

East Kent Strategy Board

Launch of 'Better health and care in east Kent: time to change'

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the 'Better health and care in east Kent: time to change'?

In September 2015, the East Kent Strategy Board was set up by local health and social care leaders and clinicians to help determine how best to provide health and social care services for the population of east Kent. This 'case for change' is an important milestone in the work of the Board as it provides a snap-shot of how services are currently delivered, where there are strains within the system and early indications of how things could – and must – work better. The 'case for change' marks the start of a new series of conversations with patients and the public and staff about how organisations can work together to find ways to improve the way that services are delivered, and to make sure they are safe, high quality and financially sustainable into the long-term.

The 'case for change' document is just that – a case for change. It sets out the reasons why health and social care organisations in east Kent believe that changes need to be made to the way that services are delivered. It also signposts people – including patients and the public and members of health and care staff – as to how they can get involved in this new series of conversations about health and care in the area. The Board is not publishing any firm ideas or proposals for change yet – although that conversation will develop with pace over the coming weeks and months ahead of a formal public consultation.

2. Tell me more about the East Kent Strategy Board.

The East Kent Strategy Board was established in September 2015 by local health and care commissioners to spearhead a new drive to determine how best to provide health and social care services to the population of east Kent. This programme of work is wide-ranging as it involves all health and care organisations within east Kent and will take a 'whole system' approach to transforming the local health and social care economy. The Board is chaired by Dr Sarah Phillips who is a GP based in a busy practice in Faversham.



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.

3. Why is there a need to change health and care services in east Kent?

People are rightly expecting more from the NHS in terms of when, where and how they access health and care services. Everyone deserves to experience the very best care, wherever they live. However; in east Kent – as in many other areas of the country – there are significant variations in the quality and range of services that are available to people. This is unacceptable and must change.

Our current NHS system isn't designed to meet the needs of today's population. Some services were designed to meet the needs of people in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s and while they've done that and much more, the system is under increasing pressure. In some areas organisations are struggling to deliver expected standards of care. Local people have said that they find it hard to get a GP appointment and too many people have to wait too long in A&E or to see a specialist. In addition, many health and care organisations struggle to find enough staff to deliver services in east Kent.

With change comes opportunity. Nowadays more treatments can be offered out of hospital or with shorter hospital stays because of new medicines and medical techniques. Changing the way that patients can access care so that it is quicker, easier and closer to home is something that people have said repeatedly that they want and is at the heart of the local NHS's ambition for the future.

Both nationally and in east Kent, health and social care services are under increasing strain. The publication of this 'case for change' marks the next stage of the East Kent Strategy Board's work to tackle the challenges that all health and social care organisations face by working together and in new ways. We need to use our resources where they can be most effective and work together across our health and social care system to develop and deliver services that people need both now, and in years to come.

There's also a financial imperative to making changes. At the moment there is predicted to be a financial shortfall of around £25 million per year across the system if action isn't taken to transform the way that services are delivered. If we carry on as we are now by 2026 the gap between what we have and the costs we need to meet will be £367 million. The annual budget for health and care in east Kent is £1.3 billion and changes to the way that services in east Kent work are essential if health and care organisations are to be brought into financial balance. We want to make sure that we spend the available health and care budget for the people of east Kent as efficiently and wisely as possible, making sure that we get the best value for local people. It is only by working together as we are doing now that we can effect real, tangible change that will improve patient care and achieve financial sustainability.

Finances in brief:

- *£1.3 billion to spend each year on health and social care in east Kent;*
- *£1 billion is spent on NHS services, including £500million on acute care, £413m on primary and community care, and £87 million on mental health services; and,*
- *The remaining £300 million is spent on social care.*



4. What are some of the specific challenges that mean health and social care services need to change?

- People are getting older and living longer. While this is great news, our ageing population often has multiple long term conditions that need complex treatment and care provided in different ways. Local people have told us that they want their care to become more personalised, coordinated and community based.
- We need urgent action to tackle health inequalities across east Kent. Health and care services need to adapt to rising levels of demand. They need to proactively support people to prevent ill health and coordinate care for people living with complex health needs in challenging social circumstances.
- Helping people to navigate the care system, meeting individual needs and drawing on and coordinating a range of different professional skills and expertise are becoming increasingly important.
- East Kent needs to improve to meet rising national quality standards and tackle unwarranted variation in quality. We want to improve the safety and clinical effectiveness of care delivered to all those who need it.
- Some of our lifestyle choices mean we are developing more chronic long-term health problems – such as diabetes - which take time, effort and new approaches to keep people well and out of hospital.
- We face significant financial challenges and need to operate services within the funding available. In addition, we face workforce challenges and a scarcity of specialist clinical staff. By transforming the way that organisations work together and how services are delivered, we can ensure that high quality health and care can be delivered by sustainable and financially effective organisations.

5. What does the ‘case for change’ cover?

The ‘case for change’ looks at the whole health and social care system, from general practice to acute medicine to social care. It focusses on addressing three ‘gaps’ in the health and social care system. These are:

- **Health and wellbeing gap:** this is the gap between people who have the best and the poorest health. At the moment people living in the most deprived areas of east Kent are likely to have worse health than those living in more well-off areas.
- **Care and quality gap:** this is the gap between the availability and quality of services that are needed and the availability and quality of services currently provided. In east Kent we often do not meet national quality standards and there is too much variation. This is partly because of increasing demand for services and also because of problems finding enough staff to run services effectively.
- **Financial and efficiency gap:** this is the gap between the money we have and the cost of providing services. Our finances in east Kent are under increasing pressure and we are heading for big shortfall of around £25 million per year if we don’t find ways to work differently and smarter.



The 'case for change' also includes facts and figures about the population of east Kent, how services are currently organised and delivered and assessments of how services in every area – from mental health to the community – are currently faring. It also includes research and evidence about what local people think such as work carried out by Healthwatch¹ which demonstrates that people in east Kent want to see the NHS and social care working more efficiently and offering higher quality care.

Some of the most common concerns raised by local people relate to:

- the quality of care received;
- experience of interacting with staff;
- getting an appointment with a GP; and,
- waiting times to see a specialist.

We also know from the discussions the clinical commissioning groups in east Kent have in their communities², and the work done by Healthwatch^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}, that local people would like:

- care to be as close to home as possible;
- appointments that are easy to book and at convenient times;
- the NHS and social care to work in a more joined up way;
- more support to help people live healthy lives; and,
- quick action when you become unwell or need extra help.

Most importantly of all, the 'case for change' includes a new vision for health and care in east Kent. This is focused around a core ambition to make health and care:

- **Easier to access:** services are available when and where they are needed;
- **More coordinated:** teams of health and social care professionals work more closely together to offer personalised care;
- **Proactive:** health and social care professionals supporting people to lead healthier lives and tackle treatable conditions before they get worse; and,
- **Affordable and sustainable:** spending the £1.3 billion budget available for health and social care as widely and efficiently as possible and planning with certainty what services are affordable for the future.

6. How much money is there for health and care for the people of east Kent and how is it currently spent?

East Kent has a budget of £1.3 billion to spend each year on health and care for the local population. Of this, £1 billion is spent on NHS services, including £500 million on acute care, £413 million on primary and community care, and £87 million on mental health services. The remaining £300 million is spent on social care.

¹ Delivering our future: Healthwatch Kent's report on public engagement for East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust. April – May 2015

² Find out more about local involvement work at <http://www.ashfordccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/>, <http://www.canterburycoastalccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/>, <http://www.southkentcoastccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/> and <http://www.thanetccg.nhs.uk/health-network/>



7. How have staff been involved in the development of this ‘case for change’?

Clinicians from all care settings and professions have been key to the production of the ‘case for change’. Clinical conversations are at the heart of our work to find new ways of delivering safe, high quality and affordable care in east Kent over the next 5 years. Making sure that plans are evidence-based and clinically led means that clinicians, who are treating local people every day, have been involved in workshops and groups to discuss areas such as long-term conditions and frailty, maternity and paediatrics, mental health and urgent and emergency care. They will continue to bring their energy and expertise to look at how care could be delivered in different ways.

As part of their discussions the clinicians will be considering and evaluating new models of care that are already beginning to work locally, such as the development of GP ‘hubs’ staffed by mixed teams of health and care professionals (including GPs, nurses, therapists, paramedics, pharmacists, and social workers) and emerging clinical thinking about how those patients, particularly the frail elderly, who are too often kept in hospital for lack of more appropriate care elsewhere could be better treated and cared for in other settings. They are also considering best practice and looking at innovation from other areas.

8. How have patients and the public been involved in the development of this ‘case for change’?

Over recent years the NHS in east Kent has engaged widely with staff and local people to find out what they think about services and their ideas for improvement. Some of the changes suggested are already being implemented, such as the new teams of GPs, nurses, counsellors, health visitors, social workers and community paramedics working together in health centres in Whitstable.

The launch of this ‘case for change’ marks the beginning of a new series of conversations with local people, staff, patient and carer groups, politicians and partners such as the voluntary sector, about the issues set out in the document.

Some potential changes are already being explored by local doctors and health and social care leaders. Emerging plans are focused on how services could best be organised across each of our acute hospital sites and how health and social care professionals could work in ‘hubs’ within local communities offering a range of services. We will consider all the views we have heard carefully as we develop these detailed plans.

9. What decisions have been made about the future?

The East Kent Strategy Board has not yet 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 (CCGs), NHS England and Kent County Council) who have the statutory responsibility to take decisions about what health and social care services should be provided for their local populations. Once we have developed more detailed options, working with a wide range of partners and building on all these conversations, we will formally consult on our plans. Only then, following a public consultation, will we make any decisions about the future shape of services.



10. How can people get involved? How can local people have their say?

If you would like to get more involved in this important work you can join your local Clinical Commissioning Group health network, patient participation group linked to your GP practice or contact Healthwatch.

You can also visit www.eastkent.nhs.uk

Ends

