

## **Kent and Medway Trauma Project Update**

### **1. Summary**

- Setting up a major trauma system in Kent and Medway is a National directive.
- The Kent and Medway Major Trauma Network has joined with the South East London Major Trauma Network to form a new Network, SELKaM.
- Trauma units in Kent and Medway will be aligned to Kings College Hospital as their Major Trauma Centre.
- The Medway Maritime Hospital and the Tunbridge Wells Hospital had trauma unit designation visits in September and the recommendation from the panel was that they are designated as trauma units.
- Work is continuing with East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust to raise standards of care for major trauma patients in east Kent via the William Harvey Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital. They remain committed to providing a trauma unit/s.
- Work is underway with partners to agree the optimum model of major trauma care for all residents in Kent and Medway so that a recommendation can be taken to Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Groups for their decision.

### **2. Background**

Major trauma may typically occur because of a road accident, a violent incident, or a serious fall. Although the number of major trauma patients is relatively small, less than 0.2% of hospital emergency work, their injuries are often complex and serious putting them at risk of death or disability. For example, somebody who has been in a road accident might have both chest and head injuries. In order to improve chances of survival it is imperative that care is based on the individual needs of this patient group, rather than geographical boundaries or the location of individual acute institutions.

Nationally the NHS has recognised the importance of making improvements to the pathway for major trauma patients. In the future patients will be treated more quickly and receive a higher standard of care in a dedicated 24-hour specialist major trauma centre or a local trauma unit based on their individual needs. Less serious traumas will continue to be dealt with at an emergency department local to the patient.

The need to improve care for major trauma patients was highlighted in a National Audit Office report (2010). It stated that there were unacceptable variations in care for this most severely injured group of patients and made recommendations to improve standards. A nationwide programme to form regional trauma networks was set up by the Department of Health following a recommendation from Lord Darzi that Major Trauma Centres would save lives.

Kent and Medway major trauma leads have been working with partners on three main areas:

- A merger of the South East London Major Trauma Network and the Kent and Medway Major Trauma Network in order to form a new Network, the South East London Kent and Medway Major Trauma Network (SELKaM). This is now established.
- The development of a robust Kent and Medway major trauma system, which is equitable for all residents, improves patient outcomes and saves lives.
- Improving the rehabilitation pathway for major trauma patients so that they receive the best on-going care, have improved outcomes and can receive care as close to home as possible.

### **3. Current progress in developing major trauma services in Kent and Medway**

Within the SELKaM Trauma Network trauma units for Kent and Medway will be based at the Medway Maritime Hospital and the Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, Tunbridge Wells Hospital. In addition the Network are working with East Kent Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to ensure a trauma unit is in place in East Kent.

Trauma unit pre designation visits took place in March to establish whether they fully met the trauma unit criterion. The designation panel concluded that all sites had made substantial progress towards becoming trauma units. However they suggested they needed to work closely with the emerging SELKaM Trauma Network and partners, including South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb) and Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS), to show they could fully meet the criteria at a second designation visit.

Discussions are on-going with East Kent University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) regarding the development of a trauma unit in east Kent. EKHUFT has advised it wishes any final decision on which site/s should be trauma unit/s to be taken after its Clinical Strategy Review but it remains fully committed to the continuous improvement in major trauma care at both the William Harvey Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital.

Second designation visits took place at the Medway Maritime Hospital and the Tunbridge Wells Hospital in September. The visiting panels were impressed with the progress both hospitals had made particularly with regards to TARN (Trauma Audit and Research) data collection and analysis, education and training, governance, and pathways. Their recommendation is therefore that both hospitals should be designated as trauma units.

SELKaM and NHS Kent and Medway are now working with partners to devise a robust model for trauma care in Kent and Medway with the overarching driver being improving care and outcomes for major trauma patients in all areas of Kent and Medway. This model, once fully developed, will be taken to the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the SELKaM Major Trauma Board along with the panel recommendations from the trauma designation visits.

#### **4. How trauma services in Kent and Medway connect with those of London and the South East Coast area**

A merger of the South East London Trauma Network and the Kent and Medway Trauma Network has taken place in order to form a new Network, the South East London Kent and Medway Major Trauma Network (SELKaM). This took effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and the inaugural meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The emerging SELKaM Major Trauma Network is supporting the development of the trauma system for Kent and Medway patients and ensuring on-going improvements to standards of care for patients across South East London and Kent and Medway. Sub groups are in place or in the process of being set up in order to concentrate on specific areas, for example TARN data, imaging, nursing, and rehabilitation, so that the same standards of care and pathways are in place right across the system.

The majority of Kent and Medway patients who require specialist Major Trauma Centre care will go to Kings College Hospital either directly or through secondary transfer after stabilisation at a trauma unit. However some patients from the borders of west Kent may be taken to the Royal Sussex County Hospital Major Trauma Centre.

Work has started on improving the rehabilitation pathway for major trauma patients so that they receive the best on-going care and can return to their local area at the earliest opportunity. The first SELKaM Major Trauma Rehabilitation Board meeting took place on 27 September 2012 and the initial focus is on understanding what services are available to patient across South East London and Kent and Medway including the gaps and issues. The overall aim is to improve the rehabilitation care patients receive, improve patient outcomes and provide on-going care as close to home as possible.

## **5. Challenges to developing the Trauma Network**

The key challenge for the Kent and Medway aspect of the SELKaM Major Trauma Network is that the small number of major trauma patients in Kent and Medway does not support a model where all acute hospitals are designated as trauma units. The small numbers 2-3 patients at week maximum would be too low to maintain specialist skills. NHS Kent and Medway, the SELKaM Major Trauma Network, acute providers and partner organisations are therefore working in partnership to ensure:

- Major trauma patients receive the best possible care to improve their chances of survival and best outcomes.
- Care is supplied as close to home as is practical and reasonable, taking into account individual patient needs and the standards required of specialist Major Trauma Centres and trauma units.

## **6. Impact of the Trauma Network on the wider health economy**

The location of sites for trauma units was based on the overall needs of the Kent and Medway population, geography, the need to ensure specialist staff are available to support the trauma units 24/7 and ambulance travel times. Representatives from each of the Kent and Medway acute trusts were party to this decision.

It was not expected that the establishment of the trauma units would impact on the remaining acute hospitals as the staffing requirements for a trauma unit are similar to those for a robust emergency department. In addition major trauma patients account for only approximately 0.2% of hospital emergency work so very few patients will be directed away from their nearest emergency department and to a trauma unit or Major Trauma Centre. All non-major traumas will continue to go to emergency departments as at present, for instance patients with fractured neck of femur.

Discussions are on-going with East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKUFT) regarding the development of trauma unit/s in East Kent. They have advised this needs to be addressed as part of their review of clinical strategy which is looking specifically at the provision of urgent care services. They remain committed to the SELKaM Major Trauma Network and to the process of continual improvements in trauma services at both the William Harvey Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital.

## **7. Timeline of the process**

The designation visits to the Medway Maritime Hospital and the Tunbridge Wells hospital took place in September 2012 and the panel has recommended that they are put forward as designated TUs. This recommendation and an update on East Kent University Foundation

Trust's progress will be taken to the NHS Kent and Medway Cluster Commissioning Committee on 10 October 2012 for discussion. They will also be asked to agree the decision making process for the proposed model for the Kent and Medway element of the SELKaM Major Trauma system.