

# No Bury and Salford PCT merger, states chief

3 December 2009 | By [Steve Ford](#)

The joint chief executive of Bury and Salford primary care trusts has ruled out a merger of the two, saying they are “culturally very distinct”.

Mike Burrows was appointed interim joint chief executive in October after the sudden retirement of Bury chief executive Stephen Mills. As HSJ revealed last month, [NHS Bury had overspent its budget by £7.5m](#) - equivalent to more than 5 per cent of its allocation - by September.

Major clinical engagement work is a priority

Speaking to HSJ about the challenges of the dual role after his first few weeks into the six month post, Mr Burrows described NHS Bury as a “classic PCT in financial trouble” and said turning it round was a “massive challenge”.

He said there was a “tremendous amount” of opportunity to bring together people in similar roles at the two PCTs to work on projects. But he added that “this clearly isn’t about mergers”, describing the two areas as “culturally very distinct parts of greater Manchester”.

He said it was likely to be 2010 before Bury PCT’s finances were back on a stable footing. Short term measures were in place, which “buys us time” to embed a more medium term plan, he added.

Mr Burrows highlighted the cost of secondary care as one of Bury’s main problems and said there was a need to get “a much better grasp on referrals”. He also said there was a need for more [clinical leadership](#) and for [GPs](#) to recognise the issues.

“Major clinical engagement work is a priority,” he said.

Mr Burrows said managing demand for secondary care was the top challenge facing the health service.

He said: “The ability of PCTs to control demand has not been covered in glory. We need to properly get a hold on supply induced demand.

“The providers have got to play their part responsibly. The day of reckoning has come.”

Despite the challenges of his temporary role, Mr Burrows described it as a “fascinating experience”, providing an opportunity to “contrast and compare” the two PCTs. He added: “It does mean I’m taking a lot of work home in the evening.”

Mr Burrows paid tribute to his chair at Salford, Eileen Fairhurst, for allowing him to take on the joint role, and also his teams at both organisations - who at Bury he said were “putting in unbelievable hours”.