

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Issue date: Friday 2 June 2017**

**KENT AND CANTERBURY HOSPITAL: Update on temporary changes**

The NHS is planning for temporary changes to some services at Kent and Canterbury Hospital (K&C) to go live from 19 June 2017.

“We are working closely with the ambulance service and other parts of the NHS and social care locally to prepare for this and ensure everything is in place before we make any changes,” said Chief Executive Matthew Kershaw.

“We are working on making these changes because we want to maintain patients’ safety as well as give the right support to our junior doctors and other staff. We need patients to be seen in the place they will get the most appropriate treatment which means, for the moment, certain patients being treated at Ashford and Margate for this stage of their care.

“The changes, once finally agreed and implemented, will be temporary - any permanent changes would not be made without public consultation.

“Our longer-term strategy is based on making the best use of all three hospitals in Canterbury, Margate and Ashford, and this will be fully consulted on.”

**What the changes mean for patients**

There will continue to be a full minor injury and illness service at the hospital. Patients who have a planned operation or outpatient appointment, or are visiting the ambulatory centre, having an x-ray, blood test or therapy session at K&C, will not be affected and will be seen and treated at K&C as usual.

This change will only affect people who require urgent medical care for conditions like heart attack, stroke and pneumonia – up to 50 of the 900 people who use the hospital every day.

These patients will be taken directly by ambulance to our hospitals in Margate or Ashford, whichever is closer, for initial assessment and if they need to be admitted, patients will continue to be treated at these hospitals while they are very unwell.

Once local patients are well enough, we will be discharging them home or to a nursing or residential care facility, but if they need to remain in hospital to continue their recovery and rehabilitation, they may move to the K&C to be closer to home.

These changes do not affect other services at the K&C. For example, surgical services, chemotherapy services, renal, vascular and urology services, as well as all outpatient clinics and the minor injuries unit, are not affected.

**Why we are making these changes**

Health Education England – the organisation that oversees the quality of junior doctor training in hospitals – has asked us to move some junior doctors from the K&C to our other two hospitals at Ashford and Margate. This is because there are not enough permanent consultants at the K&C to give these junior doctors adequate training and supervision.

This means we have to make some temporary changes to how we provide some services at K&C, because it would not be safe to run these services as we do now without these junior doctors.

Hospital services are safe and the temporary changes are only being introduced so we can continue to provide these services safely while we work to find a sustainable solution.

**ENDS**

Notes for editors

Around 35 patients a day would no longer be brought to the K&C’s Urgent Care Centre as an emergency while the temporary change is in place. The majority of attendances at the centre are for minor injuries and illnesses, and these would not be affected. Complex trauma cases and many heart attack patients across Kent are already taken straight to the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, so will see no change.