

Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre

Public engagement report from March 2023 listening events

Summary

During March 2023, people in Edenbridge were asked their views on the new Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre. The centre is a purpose-built community hub; a one-stop shop for health and wellbeing services and is due to open this autumn.

With construction of the centre near completion we wanted to seek feedback on the proposed range of services, how best to use the community space in the centre and how to make the centre accessible.

Around 400 people were reached through meetings, by talking to people in the town and attending community groups. One hundred and seventy seven people gave us their views by completing a survey. There were more than 1,000 views of the Edenbridge page on our public website and we reached about 28,000 people through social media. More than 2,000 booklets were handed out and left in public venues.

Overall people told us:

- they are pleased the health centre will be opened soon and pleased about the range of new services and facilities available
- the GP practice will benefit from new purpose-built premises, under the same roof as community services
- they were not happy the proposed opening hours for a minor injury service would be Monday to Friday only. People wanted the service to be open during the evening and at weekends
- They were disappointed about the lack of an x-ray service, mostly due to travel and transport issues and were uncertain about the data relating to footfall which was presented to them.

Background

The Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre will bring together a wide range of health services under one roof and give the people of Edenbridge seamless access to healthcare. Services already planned include a GP practice, outpatient services, therapies and social prescribing. The centre includes a wellbeing day centre designed to provide a multi-purpose space to facilitate sessions aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the local population.

Since we consulted with local residents about the services available in 2017, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on the way health and social care has been delivered, highlighting inequalities and the changing needs of our populations. With the roof going on we wanted to finalise the services and explore what else could be provided to benefit the health and wellbeing of the Edenbridge community. As well as providing information about the additional

services that could be offered in a booklet, which was available online and in printed format, we asked for people's views on what matters most.

1. How we engaged with people in Edenbridge

We used a range of ways to make sure we gave the residents of Edenbridge the opportunity to tell us their thoughts and views on the health centre.

An in-person meeting was held on a Saturday morning, along with two meetings held online, with one taking place on a weekday evening. A survey was developed and made available online with a paper copy version as part of a detailed engagement booklet. These were shared with local community groups, through social media, the Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust website and the paper copy could be returned via freepost.

To be sure we reached as many people as possible, we spent time in the town speaking to people about the plans; giving them the opportunity to ask questions. We spent a few hours on two days at the Eden Centre and the Public Health Bus spent two days at Waitrose in the town. We also visited a stay and play group at Edenbridge Children's Centre and the local Foodbank.

More than 2,000 engagement booklets were handed out on the Public Health Bus, left in public venues, such as the library and hospital for people to collect, as well as some being given to local community groups to share with their service users.

2. Who we heard from

More than 400 people gave us their views through the variety of engagement sessions held or by completing a survey.

- 100 people attended the public meeting on 4 March
- 19 people attended online meetings on 8 and 17 March
- Two sessions at the Eden Centre and engaged with 70 people
- Spoke to 20 families at the Stay and Play session, Edenbridge Children's Centre
- Spoke to 30 people at the Foodbank
- Health bus – handed out more than 700 leaflets
- Approximately 10 emails received with comments and enquiries which were responded to
- More than 1,000 views of the Edenbridge page on the Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust public website
- Social media coverage on KCHFT pages:

Twitter: Shared 18 posts, which reached more than 6,597 people and were clicked on 246 times.

Instagram: Shared 11 posts, reaching more than 3,230 people.

Facebook: Shared 14 posts, reaching more than 18,864 people and engaged with 349 times.

A total of 177 completed surveys were received. Those responding to the survey were:

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| • A patient/carer at the Edenbridge Medical Practice | 63% |
| • Resident in Edenbridge or the surrounding villages | 87% |
| • Working for Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust | 3.5% |
| • Working at Edenbridge Medical Practice. | 0.7% |

It is noted that there would be people responding both as a patient or carer at the Edenbridge centre and as a resident of Edenbridge and surrounding villages.

- The majority of people completing the survey were females (67%).
 - 5% of respondents were between aged 25-34,
 - 9% aged 35-44;
 - 14% aged 45-54;
 - 13% aged 55-64;
 - 20% aged 65-74;
 - 27% aged 75-84
 - and 5% aged over 80.
- The majority of people identified as heterosexual or straight (85%) and three people identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- 16% of people stated that they had a disability.
- 91% of respondents stated their ethnicity as White British, one person identified as mixed British Asian and two people identified as mixed-race ethnicity.
- 16% of people said they provided care for a child or children and 10% provided care to an adult.

Views on the services planned for the new centre

Many people told us they were pleased the centre would be opening soon after many years of planning and felt this would have a positive impact on Edenbridge.

"I would like to say how happy my family are, having a wonderful new health centre in Edenbridge.

"Well done for getting this done!"

"Really positive – this is a huge improvement on what's there already"

"I'm really looking forward to the new building"

People we spoke to acknowledged the positive benefit for staff by having the GP practice and community services working together under one roof.

"Looks impressive. Look forward to seeing the finished product. Hopefully, communication between different departments will improve greatly."

Although the new health centre is seen as a positive move, people have raised concerns about services which may not be available.

I am pleased that there will be services for babies, children and youth. I wish the dentist NHS was on the site.

What is being proposed for inclusion at the new health centre is excellent – thanks for bringing services together on the site BUT there are key omissions which will give residents difficulties.

"I have lived here for 46 years and have seen how much Edenbridge has expanded ... I am impressed more is going to be done for the older community and that the day centre will be extending to six days a week. However, I'm concerned that the MIU will be down sized and we will have no X-ray department."

At the public meeting, a person did acknowledge that providing services for everyone is a challenge and the services may not meet all needs.

“We’re not going to meet everyone’s needs all the time”

The key concerns raised were about:

- No x-ray being provided
- MIU opening times
- Travel and transport

3. X-ray

A large number of people expressed unhappiness about the lack of provision of an x-ray facility. In the survey, 78 responders reported the lack of an X-ray service as a concern, stating that they would have to travel to access x-ray services in Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells.

Respondents stated this would prove difficult, especially without access to a car. They said public transport was limited and this would mean they would have to rely on an already overstretched volunteer transport and emergency ambulance service. Some respondents said that they felt ‘cheated’ as they had been promised an x-ray facility.

“Edenbridge needs its own x-ray facility as public transport is so poor”

“Lack of x-ray is disappointing”

A few people have said they understand the reasons for not having x-ray and suggest we communicate clearly the reason for this with people.

“Shame x-ray won’t be at the centre, but I understand why”

“The x-ray explanation was clear and interesting – people just need to understand the reasons and that everything doesn’t hang on x-ray”

At the public meeting, there was a challenge from the people in attendance about the reliability of the data showing people attending x-ray services.

“x-ray footfall – suspicious of data.”

“Concerns around figures for x-ray dept”

People were assured that the footfall data is being reviewed continually so we have a clear idea of people in the Edenbridge locality who are attending other units as a result of no facility in the town.

Linked to accessing x-ray services is transport, which will be covered in section 6. Many people raised transport and accessing x-ray at other hospitals in East Grinstead, Sevenoaks and at Pembury Hospital.

“x-ray – the difficulties of access for this rurally isolated community if it is not available here. East Grinstead is closest (7 miles) but not easy if you can’t get transport – so logistics of access are important. Again, if there was an x-ray here, computer linked to aid remote diagnosis, people would attend if it could be relied on to be open at set time.”

4. Minor injuries unit

A consistent theme for the minor injury unit is opening times and the availability only proposed as being Monday to Friday. The suggestion from people is to re-think the days when the unit is open and include weekend cover, due to more sport and other activities taking place. People also said

that infrequency of opening times could result in more people calling the GP surgery line making it even more difficult to get an appointment

“At weekends, there are more residents around town (who work elsewhere weekdays, or out of town at school etc) and more risk of injuries from sports activities and DIY mishaps.”

“It should cover weekends - also if people could rely on the unit being open, there would be more footfall”

A suggestion from the families spoken to at the children’s centre is once a decision has been made, to be really clear about what treatment the people of Edenbridge can go to the minor injury unit for.

5. Travel and transport

Travel and transport was a key theme in the feedback we heard. The concern didn’t only focus on getting to other hospitals to access x-ray or other services, but also getting to the new health centre.

“Transport to and from the centre is important- how will people get there from outlying towns?”

“How will people access services outside of Edenbridge if they can’t drive e.g. non-drivers, residential homes”

However, some people are happy to catch a bus to the nearest hospital.

“I’m happy to travel to the hospital in East Grinstead, I catch the bus all the time”

There were several solutions suggested to overcome travel and transport challenges. Some suggestions were car sharing schemes, volunteer transport bus service or a regular minibus and promotion of the current volunteer driver service.

“To improve voluntary transport bus service to medical centre from outlying areas”

“Voluntary driver service needs to be more widely known about”

Another suggestion was for there to be a bus stop put outside the centre.

“Make sure bus stops outside the centre”

It was highlighted there will be a car park with 100 spaces for staff and people accessing the health centre. There were concerns raised about how people using the parking would be monitored and the risks, as the centre is close to the train station. People want us to keep the spaces for patients attending for appointments.

“Risk around station users using the car park”

To overcome this, there were suggestions of putting a barrier in place or a camera.

There were questions asked about paying in the car park, which could be another solution to other users parking there.

“Will it be paid parking?”

“What will the paying system be?”

As well as vehicle travel, there were concerns and suggestions raised for pedestrians. There was mention of speeding cars and how dangerous it can be crossing the main road.

“Lots of disregard of 30 MPH limit!” (Spital’s Cross to South Side of Main Road)

“Speed limit is 40 and people race down it”

“Surrounding roads are dangerous to walk and not well lit”

A suggestion was for us to work with Highways to look at the road issues and how best to overcome them. It was highlighted there is a need for a zebra crossing.

“Need for a Zebra crossing”

“Are there plans to have a safe pedestrian crossing (preferably Zebra crossing) over Four Elms Road”

Bearing all of this in mind and the travel solutions, one person raised the ‘green agenda’ and the importance of looking after our environment.

6. Using the community space and other services

Some people told us the Eden Centre is used for lots of functions and felt that the rooms available at the new centre should be used for an x-ray function and more GPs.

Many people said that the rooms should be available for hire by therapists offering alternative therapies such as chiropody, osteopathy, acupuncture and aromatherapy.

In relation to health services people wanted support with:

- Hearing/Ear syringing/ENT clinic
- Podiatry
- Dementia
- Parkinson’s
- Sexual health clinic
- NHS Dentist service
- Chemotherapy beds
- Day beds for people who have had treatments
- Memory clinic – currently only at Sevenoaks
- Nutrition
- Lifestyle classes – diet/healthy living
- Wrap around health support for older people
- Mental health support for all ages
- Eye clinic – dry eye/macular degeneration
- Rehabilitation – post injury/illness
- Carers support/education/guidance and advice

Health and wellbeing

Lots of people told us about the importance of using the indoor and outdoor space available, including the multi-purpose wellbeing day centre for social groups to reduce loneliness and encourage social interaction as an essential tool in improving mental and physical health.

- Access to gym equipment

- First aid classes – CPR /defib. Include educating children in first aid
- Alcoholics Anonymous/marriage guidance
- Outside space with flower gardens
- Areas for young and another for old citizens, communal areas
- Class and exercise for the older people
- Youth club and sports
- Self-defence lessons
- Mother and baby support
- Pilates/yoga
- Creative arts as therapy sessions
- Singing group
- Baby and toddler groups
- 70+ clubs
- Child free spaces and waiting areas which are quiet for vulnerable people to go
- Day centre
- New Parents group – New residents who don't know people
- Wellbeing talks/events i.e. Saturday/ Sunday weight loss, weigh ins, sight checks, bone density, blood pressure, etc.
- Young people / teenagers space – social space, meet, education / music!!! Club meet local people
- Bingo.

People also told us we could use the space for puppy training, blood donation, parish/town Council meetings and for the Women's Institute to meet.

7. Improving accessibility in the health centre

Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. There will be an induction loop for people with hearing impairments and all clinic rooms are on the ground floor.

There were suggestions made about the outside of the building and making sure people can access the front door.

"No steps please only slopes. Need handle raise to hold safely up."

"Smooth paths and no steps"

There was also a suggestion for an outside shelter while waiting.

"Outside shelter by the front door if waiting for the centre to open" (to stop people getting cold)

It was recognised, that signs and information in the building need to be accessible for people with sight loss and literacy problems. A suggestion was for them to have personal support when they are in the building.

"People with literacy problems – access information, signage, interpersonal support"

A person highlighted the need for equipment to be installed to make examinations of people with complex needs, including physical needs, easier and dignified for the individual.

"Hoist and or changing places/toilets so that those with complex needs can be examined fully."

Many people asked about the moving around the building in wheelchairs or mobility scooters. The concerns raised were about the door ways being wide enough, corridors being wide enough and automatic door buttons at a level for people to reach.

“Fire doors in the corridors are not always left open in Pembury there are no buttons for someone on scooter to press and same in library. Someone has to open doors for me, how will this work for me on a scooter?”

“Will I be able to take my scooter around the centre? I can’t walk more than a few steps.”

A concern was raised by a person attending one of the online meetings about able bodies people agreeing disability aides when they don’t have lived experience.

“I worry as disability aides are being agreed by able bodied people and it’s wrong to do that.”

People told us that we should make sure translation services are available.

8. Other comments and feedback

People also told us that they:

- want to see the centre staffed with enough doctors and nurses available for appointments, operating shifts to cover week days and weekend.
- want an online booking system so they don’t have to call
- want to be able to access GP services and clinics when they need to
- like the support area for children and the café for social interaction.
- want a volunteer bureau for transport and to undertake roles such as meet and greet.
- Were disappointed with the design of the Wellbeing Day Centre. They said it was hoped this would be a bespoke area for dementia patients and their carers. They were concerned about its location at the front of the building as it would be too noisy and there was only one nearby accessible toilet.
- felt the time to consider how the interior of the building should be used is before construction began not when it is already under construction
- are concerned about future housing development and the impact of a larger population might have on services and this will need to be taken into consideration.

9. Next steps

The feedback from the listening events is being used to develop the clinical model for the centre and will be shared with Edenbridge residents at a meeting on Saturday, 7 October at the WI Hall. You can find more information and book your place online: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/EdenbridgeFuture