then to proactively market itself.

### South West London Procurement Partnership (“SWLPP”)

SWLPP is a shared service covering Croydon, Epsom & St Helier, Kingston & Richmond and St George’s NHS Trusts and is supporting the Authority with this initiative.

## Background

With increasing demand for fertility services driven by demographic trends and advancements in reproductive medicine alongside operational, accommodation and financial pressures on the Authority, there is a critical requirement for the Authority to identify alternative methods of delivering and expanding access for its patients to high-quality assisted conception treatments.

The Authority’s current strategic approach is to seek a strategic Joint Venture (“JV”) partner with the necessary clinical expertise, operational capacity and commercial appetite to collaborate on establishing and operating an industry leading ACU for the area. It is envisaged this unit will provide advanced fertility treatments, including In Vitro Fertilization (“IVF”), Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (“ICSI”), egg/sperm donation, and fertility preservation services as well as have the potential to offer enhanced services such as Pre-implantation Genetic Testing (“PGT”), to deliver against current requirements and future patient demand opportunities in the catchment area.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Authority is open to other operational and commercial approaches and invites respondents to use this Early Market Engagement as an opportunity to describe alternative models that may be more appropriate in delivering the Authority’s desired outcomes.

# Guidance

## Purpose of this Early Market Engagement

This Early Market Engagement is being conducted ahead of any formal tender that may be issued. The purpose is to gather information, understand market capabilities, test the feasibility of the project, and encourage competition, which can help the Authority:

1. Design its procedure, conditions of participation and award criteria;
2. Shape the tender requirements and improve the quality and relevance of future bids;
3. Identifying potential suppliers best placed to meet the requirements of the Authority .

Accordingly, the Authority has purposely left the Early Market Engagement questionnaire broad with the intention of securing the widest possible range of responses and options to inform its future strategic direction.

The Authority invites suppliers to submit relevant queries to enable suitable submissions and may where pertinent, share queries and Trust responses with other respondents to facilitate the best possible outcome for the Authority.

Following receipt of the questionnaire responses and before any future tender may be issued, the Authority expects to engage all or a subset of Participants (dependent entirely on the Authority’s available Clinical and Management time available) in further interactive discussions to further inform Authority requirements and approach to market.

**This briefing must be read in conjunction with Early Market Engagement Instruction Letter containing the instructions which include but is not limited to the proposed timetable for this activity, instructions on submission of responses and general guidance on the process.**

## Transparency

In the interests of transparency, it should be noted by potential respondents that the Authority previously embarked on an exercise to establish a partner with whom ACU services could be provided, which was abandoned in 2019/2020 around the time of the Covid Pandemic.

This is a new attempt to identify and secure a suitable partner with whom the Authority can create an appropriate operating and commercial model to meet the needs of both NHS and Privately-Funding patients requiring ACU services.

**For the avoidance of doubt, respondents who made proposals on the previous market approach (successful or otherwise) are not excluded from this process and if interested, are invited to submit a response to this Early Market Engagement.**

## High Level Project Objectives

### Aims

* Combine NHS and Private Sector expertise and resources to develop a fully equipped Assisted Conception Unit.
* Deliver comprehensive patient focused, evidence-based assisted conception services including counselling for both NHS and Privately-Funding patients, and where appropriate provide diagnostic services for Privately-Funding patients.
* Ensure compliance with all regulatory and accreditation standards (e.g., HFEA and other relevant bodies).
* Share operational responsibility, risks and rewards equitably.
* Establish a sustainable and scalable business model which has the capacity to tap into the future growth potential.
* Drive innovation and clinical excellence in fertility care.

### Scope of JV Partners Contribution

* Expertise, technology, financial, and operational capability.
* Clinical expertise in assisted reproductive medicine and embryology.
* Investment capability including capital funding for facility setup and ongoing operations.
* Commitment to risk-sharing.
* Experience in managing fertility or related healthcare services.
* Access to advanced laboratory infrastructure and technologies.
* Marketing, patient acquisition, and referral networks and strategies.
* Regulatory compliance and quality assurance.
* Knowledge of relevant regulatory frameworks.

### Desired Outcomes

* An ACU capable of serving NHS patients and Privately-Funding patients with a high degree of patient satisfaction and clinical success rates.
* Maximisation of growth in patient volumes and revenue, with clear ROI metrics.
* Provide the Authority with a strengthened position in the fertility treatment market.

### Pre-requisites of any JV partner

* Proven expertise and experience in assisted conception or directly related healthcare sectors.
* Strong financial stability and investment capacity.
* Commitment to quality, innovation, and patient-centred care.
* Ability to navigate regulatory frameworks effectively.
* Strategic alignment with the Authority’s mission and values.

### Potential Authority Parameters

As at the date of this Early Market Engagement exercise, the following items have been identified as Authority parameters that are likely to influence any future operating/commercial model. Accordingly, these should be considered in any response you make to this Early Market Engagement but should not prevent you from indicating alternatives that would deliver an optimal outcome, but which may be dependent on these items.

It is anticipated that:

* Kingston Hospital and/or other existing NHS Kingston and Richmond Trust Sites will not be an option for locating the ACU due to known space constraints and competing service requirements.
* The Authority is not able to contribute Capital funding into the proposed JV for the ACU for up front development.
* The Authority is not able to transfer revenue to the proposed JV for the ACU for ongoing operational costs.
* Any site location for the ACU is preferred to be within 3.5 miles radius of Kingston Hospital main campus and that it should include good transport links and ideally parking.
* A continuation of the current Transport model is no longer considered viable, operationally or commercially. Accordingly, the Authority’s preference is for a future operating model which delivers end-to-end clinical assisted conception services from a single site. The Authority is willing to consider alternatives to a single site model including satellite scenario’s provided Transport does not form part of the solution and the satellite model is proven to be effective, supports high success rates and does not add to the commercial burden.
* TUPE of existing nursing and administrative staff (but not Consultants) will apply.

# Early Market Engagement Response

## Participant Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the organisation** |  |
| **Company Registration Address** |  |
| **Head Office Address (if different to above)** |  |
| **Company Registration Number** |  |
| **Contact Name:** |  |
| **Job Title:** |  |
| **Telephone:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Website Address:** |  |

## Early Market Engagement Questionnaire

Respondents to note that unless otherwise stated each question in the table below has a 750-word limit.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | **Please provide a summary/introduction about your organisation and your experience in delivering Assisted Conception services (either for the NHS or privately) and whether this is on a stand-alone or Joint Venture capacity** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **2** | **Please summarise your understanding of the current and likely future market landscape in relation to Assisted Conception Services in the Authority catchment area as described, and the wider South West London area.** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **3** | **What would you suggest as being the optimal operating model for an Assisted Conception Unit for the Authority?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **4** | **What would you suggest as being the optimal commercial model for an Assisted Conception Unit for the Authority?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **5** | **If you were to partner with the Authority in providing these services, how would you maximise growth in patient numbers and consequently income?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **6** | **Do you have examples of success and evidence of benefits that you have achieved elsewhere that are relevant to this potential opportunity and can you share these?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **7** | **Describe how would you best address the changes in future NHS funding for Assisted Conception Services and how they may impact the Authority’s preferred approach as outlined?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **8** | **Are there any other key issues or gaps that the Authority should consider and describe these?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **9** | **Are there any potential regulatory or compliance issues we should be aware of as we move through the process?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **10** | **What, if anything, would make this potential opportunity more attractive to you?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **11** | **What would you require from the Authority to make an ACU Joint Venture viable.** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **12** | **What do you believe the Critical Success Factors are for evaluating the selection of an ACU Joint Venture partner and for ensuring the relationship remains viable and successful once live.** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **13** | **What are the main risks you can identify in the Authoritys desire to create a JV to deliver off site ACU services and what mitigations could be applied?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |
| **14** | **Whilst the Authority has expressed an interest in pursuing a JV model, what alternative models could you recommend the Authority considers? Do you have any innovative solutions or approaches that could improve the project outcomes.** |
|  |
| **15** | **Please can you confirm if you are happy for us to contact you directly with any follow ups in relation to this Early Market Engagement exercise?** |
| [Enter Response Here] |

**End**