

Briefing: Future of services provided at Sevenoaks Hospital

Briefing for: Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date March 2016

Subject Withdrawal of outpatient services from Sevenoaks Hospital and transfer to sites in Bromley

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1. Introduction

In October 2013, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust acquired a number of sites and services following the dissolution of South London Healthcare NHS Trust. This included a number of outpatient services at Sevenoaks Hospital as follows:

- Orthopaedics
- Ear Nose & Throat (ENT)
- Ophthalmology
- Dermatology
- Pain
- Gastrointestinal
- General Surgery
- Urology
- Cardiology

A contract has been in place with the site owners, Kent Community Health NHS Trust, through which King's leases space to deliver these services. The majority of patients (80%) that use these services are from West Kent. Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley patients are the third largest cohort (6%). If looking at all outpatient activity by site within the West Kent CCG area, this equates to 16% of patients using Sevenoaks Hospital.

Other sites and services that King's acquired in October 2013 include:

- Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH)
- Orpington Hospital
- Some services at the Beckenham Beacon and Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup

Post-acquisition King's set about making wide-scale changes to improve the quality of care for local patients. This included a major nurse recruitment drive and the complete refurbishment of Orpington Hospital. In more recent times however, whilst progress continued there was a significant change in the financial position of the Trust and we faced a very serious ongoing deficit. As a result, the Trust set an ambitious savings target of £86m for this year and is well on the way to achieving this. Whilst we are in a much better place than previously, challenge still lies ahead, with further work to be done over the next few years to achieve financial sustainability

2. Review of clinic utilisation and conclusions

As part of our ongoing Cost Improvement Programme, a detailed review of all patient activity within outpatient services across the Trust was undertaken. This included services at Sevenoaks Hospital and was considered alongside contractual costs.

Findings of the Sevenoaks Hospital review showed that clinic utilisation was lower than at other Trust sites, with a third (33%) of available appointment slots not being used. In addition, the review identified the repatriation potential for the services currently undertaken, into capacity available on other sites.

The viability of delivering services from any site is dependent on the level of patient activity and it is vital that capacity is used to its full potential. Where this is not the case with regard to external sites we have to look at where we can provide services from our own sites. The number of patients using Sevenoaks Hospital clinics is very low in comparison to other sites therefore the Trust has had to consider alternative options for providing these services.

Following this review and discussions with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust and our local commissioners we have taken the decision to withdraw our services from Sevenoaks Hospital and will continue to provide them at our nearby sites, Orpington Hospital and the PRUH.

We have a responsibility to ensure we are a financially stable organisation; therefore we have to balance service provision with the need to achieve financial sustainability. This does mean we have to make some difficult choices about the services we provide.

Achieving financial stability is in the interests of the population we serve as it ensures the continuity of essential services for our patients.

All of our savings initiatives go through rigorous review processes to assess risk and ensure the clinical care and treatment we provide to our patients is not impacted.

3. Future plans for delivering the services

We will be taking a phased approach to the withdrawal over the next few months to ensure a smooth transfer process and that patients continue to receive the care that they need.

The timeframe for our withdrawal is as follows:

End of March 2016	Cardiology, Gastroenterology, General Surgery, Pain Management and Urology
End of July 2016	ENT, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics
End of September 2016	Dermatology

Services for these patients will continue immediately and patients can book follow up appointments at the PRUH or Orpington Hospital. Where clinic provision is available we will be offering patients the choice of either hospital location and will be contacting all patients with existing bookings to inform them of the new options. New patients will be invited to attend one of the hospitals as appropriate. Both sites are within a reasonable travel time from Sevenoaks on public transport and by car.

We are working with colleagues at Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust to ensure robust communication to patients on these moves.

We remain committed to providing high quality care to the people of West Kent, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley and look forward to continuing the delivery of this care from our Bromley hospital sites.