

NHS private patient units: Expanding via partnerships and key considerations

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The expansion of private patient units (PPUs) within NHS hospitals provides an exciting opportunity to unlock innovation, revenue and capacity for trusts. This hub is designed to demystify the challenges, opportunities and strategic considerations for NHS trusts.

Fulfilling the latent potential of PPUs could be one of the easiest routes for trusts to achieve commercial income and can be done through collaboration with the private healthcare sector, which has been encouraged by the UK government to address resource challenges that have led to lengthy waiting lists for NHS patients.

What is an NHS private patient unit?

PPUs are specialised units within NHS hospitals that offer private healthcare services to patients (alongside the trust continuing to deliver its NHS services).

These units are designed to provide patients with the option to receive treatment on a private basis, often with quicker access to consultations, treatments and a choice of doctors.

The income generated from these private services is reinvested back into the NHS, supporting the improvement of NHS services and bringing in revenue that the trust would otherwise not have.

Benefits of expanding PPUs

PPUs offer a synergy between private healthcare and public service, aiming to deliver high-quality care while supporting the sustainability and growth of the NHS.

Key benefits for NHS trusts include:

- Driving additional revenue to be reinvested into NHS services.
- Keeping consultants on-site and readily available to support NHS services.
- Supporting recruitment and retention, with the option of co-locating NHS and private practice.
- Building your brand and reputation internationally, with a possibility of attracting inbound patients from around the world.
- Enabling greater translation of innovation and science from the lab to clinic.
- Providing an opportunity to incubate new ways of working.
- Supporting the local economy, with patients and their visitors staying in hotels and using local amenities.
- Promoting commercial, innovative thinking within the trust.
- Contributing towards driving quality standards and competition across the private healthcare sector.
- Ensuring the NHS benefits from the investment made into clinical team's education.
- Providing NHS services with a capacity buffer in times of acute demand such as a pandemic.

Examples of PPUs

Many trusts are already reaping these rewards. World-class examples of established PPUs can be found at [The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust](#), which has used its PPU to fund pioneering cancer research and treatments, and [Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#), whose additional income from its PPU has facilitated advancements in eye care that have set new standards in ophthalmology. Both operate 'in-house' as separate divisions of their respective trusts.

Other trusts have pursued partnerships with independent healthcare providers. Recent successful models include the partnership between University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and HCA Healthcare UK to develop the [Harborne Hospital](#). Combining the NHS trust's clinical excellence with HCA's private healthcare expertise, Harborne Hospital has become a beacon of high-quality private care, generating valuable revenue to support NHS services.

However, there remains significant unfulfilled potential for establishing and expanding PPUs. Many trusts have ambitions for new or larger units but have been constrained by a lack of capacity, resources or know-how.

How we can support

Browne Jacobson is supporting [NHS trusts](#) to pursue these opportunities by:

- Educating clients on practical and legal considerations for expanding PPUs
- Connecting NHS clients with independent sector clients and partners
- Bringing together clients at a series of roundtables to understand common challenges, share best practice and identify opportunities for collaboration.

This PPU hub signposts to our support, roundtable reviews and thought leadership articles related to NHS PPUs.

Our team of [health and life sciences legal experts](#) can advise clients on health law, intellectual property, dispute resolution, data protection and security, and digital health projects.

If you would like to discuss any of these issues or anything else relating to your existing or future private patient activity or expansion, please get in touch and we would be very happy to arrange a one-hour free sounding board advice meeting.

Contact us →

#contact

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[PPU roundtable 1: Expanding your private patients unit roundtable](#) →

[PPU roundtable 2: Advancing private patient units](#) →

[Building sustainable NHS-private sector partnerships: Expanding private patient units and beyond](#) →

[How to expand an NHS private patient unit: Practical guidance](#) →

[Top 10 considerations when expanding an NHS private patient unit](#) →

Media coverage

- [Private patients could bring in more cash for the NHS \(The Times\)](#)
- [Building sustainable NHS-private sector partnerships: Expanding private patient units and beyond \(Open Access Government\)](#)

- [Healthcare Markets: NHS PPUs: an untapped opportunity for all \(LaingBuisson News\)](#)
- [Expanding NHS private patient units: Unlocking new revenue streams and delivering high-quality care \(Health Tech Digital\)](#)
- [Ten key considerations in international healthcare contracting \(Investors in Healthcare\)](#)
- ['NHS trusts should look to their private patient units for revenue' \(Public Finance\)](#)
- [Private patient units could boost NHS funding \(Healthcare Property\)](#)

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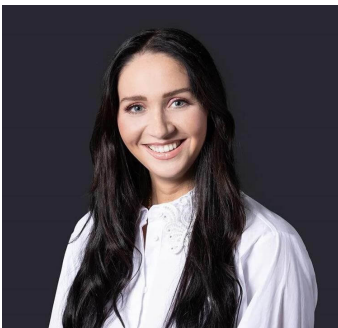


Carly Caton

Partner

carly.caton@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)7890423367



Taylor Berzins

Associate

taylor.berzins@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 0452312

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