

NHS Financial Sustainability

Key Issues and Recommendations

Medway NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

As part of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Kent County Council's report on NHS Financial Sustainability, several recommendations were made for consideration by the NHS and organisations specifically. This short report looks at the two specific recommendations made relating to Medway NHS Foundation Trust.

Communication of Service Changes.

Despite the impression that the entire NHS is changing on a weekly basis, effective forward planning is essential if the appropriate services are to be delivered in the most effective and efficient way. We therefore encourage all provider NHS Trusts in Kent and Medway to ensure they work with commissioners on setting out a clear timeline of proposed major service changes over the next two years. We also ask the PCT Cluster to take responsibility for coordinating said timeline and making it available to the HOSC and other stakeholders.

Response:

Medway NHS Foundation Trust has regular discussions with its commissioners about possible changes to service delivery. Previously these had been exclusively with PCTs but more frequently now and in the future, this includes GP commissioning leads.

Medway's service development strategy is one of looking to provide more specialised services for the local population of Medway and surrounding areas. The Trust has developed several examples of this over the last twelve months increasing the range of services we provide. These include the new Neurosciences unit where patients can have specialist treatment undertaken on site, where previously they would have had to travel to London. For example, we provide multiple sclerosis drug infusions, removing the need for some patients to make 13 trips a year to London.

Develop Local Pricing

While we recognise the fine details around currencies and tariffs might not engage the imagination of the wider public that easily, this review has made it clear how important these details are. While the Payments by Results tariff is fairly well established in the Acute Sector, the development of currencies and tariffs in other areas is only slowly developing. Due to their technical nature, the Committee has no specific recommendations to make as to the form they should take. However, we ask all relevant organisations to consider how these should best be taken forward locally.

Response:

As the report notes, the Payments by Results tariff is fairly well established in the Acute sector and covers the majority of activity that the Trust undertakes. The National Operating Framework, published on an annual basis by the Department of Health, highlights the areas of further development either in terms of currencies or in terms of prices that NHS Trusts should be working towards implementing. Medway discusses with its commissioners those areas that both parties would wish to develop in terms of a further implementation of the Payment by Results ethos.

The Trust is keen to operate in a cost per case way across the total range of its contractual agreements with not just its commissioners, but also with other providers so that payments are reflective of the cost of the activity undertaken and not simply on a "block" basis.