

**Kent Community Health NHS Trust  
Our Journey to becoming a Foundation Trust**

**Report for Kent County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee, 7 September 2012**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Kent Community Health NHS Trust provides the vast majority of NHS care provided in patients' homes and in the community in Kent. It was formed in April 2011 from the merger of Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services NHS Trust and West Kent Community Health (part of West Kent PCT) in April 2011.

1.2 The Trust's budget for 2012/13 is £213 million which is approximately 9% of the health care market in Kent. It has 5,400 staff and annually has more than 3 million contacts with patients (representing about 330,000 Kent patients).

1.3 It provides a wide range of services out of GP surgeries, nursing homes, clinics and in community settings, including 7 walk-in centres and 12 community hospitals (with a total of 290 beds), as well as in people's own homes.

**2. What we are here to do**

2.1 The Trust's mission is to provide high quality, value for money community based services to prevent people from becoming unwell, avoid the need for people to go into hospital and when they do to leave earlier, and to provide support closer to home.

2.2 The Trust's strategy aims:

- i. To prevent people from becoming unwell and dying prematurely by improving the health of the population through universal targeted services.
- ii. To enhance the quality of life for people with long term conditions by providing integrated services to enable them to manage their condition and maintain their health.
- iii. To help people recover from periods of ill health or following injury through the provision of responsive community services.
- iv. To ensure that people have a positive experience of care and improved health outcomes by delivering excellent healthcare.
- v. To ensure people receive safe care through best practice

2.3 The Trust's strategy has been developed in response to the commissioning intentions identified by the commissioners of health and social care in Kent. The Trust is working collaboratively with health and social care partners to shape new services particularly for those with long-term conditions, those in need of urgent care as well as driving improvement in the wider population's health and wellbeing.

### **3. Reasons for pursuing Foundation Trust Status**

3.1 Foundation Trusts are NHS organisations have greater freedom from central government control. They are free to invest any surplus of money into services for the benefit of local people. They are also free to borrow money for capital projects and are free to innovate.

3.2 As a Foundation Trust we will be able to deliver:

Increased autonomy and financial independence to enable us to react faster and more responsively to necessary changes in local needs by:

- i. Remodelling our services based on service user and carer views.
- ii. Taking up opportunities for innovative commercial relationships and partnerships.
- iii. Approving business cases more quickly to achieve progress.
- iv. Re-investing surpluses back into improved services for local people.

3.3 Greater opportunities to integrate our health services with social care by developing our relationships with KCC and other partners across the county.

3.4 Better negotiating opportunities and increased ability to build alliances with other local Trusts who already enjoy Foundation Trust status in order to build new community focused pathways for local people's care.

3.5 A greater level of local accountability and closer local engagement through our membership and Council of Governors

### **4. Benefits to staff, patients and the wider public of becoming a Foundation Trust**

4.1 Staff will have greater opportunity to influence the Trust's plans as members directly or through their Staff Governors who will represent them on the Council of Governors. Staff will also benefit from greater job stability, increased flexibility and opportunities to increase their skills and will benefit from the Trust's ability to re-invest money into continued training and development.

4.2 Patients will benefit from better health outcomes because a Kent-wide Foundation Trust which focuses exclusively on community-based health services has greater capacity and flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the population. Patients and their relatives will have greater influence over the way we deliver their services through membership and through their Council of Governors who will hold the Foundation Trust Board to account.

4.3 Our large membership will represent all communities in Kent and will provide opportunities for greater engagement with our patients and their families.

4.4 Any person, resident in Kent can become a member of the Foundation Trust within any one of the 12 local authority boundaries. This will enable them to influence the future provision of community services in Kent which will directly benefit their community.

4.5 Any person residing outside of the Kent catchment area can join our “out of areas constituency” and can influence the future of community health services either in their own areas or on behalf of their relatives who reside in Kent.

## **5. Assessment of the Risks associated with attaining Foundation Trust Status**

5.1 The risks associated with not attaining Foundation Trust status are far higher than the risks associated with gaining it.

5.2 All NHS Trusts are expected to become Foundation Trust by April 2014. Trusts that do not succeed in their applications will cease to exist in their current form and their services will be provided by appropriate existing Foundation Trusts or any other Qualified Provider organisation.

5.3 As a Foundation Trust, Kent Community Health NHS Trust will be able to continue to provide high quality, sustainable and flexible community health services across Kent. The Trust believes that it is best placed to support Kent Commissioners to meet the health needs of our local population.

5.4 We are mindful that:

- i. Part of the rigorous process of attaining Foundation Trust status is to satisfy the assessors that the Trust’s Board is fit to run such an organisation. The Trust will need to demonstrate robust leadership.
- ii. The Trust is very aware of the need not to be distracted from its core business during the Foundation Trust application process and will need to ensure high quality, safe and sustainable delivery of services throughout.
- iii. Our staff need to be committed to the Trust’s vision and values to ensure its continued success.
- iv. We need to continue to develop good relationships with the commissioners of health and social care.
- v. We need to ensure our systems of performance monitoring and reporting are robust.

## **6. Impact on the delivery, location and quality of services related to attaining Foundation Trust status**

6.1 The rigorous process of attaining Foundation Trust status puts a spotlight on the quality and delivery of the Trust’s services. The Trust will need to demonstrate that it can provide high quality, sustainable services that meet the needs of the population and can respond to future demands.

6.2 The ageing population and increased prevalence of chronic diseases among Kent’s population requires more emphasis on prevention and supporting people to

manage their own health conditions better. Services will focus on preventing illness, avoiding admission to hospital and earlier return from hospital.

6.3 As a Foundation Trust we will have a greater degree of flexibility to be more innovative about the locations from where we provide our services, making it easier for the Trust to provide care closer to patient's homes.

6.4 Services will be delivered in a range of local community settings, in people's homes and in community hospitals. Services and care will increasingly be provided in locations that are easily accessible for users and respond to the needs of commissioners.

6.5 The Trust is working closely with GPs and Kent County Council to ensure care is provided by multi-disciplinary health and social care teams that work together to improve the quality of care for individual patients, service users and carers. These teams will be based on the populations served by clinical commissioning groups and configured to target specific local health needs.

6.6 The quality of care will also be improved through greater engagement with the public and patients and greater understanding of patients' experiences.

6.7 As a Foundation Trust we will undergo robust monitoring from our regulators.

## **7. Outline of Engagement and Consultation Process**

7.1 The Trust has a robust Consultation Strategy which has been commended by the Strategic Health Authority during the first phase of our assessment process. Engagement with our staff, patient groups and partners has been ongoing since we first began our application process.

7.2 We are now into our public consultation phase which started on 30 July and will run for 12 weeks. All responses must be received by the Trust before 26 October to ensure all views are taken into account.

7.3 The guiding principles of the strategy are:

- i. To make it as easy as possible for people to receive information about our Trust and the plans we have for providing excellent Community Health services and to attain Foundation Trust Status
- ii. To provide a platform for people to talk to us freely so that they can be involved and help to shape the services provided by a Kent wide Community Health NHS Foundation Trust
- iii. To ensure that the people we consult with is as representative as possible of the diverse communities we serve
- iv. To enable varying levels and means of participation in the consultation according to the needs and wishes of individual people or groups
- v. To ensure mechanisms are in place to seek and obtain the views of people about issues relevant to our application
- vi. To ensure that as many people as possible feel well informed and enabled to enjoy effective two way communication
- vii. To ensure people truly feel that their input influences our plans
- viii. To receive feedback and views that are collated, reported back and used to finely tune our plans for future provision of services

- ix. To ensure that we become the kind of organisation that local people truly need and can provide the quality outcomes that they want

## 7.4 Key activities:

- i. 12 public consultation meetings are being held in the 12 local authority areas during September and October. These have been advertised in the local press, online and through direct marketing to patients, patient groups, partner organisations, via our staff, in community settings and to stakeholders.
- ii. A radio and social media campaign has been launched to ensure as wide an audience as possible is engaged in the process.
- iii. Kent LINK is supporting the consultation along with other partner organisations that are publicising the consultation to their networks.
- iv. The FT membership team has been visiting community groups, major public events including the County Show, public venues and meetings throughout the county to engage directly with communities in Kent.

## 8. Timeline of the process

- We started our Foundation Trust Application in April 2011.
- In July 2012 The Strategic Health Authority declared us in a suitable position to go to public consultation on our plans.
- During August, September and October we are holding a full public consultation with staff, patients, carers, our partners and members of the population in Kent.
- In November we will report on the feedback from the consultation and if necessary adjust our plans accordingly.
- In December 2012 the Strategic Health Authority will make its recommendation to the Department of Health based on its assessment of our fitness to become a Foundation Trust and compete in a competitive market place.
- At the end of February 2013 the Department of Health will make its recommendations on our readiness to become a Foundation Trust, based on its assessment, to the Secretary of State.
- At the end of June 2013, after rigorous assessments and testing, Monitor will decide if we are ready to be authorised as a Foundation Trust.
- We aim to be approved as a Foundation Trust in July 2013.