

# Medical services expand



A NEW multi-million pound extension at Stepping Hill Hospital is up and running.

by Robert Dawson

The three-storey development - which cost £10.5million - includes a 16-bed orthopaedic ward, 11 extra day case beds and two new operating theatres designed specifically to combat infections such as MRSA and c-difficile.

Dr Chris Burke, chief executive of Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, said he hoped the extension would help cut waiting times for orthopaedic services in Stockport and also reserved special praise for the way the extension was put together - which saw the new ward built in less than a year.

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He said: "There has been a steady increase in demand for orthopaedic services in the borough.

"The ward, together with the additional operating theatres and day case capacity will help reduce patient waiting times while improving the overall services we offer at Stepping Hill.

"Most of the building was prefabricated off site and craned into position. It was

impressive to witness just how quickly and effortlessly this building went up and we will definitely consider this construction method for future developments."

And there was double reason to celebrate at Stepping Hill as the foundation trust approached its fifth birthday.

Stepping Hill was one of the first hospitals to get foundation trust status in 2004 and has since invested more than £35million in new buildings alone at the Poplar Grove site.

Dr Burke added: "As a foundation trust we have been able to make quicker decisions and develop services which directly benefit patients and service users. We have also made great strides in becoming part of the community through the involvement of our governors and members.

"Becoming a foundation trust gave us freedom from direct NHS control which means we have been able to reinvest surpluses to enhance the service we offer patients from Stockport and the High Peak."