

Covid-19 update for Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – November 2021

Content of this report is accurate for the deadline of paper submissions. Verbal updates will be provided at the committee meeting.

The report is provided by the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (KMCCG) on behalf of the Integrated Care System. It is an overview to the NHS response to the pandemic and includes work being delivered by a wide range of NHS partners. Elements of the pandemic response, in particular testing, are led by councils and the KCC Director of Public Health will support with responding to relevant questions from HOSC.

1 Vaccination programme

Since the last HOSC update, key changes to the programme have been:

- **Booster vaccinations**

Confirmation and roll out of the booster programme has begun, and from 1 November it has been expanded to offer walk-in options. Boosters are available to people who are six months past their second dose AND are over 50 or over 16 and at higher risk of Covid-19. Invitations and access through the national booking services will only be available once the six-month gap is reached.

Initially, uptake has been slower than expected and this is reflected across the south east region. However, with the continued promotion, rising case numbers and colder weather, uptake has steadily increased.

Some people have reported initial difficulties booking boosters and the national booking service has continued to update its process. The provision of walk-in options should also make getting a booster easier. We are reviewing national and local messaging to reinforce the point that boosters are only available from six months after a second dose – as there has been some confusion with people trying to book boosters earlier.

There is dedicated work to provide boosters to care home residents and housebound patients who are eligible. NHS vaccination services continue to work closely with council colleagues to co-ordinate care home vaccinations.

- **Vaccination offers for 12 to 15-year-olds**

Since the last HOSC report the vaccination offer to 12 to 15-year-olds has been made available through national booking service (from 22 October) and walk-in clinics are now also available. Parental consent processes are in place for these as they are for the vaccinations offered through the school immunisations service.

VACCINATION PROGRESS

Local vaccination services are currently delivering approximately 73,000 vaccinations per week. The booster programme is 53% complete (of those currently eligible). Uptake by 16 to 17-year-olds is currently 58% and for 12 to 15-year-olds it is 24%.

Official figures on vaccine progress are published nationally each Thursday. As of 28 October 2021, the position in Kent and Medway was:

- 2,589,283 vaccines in total
- 1,345,481 first doses
- 1,244,102 second doses completed

For Kent specific data uptake amongst all people aged 12+ is:

- 1st dose 1,162,075 (80.4%)
- 2nd dose 1,072,701 (74.2%)

VACCINATION CENTRES

Across Kent and Medway we continue to have over 20 vaccination sites available through the national bookings service and continue to run a range of walk-in clinics. All local options for vaccination sites are published on our vaccination pages of the KMCCG website and through national NHS websites for locating nearest clinics.

Two of the large vaccination centres (Saga in Thanet and Folca in Folkestone) established in the first phase of the programme have now transferred from the Kent Community Health NHS Trust to being run by the local GP-led vaccination service. The other large centres in Kent have now closed.

Websites for vaccine information and booking:

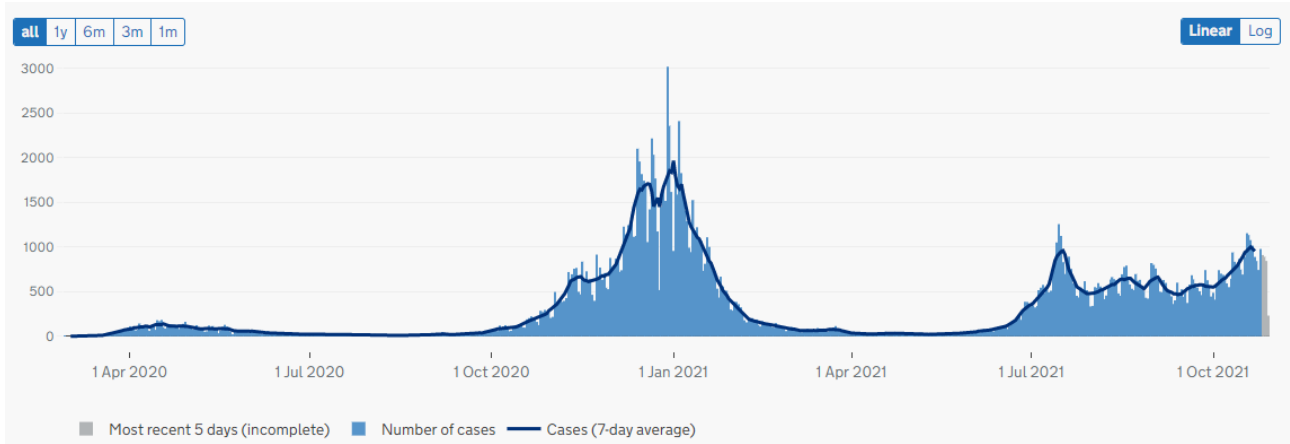
Kent and Medway vaccine information www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/covid19vaccine

National websites for:

- Bookable clinics <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>
- Walk-in clinics <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/>

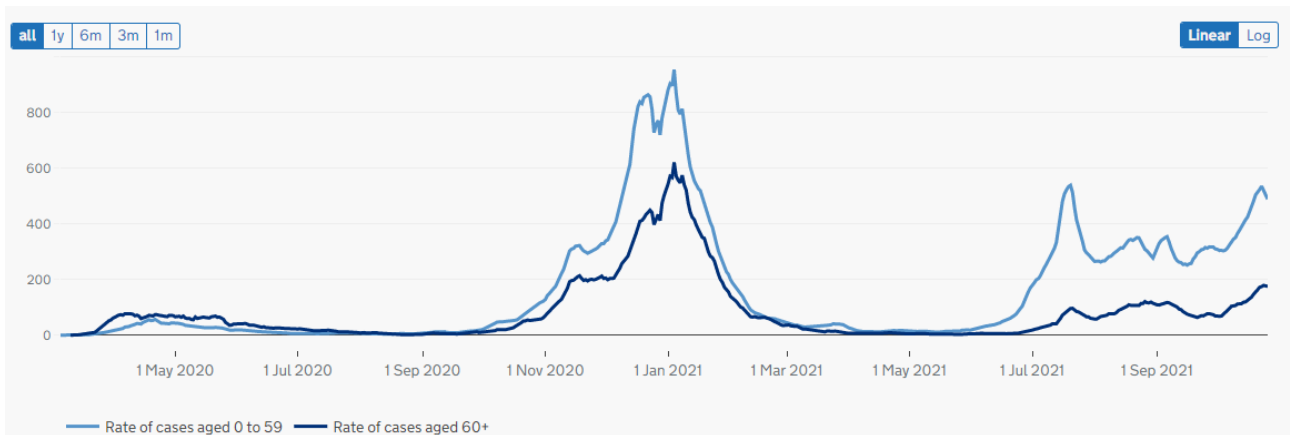
2 Covid-19 cases and deaths

Community infection rates for Kent as a whole are currently 406 per 100,000 (26 October 7 day rolling average). The graph below shows the trend in **daily confirmed cases** in Kent over the duration of the pandemic:



Source: 31 October 2021 <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases?areaType=utla&areaName=Kent>

Within the overall case numbers there is a significantly higher rate amongst those aged 0-59 years old, as shown in the graph below:

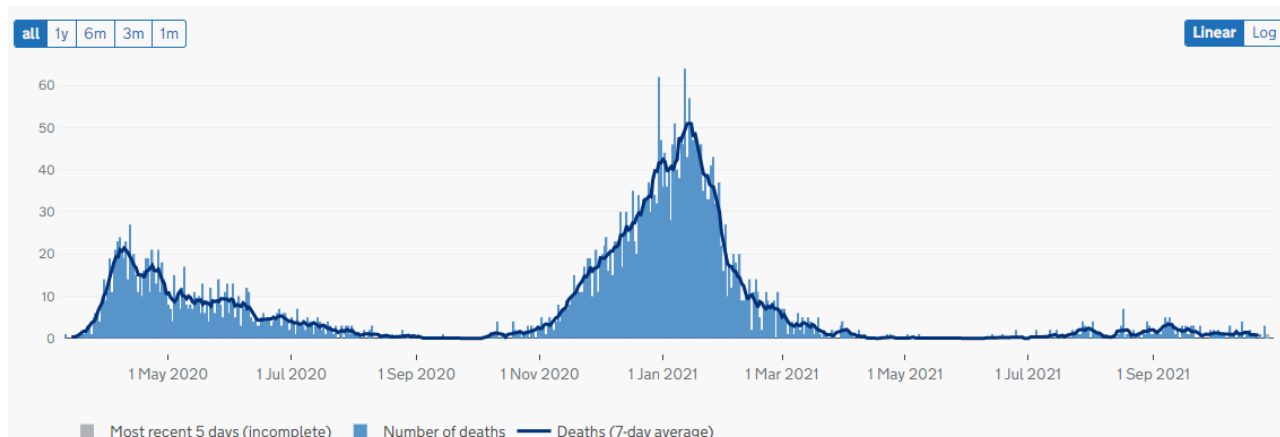


Source: 31 October 2021 <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases?areaType=utla&areaName=Kent>

Deaths from Covid-19 remain relatively low, however there are unfortunately still a number of deaths on a weekly basis. As of 31 October in Kent there have been:

- 4,147 deaths within 28 days of a positive test (+92 from Sept HOSC report)
- 4,744 deaths with Covid-19 recorded on the death certificate (+104 from Sept HOSC report)

The graph below shows the **daily confirmed deaths** in Kent over the duration of the pandemic:



Source: 31 October 2021 <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths?areaType=utla&areaName=Kent>

3 Hospital pressures

The number of people in hospital beds with confirmed Covid-19 is currently around 164 (of which 15 are in intensive care/high dependency units). This represents approximately 4% of all hospital beds currently available.

Hospital services, like all parts of the NHS, are however very busy at present with significant pressure on both urgent care and in-patients as we move towards the winter months. There is regular cross-Kent and Medway operational planning underway involving all acute trusts, community trusts, ambulance services, mental health, social care and primary care in order to manage pressures; with active co-operation to try to ensure patients receive the care they need.

As noted in the General Practice paper on the HOSC agenda, it is a complex picture with covid and non-covid related pressure across all health and care services both in terms of high demand and workforce issues.

4 Elective care treatments

The NHS across Kent and Medway continues to work hard to reschedule routine treatments.

Latest figures for planned (elective) care waiting lists were published on 14 October, providing data for August 2021, and show the number of people waiting over 52 weeks continues to fall however the rate of reduction slowed during August. Figures in the table below are for Kent and Medway as a whole. The data is compiled and published by NHS England and is only given at the CCG/NHS system level of Kent and Medway combined.

In September HOSC members asked for comparative figures with other parts of the country. We have included the South East England NHS region's combined data for August as a comparator.

	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	SE Eng Aug 2021
Total incomplete pathways	143,974	150,752	153,366	160,380	162,175	768,891
Total within 18 weeks	92,867	103,028	108,888	113,860	113,778	536,229
% within 18 weeks	64.5%	68.3%	71.0%	71%	70.2%	69.7%
Average waiting time in weeks	10.7	10.5	9.9	10.2	10.8	11.0
Total 52 plus weeks	7,963	6,815	6,010	5,765	5,757	27,758

Source: National Consultant-led Referral to Treatment Waiting Times Data 2021-22, 12 Aug 2021

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/rtt-data-2021-22/>

The table below provides the Kent and Medway level data for August 2021 on the ten specialties with the highest number of 52+ week waits:

Treatment Function	Total number of incomplete pathways	Total within 18 weeks	% within 18 weeks	Average (median) waiting time (weeks)	92nd percentile waiting time (weeks)	Total 52 plus weeks
Trauma and Orthopaedic	21,941	13,132	59.9%	13.6	53.2	1,855
Ear Nose and Throat	14,671	7,583	51.7%	17.3	51.6	1,146
General Surgery	18,576	11,807	63.6%	12.1	47.7	1,083
Gynaecology	13,905	9,432	67.8%	11.7	40.8	587
Urology	9,439	6,508	68.9%	11.0	39.6	314
Ophthalmology	14,857	10,582	71.2%	11.2	32.9	193
Other - Surgical	8,745	6,525	74.6%	9.3	36.1	174
Plastic Surgery	1,816	1,271	70.0%	11.6	47.1	119
Cardiology	6,597	4,998	75.8%	10.2	28.0	54
Neurosurgical	941	648	68.9%	11.5	45.6	44

In September HOSC members asked for a breakdown of waiting times by district. The data is not collated/published based on patient location but the following table provides the headline data for our four acute trusts in Kent and Medway.

Provider	Total number of incomplete pathways	Total within 18 weeks	% within 18 weeks	Average (median) waiting time (weeks)	92nd percentile waiting time (weeks)	Total 52 plus weeks
Dartford And Gravesham NHS Trust	18,601	13,136	70.6%	9.7	40.0	458
Medway NHS Foundation Trust	26,430	17,918	67.8%	11.5	37.7	221
East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust	61,128	38,871	63.6%	12.6	50.5	4,421
Maidstone And Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	37,306	27,452	73.6%	11.1	29.1	49

The data by hospital trust in the table above will not total to the overall waiting numbers as some Kent and Medway patients are on waiting lists of trusts outside of the county and local trusts, particularly Dartford have patients on their waiting lists who live outside of Kent.

To reduce the difference in waiting times across the county a shared waiting list is now being managed across our four NHS trusts; this means more of the people who have waited longest can be seen as quickly as possible. A new orthopaedic surgery unit has also opened in Canterbury to treat more people in East Kent.

We also continue to work with private hospitals to provide capacity for elective treatments. We are working with 11 private sector providers of varying sizes. In August, across 8 of the providers (data not yet available for 3 providers), the number of patients seen was:

- Day cases **249**
- Ordinary elective **62**
- New outpatients **379**
- Follow-up outpatients **988**

The current urgent and emergency care pressure on hospitals means there have been some limited cancellations of planned care in the last month. NHS England routinely publishes data on cancelled elective operations on a quarterly basis, however this was paused during the pandemic and is not scheduled to restart until February 2022 with data for quarter three of 2021/22.

It remains a priority across the NHS to reduce the number of people waiting a significant time and people will continue to be prioritised based on both clinical urgency and length of wait.

Elective recovery funding

The South East of England's allocation of the additional national funding provided for the second half of 2021/22 to support the elective care recovery is approximately £100million, broken down into £35m 'Technology' Capital, £35m general capital and £30m revenue. This is the total available to all six NHS systems in the South East region. Funding is a one-off investment and must be spent by 31 March 2022 to deliver reductions in waiting times and backlogs. Any recurring costs linked to this investment will need to be met within our system budget.

Kent and Medway NHS providers and commissioners have worked together and in discussion with social care partners to develop priorities for the funding which have been submitted to NHS England for review and approval. Confirmation on which bids are accepted is expected shortly.

5 Conclusion

All parts of the NHS continue to work extremely hard to meet patients' needs which have built up through the period of lockdown restrictions. In recent weeks we have seen growing pressure across all NHS services with hospital urgent and emergency services very busy. The whole health and care system is working together to respond in the most effective ways possible to maximise the quality and timeliness of care.

Critical to the response is positive collaboration across different sectors including social care in order to support timely hospital discharge and maintain effective support in people's homes to prevent them needing hospital admission.

Delivering the Covid-19 vaccine programme remains a key priority and an essential part of managing demand on health and care services through the winter months.

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