

Item: Implementation of Hyper Acute Stroke Services in East Kent

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 28 January 2025

Subject: Implementation of Hyper Acute Stroke Services in East Kent

Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by NHS Kent and Medway (the ICB) and East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT).

1) Introduction

- a) Three Hyper Acute Stroke Services (HASUs) are being established to serve Kent and Medway. These will be located in Maidstone, Ashford and Dartford.
- b) The implementation follows a long period of planning, consultation, and challenges. A summary timeline was set out in a paper to HOSC in [January 2022](#).
- c) Phase 1 of the programme resulted in the HASUs in Maidstone and Dartford opening during 2024.

2) The East Kent scheme

- a) Phase 2 of the programme is the establishment of a HASU at the William Harvey Hospital (WHH) in Ashford. Implementation has been delayed.
- b) In December 2023, the ICB Acute Stroke Reconfiguration Steering Group agreed to undertake a gateway review of the East Kent programme to gain assurance on the delivery of the scheme. The Group concluded there had not been sufficient progress to be assured of the East Kent scheme.
- c) Stroke services in East Kent are currently delivered from the Kent and Canterbury Hospital (KCH). KCH does not have an A&E department, and therefore services will not remain on that site because SSNAP audit data evidences improved outcomes when a HASU is co-located with an A&E.

3) Mechanical Thrombectomy services

- a) A Mechanical thrombectomy procedure performed within six hours of the onset of stroke symptoms, is a clinically effective treatment that can reduce brain damage and prevent or limit long term disability.

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- b) These services are commissioned by NHS England and are not part of the HASU programme. However, it is important for HOSC officers to be aware of their interdependencies.
- c) In Kent and Medway, residents have historically accessed services from London. From 2025, they will be delivered from the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.
- d) The reasons for locating the Service at KCH are the co-location requirements with other services (such as Interventional Radiology) and capital equipment required to deliver the thrombectomy service (bi-plane scanner). KCH will not be the only thrombectomy service in the country to not be co-located with a HASU. The Kent and Medway Integrated Stroke Delivery Network will ensure a smooth transition of the pathway from London to Canterbury.

4) Previous Scrutiny

- a) At its meeting on 29 February 2024, HOSC were informed that a recovery plan was being prepared to support the delivery of the East Kent scheme, with joint working between the ICB and EKHUFT. There was no definitive timeline for implementation but the ICB committed to its delivery.
- b) The Committee were concerned about the delay, fearing it disadvantaged East Kent residents and would have a detrimental impact on recruitment. There was a need for greater cost detail, which the Trust were working at pace on finalising, and that was anticipated to take one to two months.
- c) Following discussion, the Committee RESOLVED that they
 - i) Had not been assured by EKHUFT and the Integrated Care Board that works would proceed on the scheme at William Harvey Hospital.*
 - ii) note the commitment that the HASU will open at William Harvey but with significant delay.*
 - iii) request a briefing as soon as possible on the plans and timetable for opening the HASU at WHH.*
- d) Colleagues from NHS Kent and Medway and EKHUFT have been invited to provide an update on the East Kent HASU scheme and answer questions. An update on the wider scheme can be requested for a subsequent meeting.

5) Recommendation

RECOMMENDED that the Committee note the report.

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Background Documents

Kent County Council (2022) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (26/01/2022),
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=8761&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2022) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (30/11/2022),
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=9048&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2023) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (05/10/2023)
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=9318&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2024) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (28/02/2024)
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=9320&Ver=4>

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