

East Kent Strategy Board

Update for Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board

1. Introduction

The East Kent Strategy Board has been established by local health and care commissioners to spearhead a new drive to determine how best to provide health and care services to the population of east Kent. As one of the Accountable Officers for the four clinical commissioning groups covering east Kent and the Clinical Chair for the East Kent Strategy Board, this update outlines the latest developments regarding the future of local health and care services.

Comprising all organisations involved in the planning, provision and delivery of health and care services in this area, the Board is an advisory board with a clinical chair. Its membership includes the chief executives and most senior clinicians and leaders of east Kent's NHS and care services. The Board will oversee a work programme and advise local health and care commissioners whose role it is to plan the future pattern of services across east Kent.

This update aims to provide some context about the ambitions and work of the Board, and the subsequent programme of activity that it will oversee. We don't yet have answers to all the questions, but will keep you regularly involved and updated as we progress with our work.

2. Why do we need to make changes?

While staff and organisations work hard to provide local people with the best care, the quality and range of services which patients currently receive vary significantly according to the area of the county where they live. There are variations in the quality of some services, in health outcomes, in access to services and in key aspects of diagnosis and treatment. For example, some areas record much lower numbers of patients with long-term health conditions, such as heart disease or diabetes, than national trends suggest: indicating that people's illnesses may not have been diagnosed. For those who have a diagnosis, the quality of care doesn't always meet national quality standards. These variations are unacceptable and we believe that everyone in east Kent deserves to receive the very best care, wherever they live.

The NHS is under increasing strain and must look at ways to transform the way care is delivered if we are to give the best care within available funding and resources. The reasons for this are plain: the NHS is operating with an unprecedented – and changing – demand for services, with fewer available specialists, in an acutely challenging financial environment.

We have an ageing population with high levels of multiple long term conditions needing complex care and treatment from different organisations. This can be difficult for patients and their families and carers to navigate. It is time that care became more personalised, coordinated and community based.

In addition, we are seeing a rise in long-term health problems such as diabetes as a result of lifestyle choices. It takes time, effort and new approaches to keep people with these conditions well and out of hospital.

We in east Kent are not alone in needing to change. At a national level, the *NHS Five Year Forward View* (published in October 2014) made a compelling case for the need to transform if the NHS is to meet the needs of the population. This includes new ways of working and providing more services out of hospitals and in our local communities.

3. New approaches to delivering care are already underway

The East Kent Strategy Board recognises that some of this work has already begun. For example:

- Hubs in Folkestone and Dover provide GP appointments 8am-8pm seven days a week, thanks to funding from the Prime Minister's GP Access Fund. Patients are referred by their practice or NHS 111.
- Primary care mental health specialists in a number of GP practices across east Kent support people who are acutely mentally unwell so they are less likely to need care from secondary mental health services (provided by Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust).
- A new 'multi-speciality community provider' model is being tested in the Canterbury, Faversham and Whitstable areas, with £1.6million from the NHS England Transformation Fund. It plans extended practice opening hours, paramedic practitioners who will visit housebound patients, an integrated nursing service involving both community and practice nurses and an increase in the number of outpatient services provided through specialist GPs.
- In addition, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust is developing a new clinical strategy, working closely with Healthwatch and clinicians to shape services to meet the needs of patients and talking directly to patients and the public about their views and experiences.

But we now need to make sure that these new approaches are joined up, coherent and working to support each other, as part of an overall strategy for delivering care in the future for the people of east Kent.

4. Where will the Board focus its work?

It is clear that we need to tackle service pressures at the same time as developing a future model of care for the people of east Kent that meets changing needs. We need to develop a model of care that works in a joined up way across primary, community, mental health and acute services, and with social care partners.

The Board is committed to developing and delivering a comprehensive and cohesive transformation programme that improves health and wellbeing, delivers high quality and safe care both in and out of hospital settings and puts the services that so many people value on the path to a bright and sustainable future. The Board will oversee a programme of design work over the coming months that will set out proposals for a new pattern of services across east Kent. The work will be clinically led, working closely with staff, patients, carers and the local community to co-design solutions to meet the challenges we face.

The Board has not yet considered or tested any options for change and no decisions about how services might be organised in the future have been made. Any decision-making on the future pattern of services remains with the commissioning bodies (the four clinical commissioning groups, NHS England and Kent County Council) who have the statutory responsibility to take decisions about what health and care services should be provided for their local populations.

Transforming services around the interests of patients is at the heart of our ambition and we are committed to engaging with and consulting all those who provide, deliver – and most importantly of all – use health and care services.

Simon Perks
Accountable Officer, NHS Ashford CCG, NHS Canterbury and Coastal CCG

The East Kent Strategy Board member organisations include:

NHS South Kent Coast CCG; NHS Canterbury and Coastal CCG; NHS Ashford CCG; NHS Thanet CCG; East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust; Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust; Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust; South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust; and Kent County Council.