

## Item 6: NHS Waiting Times for Cancer Care

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 19 September 2019

Subject: NHS Waiting Times for Cancer Care

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Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by the Kent and Medway STP.

It provides background information which may prove useful to Members.

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### 1) Introduction

- a) There are nine cancer waiting time performance measures and these are published quarterly by NHS England.<sup>1</sup>
- b) One of the measures is that 85% of patients should receive their first treatment within 62 days of an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer.<sup>2</sup>

### 2) The National Audit Office report

- a) In March 2019, the National Audit Office (NAO) published a report called "NHS waiting times for elective and cancer treatment".
- b) The NAO reported that the key measure referred to in 1b) above had not been met since the end of 2013.<sup>3</sup>
- c) The report linked the poor performance with an increased demand<sup>4</sup> along with staff shortages for diagnostic services, a lack of available beds and pressure on Trusts from emergency care.<sup>5</sup>

### 3) The local picture

- a) The quarterly statistical data provided on the NHS website reveals the performance of individual providers in meeting the various cancer standards. A summary of Kent providers in meeting the 62-day measure is shown in Table 1. Those failing to meet the performance standard are shown in red, and those achieving the standard are in green.

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<sup>1</sup> NHS England (2018) Waiting Times for Suspected and Diagnosed Cancer Patients 2017-18 Annual Report

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> According to the NAO report, the number of urgent referrals made by GPs for suspected cancer between 2010-11 and 2017-18 had increased by 94%.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

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**Table 1: Percentage of patients receiving first treatment within 62 days of GP referral - performance of Kent NHS providers**

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Quarter 4 2018/19 (final)<sup>6</sup></i>	<i>Quarter 1 2019/20 (provisional)<sup>7</sup></i>
All English Providers	77.42%	77.83%
Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	63.05%	69.46%
East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust	75.23%	77.34%
Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust	90.84%	89.71%

- b) In their full report, the NAO included a list of the twenty highest and lowest performing Clinical Commissioning Groups<sup>8</sup> meeting the 62-day cancer waiting times operational standard between October and December 2018.<sup>9</sup>
- i) NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley CCG was the 11<sup>th</sup> highest performing CCG, with 89% of their cancer patients treated within 62 days of referral.
- ii) NHS West Kent CCG was the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest performing CCG, with 66% of cancer patients treated within 62 days of referral.
- c) HOSC invited NHS colleagues to prepare the attached paper to address what was being done to address the poor performance in some areas of Kent.

## **2. Recommendation**

RECOMMENDED that the Committee consider and note the report.

## **Background Documents**

National Audit Office (2019) NHS waiting times for elective and cancer treatment, <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NHS-waiting-times-for-elective-and-cancer-treatment.pdf>

NHS England – Cancer waiting times: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/>

<sup>6</sup> NHS England (2019) Cancer waiting times statistics – quarter 4 2018-19 (final)

<sup>7</sup> NHS England (2019) Cancer waiting times statistics – quarter 1 2019-20 (provisional)

<sup>8</sup> Nb. The performance statistics provided by commissioners and providers differs because the commissioner-based statistics only include patients who can be traced back to an English Commissioner using their NHS Number. The NHS advises that provider-based statistics are the most complete assessment of performance of the English NHS.

<sup>9</sup> National Audit Office (2019) NHS waiting times for elective and cancer treatment

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