

# Learning Disabilities Service, South Kent Coast Team Eversley House and Cairn Ryan site move to Dover Health Centre

**2 October 2024**

The aim of this paper is to provide HOSC members with an update about plans to move Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust's (KCHFT) Learning Disabilities Services for south Kent coast clients to a more accessible venue.

The reason for the move from Eversley House, Seabrook, in Folkestone and Cairn Ryan, in Dover into Dover Health Centre is to provide a more suitable, accessibility-compliant location for the care of people with learning disabilities and to improve the working environment for staff. An alternative option was explored to use Dover District council offices but the space needed refurbishment and being an administrative central function for the Council, was potentially not appropriate for seeing LD clients with complex and challenging behaviours.

Following engagement with people with learning disabilities, carers, staff and partners, the move is planned to take place on 14 October 2024.

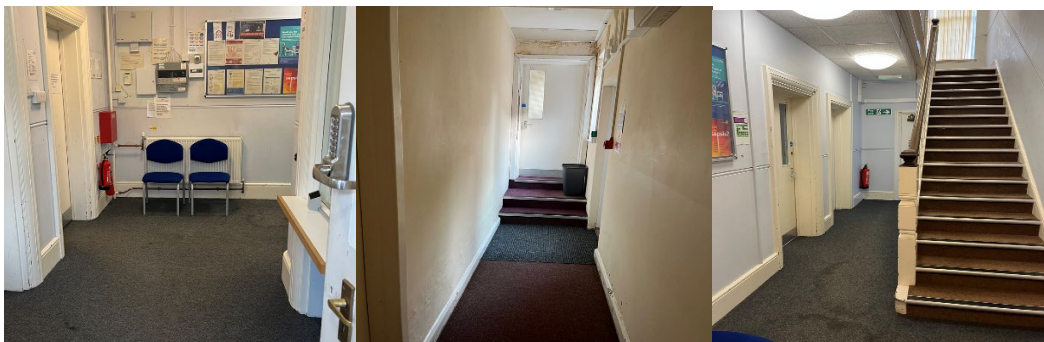
## Background

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust's Learning Disabilities Service delivers the majority of its care from people's homes and community settings, with only approximately 20 per cent delivered at bases, including Eversley House and Cairn Ryan.

### Eversley House

The Eversley House site, in Seabrook, Folkestone, is owned by NHS Property Services and rented by KCHFT.

The Learning Disabilities Service has delivered patient assessments at this site for many years. The site does not comply with the minimal accessibility requirements of the Equality Act 2010. For example, the front steps to the site are very steep and wheelchair access is from the side of the building, which still has raised edges to the entrance.



There is only on-road parking and poor public transport access. To get to bus stops people have to walk up and down a hill, which may not be suitable for all clients using the site. At present, 16 KCHFT staff work at this site. Staff from Kent and Medway Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) and Kent County Council (KCC) social workers also use the site for their main purpose of an office base.

### Cairn Ryan

Cairn Ryan, on the outskirts of Dover, is owned by NHS property services and rented by KCHFT.

The Learning Disabilities Service has delivered patient assessments at this site for many years.

There is off-road parking at the site and fair public transport access. At present, 23 KCHFT staff work at this site.



This site has a sensory room, which approximately 17 people have continued to use for respite provision although not actively supported or treated by the learning disabilities service and therefore not on the service current clinical caseload. These 17 people with learning disabilities and their carers have been informed of the move and have explored and identified local alternatives for them in the community such as Greenbanks in Thanet and Ashford gateway.

The site also has an assessment kitchen. However, the clinical preference and good practice is to conduct home visits for kitchen assessments as these are more clinically appropriate for the majority of people with learning disabilities.

The sensory room and assessment kitchen are used for approximately 11 appointments each month. Staff from other KCHFT services used the building as office space, including Adults Speech and Language Therapy and Adult Health Improvement Central Referral Team. However, due to changes in working practice, these teams are using other venues and have already vacated the site.

The whole building will be closing. KMPT and KCC staff who have remained using the site as an office base are also moving to other office sites within their organisations.



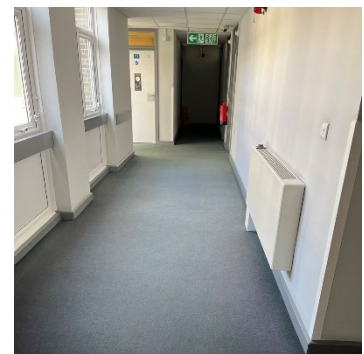
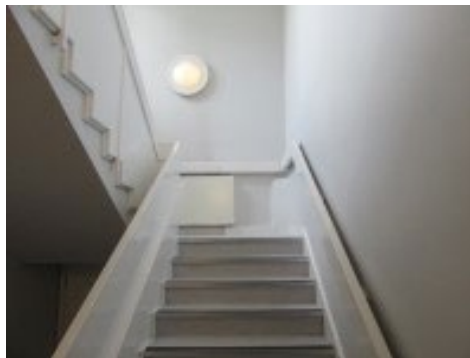
Dover Health centre



Dover Health Centre is owned by KCHFT having recently transferred from NHS Property Services. The site houses a number of clinical teams and a range of services including district nursing, adult speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, continence service, dental and GP. There are a number of bookable clinic rooms that are used to support a number of local clinics, including a range of health and wellbeing services.



The moves from both sites impacts 39 staff, who have been consulted with in relation to the proposed move to Dover Health Centre.

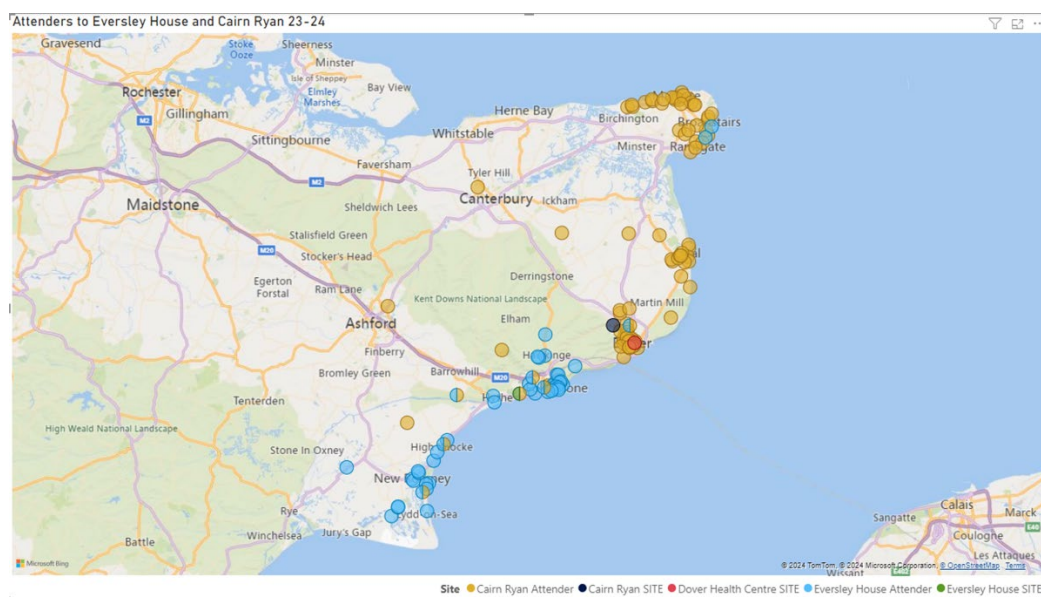


## Access demographics to sites

Demographics of those accessing services during 2023/24 was reviewed in comparison to proposed travel to Dover Health Centre. This showed:

	Cain Ryan	Eversley
Total <b>contacts</b> last year (10/05/2023 - 08/05/2024) – not people as multiple contacts	315	103
Average appointments per month	24	9
Total people using building	101	60
Current greatest travel distance	18.4 miles	23.8 miles
Future greatest travel distance when Dover Health Centre is the base	18.8 miles	22.8 miles
Number people travelling less/same after proposed move to Dover Health Centre	34	3
Number travelling further	67	57
Max additional travel to Dover Health Centre	1 - 2 miles	5 – 10 miles

The map below shows current caseload by geographical area in relation to the current Eversley House, Cairn Ryan and new Dover Health Centre.



## Advantages of Dover Health Centre

- Better accessibility than both Eversley House and Cairn Ryan.
- The building is newer and the site is Equality Act 2010 compliant, see [accessible](#).
- Public transport is very good with more bus routes and within walking distance of both the bus and national rail stations.
- Both the front and back door are accessible to patients using wheelchairs.
- A pay and display car park (via Ringo) is available. People with learning disabilities and their carers have easy access to the back door so can use separate entrance.
- There is gated parking available for staff.

- There is a well-lit, wide stairwell and relatively large lift available that is suitable for wheelchair use. Feedback identified there is space for a wheelchair in the lift but the space is narrow. Access would need to be approached in reverse and a carer/ supporter would need to stand in front of the wheelchair.
- Reception cover provides a welcoming approach and supports the security arrangements of the building.
- Other clinical teams are based at Dover Health Centre (podiatry, dental, community nursing, and CYP mental health services), which will support integrated working and provision of holistic care around the individual with learning disabilities.
- Significant financial savings of more than £250,000 per annum with some being reinvested into the health economy by enhancing the Dover Health Centre environment for all users (e.g. renewing disabled toilets on both floors).

### **Disadvantages of Dover Health Centre**

- Dedicated assessment rooms for the Learning Disabilities Service are on the first floor, accessible by stairs or lift. For those who cannot use these, alternative clinic rooms downstairs can be booked.
- There is no assessment kitchen, however home visits are preferable and clinically more effective for people. Home visits are being conducted for kitchen assessments will be available for everyone on caseload.
- While there is no sensory room local alternatives within the community have been identified and information shared with people with learning disabilities and their carers. (The sensory room has been used for respite, which can be achieved through alternative community infrastructure).
- Accessibility of patients presenting with complex behaviours who were seen at Cairn Ryan may not be able to be seen Dover Health Centre due to potential risk towards others. However, the team has scoped alternative safe provisions, which would use sites that are more familiar to the individual.

### **Proposal of site move**

- The team providing patient care clinically and administratively will not change.
- The Learning Disability Services will move to Dover Health Centre. Adults Speech and Language Therapy and Adult Health Improvement Central Referral Team admin bases will also be moved and are not patient facing teams.
- Cairn Ryan and Eversley House will no longer be occupied by KCHFT.
- People will need to use alternative sensory rooms that are available within the community.
- We are finalising use of bookable rooms in New Romney Clinic for people in that area who will be most affected by the move (three people attending Cairn Ryan already from the Marsh).
- Storage of equipment has been incorporated into a number of other KCHFT sites reducing the need for staff to travel as much freeing clinical time.

## **Engagement with people with learning disabilities, carers and families**

We have engaged people with learning disabilities, their carers, and their families via a letter and follow-up informal conversations about how the move might affect their accessibility to our service

Some of the feedback is outlined below:

- Good clear access with a ramp. Plenty of space for wheelchair in the reception area
- Due to complex needs, some services users will need to enter the building from the rear.
- The upstairs disabled toilet was not clearly indicated. The reviewer observed a lack of adaptations such as a hoist to support access. No other LD service sites offer this level of facility. Wheelchair users would use the larger disabled toilet on the ground floor.
- Travelling to the new site is easier by bus than getting to Eversley House

We have also worked closely with a member of our KCHFT's People's Network, who is a wheelchair user and has supported an assessment of access at Dover Health Centre and provided feedback on the accessibility of the site for someone using a large wheelchair.

His feedback stated "the building had overall good access". He gave us advice on improving signs for the disabled toilets, the use of hoists and the size of clinic rooms.

## **Staff feedback**

A formal consultation process has been completed with staff. Individual and group feedback has been collated with the main theme being concerns around parking. There were a number of estate issues raised, including signage and maintenance.

The formal consultation process has concluded with staff provided with the mitigations or changes being shared that address all the points raised.

## **Changes following client and staff feedback**

Changes we have made following both the client and staff feedback include:

- Work had already been completed on adapting the disabled toilets so they are more appropriate for individuals using large wheelchairs.
- The Estates and Facilities Team has reviewed the signage and adaptations and will be making the improvements suggested
- We have issued more fobs for the gated staff car park and repaired the barrier.
- Hoist equipment is being transferred from Cain Ryan site.
- Looking at the feasibility to merge two rooms dedicated for Learning Disabilities service to provide a larger clinical assessment space, although larger bookable space is available on the ground floor.
- Maintenance issues all addressed once raised by site users.

- Gap analysis on clinical provision completed by the Quality Lead for the service and all actions on target for completion before move including use of larger community spaces for group activity, finalising access to other sites such as New Romney clinic for people living in the Marsh area, Deal hospital, GP surgeries as more appropriate and being neutral space for clients to be seen
- Budget uplifted to allow for service booking larger community space for group activity and service meetings
- West Kent clinical team taking forward a Quality Improvement project with the aim to increase use of sensory room in their locality. The learning to be shared and other local community sites identified.

## **Recommendation**

Following engagement with service users, carers, staff and stakeholder and the changes being made as a result, HOSC is asked to support the transfer of services to Dover Health Centre to provide people with learning disabilities and their carers a more accessible and appropriate venue for their care and support.

**Clive Tracey, Director of Specialist Service,  
Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust**