

# Transforming our Trust –

## Our Improvement Plan summary 2023-2025

# Introduction

**Every day we care for more than 1,000 people, from helping to bring a new born baby into the world to caring for a patient at the end of life, and at all the stages in between.**

In everything we do, we want to make our patients and their families feel cared for, safe, respected and confident we are making a difference, and provide the best possible care and treatment to every one of our patients.

We have many excellent services and dedicated, hard-working staff but we also know we are not always providing the right standard of care to every patient, every day.

The importance of providing safe, kind and compassionate care, team working and listening and acting on what our staff, patients and families are telling us may be obvious but we have seen, all too clearly in [Reading the Signals](#), what happens when this does not happen.

That is why we are determined to learn from this report and use it to drive the change we want to bring about over the next three years. These are our key ambitions, together we will:

**Reduce harm and deliver safe services** by developing and fostering a safety culture in which all of us respond openly and learn when things go wrong, where we involve patients and families and do everything we can to improve the conditions where our staff work and patients are treated.

Treat our patients and each other with **care and compassion** at all levels across the organisation, create teams that value and respect each other and always strive to deliver better outcomes for patients.

**Engage, listen and strengthen leadership** throughout the Trust, by creating and supporting compassionate leaders who listen to and involve staff, patients and their families, and who help us to become a diverse and inclusive employer, where staff feel valued and listened to.

**Develop our organisation** by creating a stable leadership which is open to challenge, is supported by strong governance, clear communication from ward to Board and promotes and values working with our partners in East Kent, Kent and Medway and beyond.

Put **patient, family and community voices** at the heart of everything we do. We will be open and honest when things go wrong, we will constantly seek their feedback and design services with them, and make sure they are listened to, involved and their concerns are acted upon.

Deliver high-quality, safe care through our **Maternity Transformation Programme** and strive constantly to meet national standards for access and outcomes in **planned and emergency care**. We will seek to do this in the most **cost-effective** way possible.

We will use our nationally recognised quality improvement programme We Care together with a nationally renowned culture change programme, both of which have been shown to improve care for patients and the experience of staff in other NHS organisations.

Achieving this change will take time. There is a great deal of work we need to do at every level of our organisation to provide the consistent standard of care we want for all of our patients.

We also recognise the importance of acknowledging the milestones and progress that is made along the way, as together we work to transform this organisation.

Niall Dickson CBE  
Chairman



Tracey Fletcher  
Chief Executive



# Our plan on a page

**Our mission is Improving health and wellbeing and our vision is to deliver Great healthcare from great people.**

Our strategic themes, developed with colleagues across the Trust, are Quality and Safety, Patients, People, Partnerships and Sustainability.

Our pillars of change and strategic objectives are driven by our response to Dr Kirkup's report Reading the Signals, the importance of meeting national standards for planned, cancer and emergency care and the need to be financially sustainable by providing better care and reducing waste.

Everything we do is underpinned by our values: People feel cared for, safe, respected and confident we are making a difference.



We will discuss our progress against key performance indicators, and the difference it is making, in public at our monthly public board meetings which anyone can join, visit [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk)

# Quality and safety

## Reducing harm and delivering safe services

We will do this by developing and fostering a safety culture in which all of us respond openly and learn when things go wrong, where we involve patients and families and do everything we can to improve the conditions where our staff work and patients are treated.

### We want to:

- Have effective systems and processes for responding to and learning from patient safety incidents.
- Have an embedded patient safety culture.
- Learn when things go wrong so they don't keep happening.
- Involve patients and families in investigations and answer their questions.
- Continuously seek ways to improve the physical environment for staff and patients.

### Our ambition is:

- To be in the top 20% of Trusts with the lowest mortality.
- To have zero avoidable harms graded moderate or above.

### Our aims for 2023/24 are:

- To improve how we manage serious incidents, so that deteriorating patients are identified quickly and receive better care.
- To have a robust safeguarding plan, to keep our patients safe.
- To have a continuous improvement cycle, so we are always learning and improving.

### How we will measure success:

- Patients in east Kent will have a longer life expectancy (mortality)
- There will be fewer cases of moderate harm and above due to care
- There will be fewer falls with harm
- Fewer patients will have hospital acquired pressure damage
- Fewer patients will need to be admitted to ITU as a result of deteriorating
- Investigations will be completed more quickly and safeguarding concerns addressed
- Serious Incidents will be completed on time and there will be fewer repeat incidents
- Patients report improvements in the inpatient survey
- We will be open and explain when something has gone wrong (Duty of candour)

so that **People feel safe**

# Patients

## Patients, Family & Community Voices

We will put **patient, family and community voices** at the heart of everything we do. We will be open and honest when things go wrong, we will constantly seek their feedback and design services with them, and make sure they are listened to, involved and their concerns are acted upon.

### We want:

- Patients to feel listened to, involved and their concerns acted upon.
- To always be honest and transparent in communicating with patients and admit when we get things wrong.
- Services to be designed with patients.

### Our ambition is:

- To embed engagement and involvement across the Trust and work in partnership with patients, families and communities to co-design services and make improvements.

### Our aims for 2023/24 are:

- For patients to feel listened to and their questions answered.
- For patients to feel midwives, nurses and doctors work as a team.
- That people with protected characteristics and from areas of social deprivation do not have a poorer experience of care.

### How we will measure success:

- Complaints about staff attitude, communication and patients not feeling listened to reduce.
- More patients feel involved in their care in inpatient survey
- More Participation Partners are involved in committees, interviews and action groups
- More changes made as a result of feedback
- We will be open and explain when something has gone wrong (Duty of candour)

so that **People feel cared for, safe, respected and confident we are making a difference**

# Patients

## Timely access for patients

We will do this by striving constantly to meet national standards for access and outcomes in planned and emergency care.

### We want:

- Timely access for all of our patients to planned and unplanned care.

### Our ambition is:

- For 95% of patients to be seen and treated or admitted within 4hrs
- For 85% of patients to receive cancer treatment with 62 days
- For no patient to wait more than 18 weeks for planned treatment

### Our aims for 2023/24 are:

- To provide better care for patients by meeting our trajectory and targets for urgent and emergency care whole system pathways, cancer and elective care.

### How we will measure success:

- Cancer patients will be seen, diagnosed and treated more quickly
- More tests will be carried out at Buckland Community Diagnostic Centre
- GPs will be able to refer patients directly for tests
- No patients wait more than 65 weeks for planned care by March 2024
- Fewer patients will wait 52 weeks for planned care
- Patients won't have unnecessary follow up appointments
- More virtual appointments will be offered where that's best for patients

so that **People feel cared for**

# People

## Care and Compassion

We will treat our patients and each other with care and compassion at all levels across the organisation, create teams that value and respect each other and always strive to deliver better outcomes for patients.

### We want to:

- Treat each other with care and compassion and work in teams that value and respect each other.
- Have teams that work together in a way that delivers better outcomes for patients.

### Our ambition is:

- To be in the top 25% of Trusts in the country for positive patient feedback.

### Our aims for 2023/24 are:

- For patients to feel they are cared for with compassion and respected by staff.
- For patients to feel involved and listened to.
- For every member of staff to attend the 'Importance of Caring' video sessions.
- To improve care by ensuring patient notes and care plans are high quality.

### How we will measure success:

- Patients will report improvements in the inpatient survey to medical staff attitude and behaviour.
- Patients will report improvements in feeling involved and listened to.
- There are high levels of feedback in maternity and fewer complaints about care
- Staff pulse surveys show improved culture and working relationship between teams and front-line staff.

so that **People feel cared for**

# People

## Engagement, Listening and Leadership,

We will engage, listen and strengthen leadership throughout the Trust, by creating and supporting compassionate leaders who listen to and involve staff, patients and their families, and who help us to become a diverse and inclusive employer, where staff feel valued and listened to.

### We want to:

- Have effective, embedded ways of listening to and involving staff.
- Be an employer of choice with high retention, low vacancies and improved staff satisfaction.
- Be a diverse and inclusive employer.

### Our ambition is:

- To be in the top 20% of employers within the NHS.

### Our aims for 2023/24 are:

- To deliver our international recruitment target and reduce sickness and vacancies.
- To improve staff and patient involvement and engagement.

### How we will measure success:

- More staff will give feedback in the quarterly pulse survey.
- Staff will report feeling more involved and more staff will recommend the Trust as a place to work.
- Staff sickness, vacancy and turnover rates will reduce.
- Fewer staff will leave the Trust, across all staff groups.
- The vacancy rate in hard to recruit areas will reduce.
- We will meet targets for international nursing and clinical support worker recruitment.
- Medical job planning will be complete.

so that **People feel respected**



# Partnerships

## Organisational Development

We will develop our organisation by creating a stable leadership which is open to challenge, is supported by strong governance, clear communication from ward to Board and promotes and values working with our partners in East Kent, Kent and Medway and beyond.

### We want to:

- Have effective stable leadership which is open to challenge.
- Have effective governance processes from ward to Board.
- Make partnership working embedded and effective.

### Our ambition is:

- To be recognised as a well led and high performing organisation.

### Our aims for 2023/24 are:

- To have a stable Executive and Board Development plan.
- For the Board to be sighted on key risks and actions, with timely escalation.
- To have effective communications and engagement.
- To have a structured transformation plan and quality improvement methodology.

### How we will measure success:

- We will have a substantive Executive Team in place
- Regular, monthly communications and engagement is in place between front-line colleagues and the Board and system partners
- Through joint work and involvement with our partners in the East Kent Health Care Partnership, provider collaboratives and NHS Kent and Medway.
- Improvements in maternity services linked to the Maternity Transformation Programme.

so that **People feel confident**  
**we are making a difference**

# Sustainability

## Financial Sustainability

We will deliver high-quality, safe care, which is cost-effective and reduces waste.

### We want to:

- Deliver great care for patients within budget

### Our ambition is:

- To have no overspend by the end of March 2026.

### Our aim for 2023/24 is:

- To develop and deliver the first year of an agreed three-year financial plan.

### How we will measure success:

- We will make month on month improvement in our run rate, including over two consecutive quarters in 2023/24.
- We will reduce spend on premium pay.
- We will measure ourselves against other Trusts with efficient finances
- We will have measures in place to manage the risks of not meeting our financial plan, agreed with our partners

so that **People feel confident**  
**we are making a difference**