

Working with you, side by side

Listening and involving you, your
family, and your community

Patient Voice and Involvement Strategy

March 2022





**“Involving you in
our work is vital
We can’t do it
without you”**

**Sarah Shingler,
Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer,
East Kent Hospitals University
Foundation Trust**

We care about

Our patients

We want you and your families, to be involved in every aspect of your care

That means we want to hear what it was like when you last visited one of our hospitals or community services. We want to work with you side by side to understand your experience and use it to make things better for your next visit. We want to work with you, your family and your community to learn from you and design services that work for you. We know that we can't solve the major challenges that we face without your views and solutions.

This isn't about plans and processes. This is about embracing you and your family in the design, delivery and assessment of the care we give you. It's about creating a different mindset that enables your voices to be heard every day.

As you read this strategy you will see that we are proposing a radical change in how we want to work with you. We know that we won't achieve this overnight, but we are committed to making it happen.

We've developed these plans in partnership with patients, carers, partners and voluntary organisations and together we have created something that will not only help us at East Kent Hospitals, but also the wider health and care community in East Kent. This document outlines how we intend to do that. We are excited to share it with you and to work with you to make it become a reality.

Sarah Shingler, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

Why should you read this?

We know strategies can be boring.

But we promise this isn't a normal strategy.

If you, or your family, live in Kent then the chances are that you will require our care at some point. Even if you live in Medway, East Sussex or the furthest reaches of West Kent, then you, or your family, could still find yourselves in one of our hospitals.

Whoever you are, we want to hear from you. Whether you are a patient now, or in the future, it is in your interest to ensure we can offer the best care possible to you, your family and your community.

We want to know what works for you and what doesn't.

We want to know what you want and how you want it.



Why is your feedback so important?

In East Kent, we have some major health challenges. We know we have a health and care system that isn't working to support all of you, all of the time.

We have been working alongside patients and fellow partners in both health and social care, to develop proposals to transform our health services to work better for you all. At the time of writing this, we are awaiting a decision from Government for the money we need to progress with these conversations.

Doing nothing is not an option. 78% of our buildings need significant investment to meet modern standards. Just to keep up the basic maintenance costs us £120 million a year.

We want to work with you to tackle our challenges head on and work with you and your community to design the solutions. We want all of our work to be informed by your feedback. We want to hear what you need, what you want and your ideas for improvement. Your voice will be part of our DNA.

To do that we know that we will need a range of ways that we can listen to you and involve you. East Kent is a wonderful and richly diverse community and what may work for some of you, may not work for others. We are committed to finding a solution that works for as many of you as possible.



Your feedback is powerful and we want to hear it!

Tell us what it was like when you visited one of our hospitals

Your feedback will help us to monitor our services and ensure they are working for you. Your feedback will help us to pick up issues and fix them

Tell us what you need and want

**Help us to identify the gaps in our services and stop people falling through them.
Work with us side by side to find the solutions. You will often have the answers or an innovative idea that could solve the issue. Please share them with us!**

Tell us what is important to you

Help us define what we should focus on

All the feedback that you give us will be captured and used to improve patient experience as part of our We Care philosophy



A note about language

This is an Involvement Strategy

It sets out how we want to work side by side with you.

It explains our commitment to hearing your views, needs and wishes and creating a way for you to contribute to plans, proposals and discussions about services.

Some people might use words like engagement, consultation, participation and co-production. To us it is all the same.

It is about involving you and hearing your voice.



Our pledge to you, our patients, and your family and carers

- We will listen to you
- We will make it easier for you to tell us about your experience and get involved
- We will make sure you know that we value your feedback
- We will always try to be open and honest with you
- We will come to you and your community – we won't expect you to always come to us
- We will actively seek a range of voices and opinions from all walks of life, particularly those of you who find it harder to access healthcare
- We will ensure we have the time to involve you properly
- We will welcome all feedback, even if it's hard to hear
- We will ensure your voice is heard at all key meetings and committees
- We will work with you side by side. We will involve you in decisions about services
- We will use your feedback as part of our We Care philosophy and methodology to focus on the issues that can result in positive change
- We will show you and others what difference your feedback has made

How will we do that? What will be different?

As part of this strategy, we will create a new Patient Voice and Involvement team who will be dedicated to involving and working side by side with you.

Our new Involvement Team will build relationships with you, and your community, and proactively seek your feedback and input.

They will listen to you and work alongside you to improve our services.

Here are some examples of what they will do for you:

- Be regular visitors to community groups in your area to meet you and hear your feedback
- They will offer you a range of ways that you can share your feedback and get your voice heard
- You will find it much easier to give your feedback and you will know that we value your input
- They will train and support our staff so they know how best to work with you and your community to design new services or make existing ones better
- They will work tirelessly across our hospitals to ensure you are heard by the right people.

How will we do that? What will be different?

When you visit our hospital either as an inpatient or an outpatient, you will find it much easier to share your feedback with us.

- We will have a number of different ways to share your feedback with us so you can choose what works best for you
- Our new Involvement Champions will be in our hospitals listening to you and your experience
- Our services will use your feedback to make improvements

The process will follow these steps:

- Fill in one of our feedback forms or chat to our Involvement Champions
- Wherever possible we'll be able to make changes based on your feedback
- We'll bring all the feedback we've heard from you all and analyse it as part of our We Care work to understand the big issues we need to focus on and improve.



What are Involvement Champions?

We will have a Involvement Champions in every clinical area in all our hospitals.

They are staff who will be trained and supported to champion patient voice and involvement.

The role of our Champions is to listen to you about your experience and then our Patient Voice and Involvement team will use this feedback to work with the service to make improvements.

The process will follow these steps:

- Feedback is gathered from all our Involvement Champions and patient feedback forms and surveys
- The Patient Voice and Involvement team will analyse all your feedback that we've heard from multiple sources
- The themes and trends are reviewed by the new Patient Participation and Action Group (which is co-chaired by patients)
- The key issues for improvement that will have the biggest impact on our patients are identified and actioned.



Get involved

We want you to be involved in every aspect of work.

For example, if you live with diabetes then you may want to be involved in conversations about our diabetic service.

Let us know what you are interested in, and we'll get back to you with a range of ways you can be involved.

Join our Side by Side Network as a Participation Partner by emailing ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net or texting 07955 320771.

Our [Patient Voice and Involvement web page](#) has all the details of our Side by Side Network and will have information about our latest projects and how you can get involved.

We will also publish regular reports about the feedback we are hearing, the people we are involving and the changes that we have made as result.

Get involved

Starting immediately, we will be seeking a patient or carer to join us at our Fundamentals of Care meeting.

This is a key governance meeting which looks at how well patients are cared for and monitors improvements in how care is delivered. It is monthly meeting and is a key place where we hear feedback from patients and make decisions about next steps.

Going forward we will have more opportunities for you to be involved at key decision making meetings such as sharing your story at our Board and joining our Patient Participation and Action Group.

Opportunities to get involved won't be limited to a few meetings.

We value your input and we know that your time is precious which is why we will pay for your out-of-pocket expenses.



Getting involved: in summary

You will have many ways to get involved, so that we can hear your story, understand what's important to you and what we could do differently

You will be able to **give us feedback** by:

- Filling in one of our feedback forms
- Chatting to our Involvement Champions
- Chatting to our Patient Voice and Involvement team when they visit your community

There will also be opportunities to **join our Side By Side Network** and work with us side by side to identify the issues and help us find the solutions as well as the **representation of patients and carers at key meetings.**

This will help us define our priorities and drive improvements to our services based on what our patients and carers want.

The feedback that you give us at any of these points, will be captured and used to improve patient experience as part of our We Care philosophy.

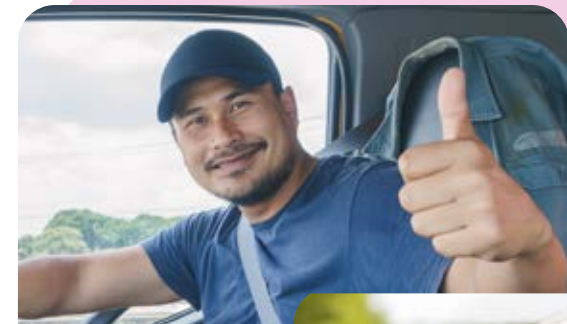


Working with the voluntary sector

We know that working with the voluntary community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector can bring about huge benefits for us all; our staff, you, your clients/members and our services.

We are lucky in East Kent to have a vibrant and dynamic voluntary sector who have a long history of developing innovative and creative approaches to improving peoples' health and well-being and of course delivering services. The sector also plays an important and trusted role in the lives of many of the vulnerable people and harder to reach communities that we are trying to serve.

We want to start a new relationship with the VCSE sector in East Kent, which is why we have worked side by side with voluntary organisations to develop this strategy.



Our pledge to the voluntary sector

- We will always be honest and transparent
- We will invest in our relationship with you
- We will be genuine and inclusive
- We will always treat you as an equal partner
- We will communicate regularly and keep you up to date on our key issues
- We will make it easier for you to engage and interact with us
- We will actively seek opportunities to partner and collaborate with you
- We will use your feedback as part of 'We Care', which is our approach to making improvements, to focus on the issues that can result in positive change
- We recognise and respect you, and your time

How will we do that? What will be different?

As part of this strategy we will make it easier for voluntary organisations and community groups to work with us as equals.

Voluntary organisations have told us that they want us to make it easier for them to work with us. They have told us they want to know which 'door' they should knock on to get the answers that they need.

Our new dedicated Patient Voice and Involvement team will become the single point of contact which anyone from the voluntary sector can use when you want to talk to East Kent Hospitals. Our Patient Voice and Involvement team will be on hand as your first point of contact. They will do the leg work to find you the right person or team to talk to, it making easier for you.

They will become your new front 'door' so you clearly know where to go when you want to talk to us



How will we do that? What will be different?

Posted on our 'door' will also be a range of opportunities to get involved and work with us.

This noticeboard will be updated regularly and will include opportunities, service specific conversations and requests for your expertise. We promise we will communicate with you clearly, honestly and concisely.

We also know that we need to work more effectively with the voluntary sector as equal partners. The same desire is felt by our partners in health and social care. We will continue conversations with the voluntary sector, and our partners, to design a solution that will work for us all.

We have very much enjoyed working with the voluntary sector to create this strategy and we want to continue to build on this special relationship. Whilst wider conversations continue, we will offer key voluntary organisations seats on our key committees and we will fund their time to make that happen.

We want to continue to champion the needs and skills of the voluntary sector to help us progress our desire to improve our community involvement and drive our culture of improvement.

What will look different as a result of this strategy for our patients and carers?

As a patient or carer you will.....

- Be asked for your feedback in new and innovative ways
- Your feedback will be acknowledged
- It will be easier for you to give feedback
- Know that patients and carers are part of our key committees and groups as Participation Partners
- Be able to read how people have been involved and the changes that have been made on a new page on our website
- Be able to join our Side by Side network which will ensure you are informed and let you know how you can get involved
- Be able to talk to our new [Involvement Champions](#) during your time in our hospitals about your experience
- More of you will be actively involved in projects to improve our services
- See us out and about in your communities listening to your feedback



What will look different as a result of this strategy for voluntary organisations?

As a voluntary organisation you will...

- Have a dedicated Patient Voice and Involvement team as your key point of contact
- More of you will be actively involved in projects to improve our services
- Be asked for your feedback in new and innovative ways
- Be represented at key meetings and decision making committees as Participation Partners
- Have a 'noticeboard' which will share opportunities to collaborate and get involved
- See us at your events and meetings as we strive to build a better relationship with you, and your communities.



What will look different as a result of this strategy for our staff?

As a member of staff you will...

- Be given training about the importance of involving people in your work
- See patients, carers and voluntary organisations at our key committees and being involved in our decisions
- Have Involvement Champions in your clinical areas, listening to your patients about their experience
- Be able to access real time feedback from your patients via a new online platform
- See patients and carers on interview panels for key roles
- Have the support of a new dedicated Patient Voice and Involvement team to help you involve more patients and carers in your work
- Know that the Board recognise the importance of involving patients in your work and the time it takes to do it properly
- A new Patient Participation and Action Group will be created to focus on feedback from patients and make improvements as a result.



What will look different as a result of this strategy for our partner organisations?

As one of your partner organisations you will...

- Be able to work with our Patient Voice and Involvement team on joint projects and initiatives
- Work together with us to design a solution that enables us all to work better with the voluntary sector
- Join our colleagues from other Kent and Medway organisations for regular meetings and discussions about how we can work more effectively together to hear from more people
- Work together to create a new digital platform that will capture feedback about all health services in East Kent (and beyond).



How have we gone about creating this strategy?

We wanted this to be different. To feel different. To deliver something different for our patients, our communities and our staff.

To do that we needed to listen.

We've worked alongside patients, carers, voluntary groups, partner organisations and our staff to explore exactly how we will engage and listen to our patients, their families and our communities. We have come together in a series of regular sessions where each of us has an equal voice to create this new and exciting vision for East Kent.

When we started, we were focused on creating a solution for East Kent Hospitals, but as we have progressed we have developed a vision that will benefit the whole health and care system in East Kent. It's been a team effort and we are excited to see it come to fruition.



Huge thanks!

Huge thanks to everyone who has been involved:

- Our staff
- Our patients and carers
- Ashford Volunteer Bureau
- Kent Coast Volunteering
- Canterbury and Herne Bay Volunteer Centre
- Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group
- Kent County Council
- Kent Community Foundation Trust
- Healthwatch Kent
- NHS England and NHS Improvement

EK360 facilitated our conversations and enabled us to work side by side.

For more information or to get involved, please email us:
ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net

We care about
Our patients

