

Item 7: Single Pathology Service for Kent and Medway

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 19 September 2019

Subject: Single Pathology Service for Kent and Medway

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.

1) Introduction

- a) "Pathology is the study of disease. It is the bridge between science and medicine. It underpins every aspect of patient care, from diagnostic testing and treatment advice to using cutting-edge genetic technologies and preventing disease."¹
- b) In September 2017, NHS Improvement set out its intention for all acute hospital trusts in England to enter pathology networks. The aim of the pathology networks was to provide more responsive, high quality and efficient services. It would also reduce the unwarranted variation in pathology services. All networks were to be fully operational by 2021.²
- c) NHS Improvement set out plans for 29 pathology networks. The "Kent Pathology Services" was to cover:
 - i) Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
 - ii) East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust
 - iii) Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
 - iv) Medway NHS Foundation Trust

2) Previous engagement with HOSC

- a) The Kent and Medway STP provided updates to HOSC in September 2018 and January 2019.
- b) In September 2018, Medway Foundation Trust set out 7 options for future service delivery. Trusts were invited to return in January 2019 with a full business case (which was to be developed by December 2018).
- c) The Kent and Medway STP returned in January 2019, and updated the Committee that:

¹ The Royal College of Pathologists (online) What is pathology? <https://www.rcpath.org/discover-pathology/what-is-pathology.html>

² NHS Improvement (2018) NHS Improvement pathology networking in England: the state of the nation

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- i) the Strategic Outline Case was with Trust Boards for consideration;
 - ii) The Outline Business Case was to be with Boards for approval during summer 2019;
 - iii) A Final Business Case would be written for approval towards the end of 2019.
 - iv) Subject to approval, implementation would take place between 2020 and 2024.
- d) Following their meeting on 25 January 2019, HOSC Members recommended the following:
- RESOLVED that the report be noted, and the Kent and Medway STP be requested to provide an update at the appropriate time.*
- e) Members are asked to consider the attached update from the NHS.

3) Potential Substantial Variation of Service

- a) The Committee is asked to consider whether the proposals relating to the Kent and Medway Single Pathology Service constitute a substantial variation of service.
- b) Where the Committee deems the proposed changes as not being substantial, this shall not prevent the HOSC from reviewing the proposed changes at its discretion and making reports and recommendations to the NHS.

4) Recommendation

If the proposals relating to the Single Pathology Service are deemed substantial:

RECOMMENDED that:

- (a) the Committee deems that proposed changes to Pathology Services in Kent and Medway are a substantial variation of service.
- (b) NHS representatives be invited to attend this Committee and present an update at an appropriate time.

If the proposals relating to the Single Pathology Service are deemed not substantial:

RECOMMENDED that:

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- (a) the Committee deems that proposed changes to Pathology Services in Kent and Medway are not a substantial variation of service.
- (b) NHS representatives be invited to attend this Committee and present an update at an appropriate time.

Background Documents

Kent County Council (2019) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (25/01/19)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MID=7924>

Kent County Council (2018) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (21/09/18)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=7921&Ver=4>

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