



**Written submission from Cllr C Belsey, Chair, Health Overview  
& Scrutiny Committee, East Sussex County Council**

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**East Sussex  
Health Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**

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By email

To: Lizzy Adam, Scrutiny Research Officer

Email: [lizzy.adam@kent.gov.uk](mailto:lizzy.adam@kent.gov.uk)

From: Cllr Colin Belsey

Email: [cldr.colin.belsey@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.colin.belsey@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Dear Lizzy,

### **Kent and Medway Stroke Services Review**

Thank you for your invitation on behalf of the Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to attend the committee's meeting on 12 December and to speak on behalf of East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

Unfortunately I am unable to attend on this occasion but I have reviewed the papers. We also received a report on the Kent and Medway Stroke Services Review at our recent HOSC meeting on 30 November and had the opportunity to question the lead officer Michael Ridgwell, particularly in relation to the potential implications of the review for East Sussex residents. As you know, this resulted in East Sussex HOSC agreeing that the proposed changes are likely to constitute a 'substantial development or variation' to services for the county's residents and as such, we expect to be involved in the formal scrutiny of the specific proposals as the process moves forward to consultation. We look forward to working with scrutiny Members from Kent, Medway and Bexley in due course.

Having reviewed the JOSC agenda, I note that a significant part of your deliberations will relate to the proposed consultation process. I would therefore like to offer some comments on behalf of East Sussex HOSC which focus on this area. In doing so, I am drawing on our HOSC's experience of two previous consultations on the reconfiguration of stroke services, in East Sussex and central Sussex, in recent years. I would comment as follows:

- The impact of additional travel time is likely to be a key focus of public attention, both in terms of ambulance travel for stroke patients and travel arrangements for visiting carers and families. These issues need to be addressed fully and clearly in the consultation materials and process.
- It is helpful to draw upon the experiences of areas/Trusts which have already reconfigured stroke services, particularly in terms of the impact of increased ambulance travel time in relation to outcomes and the impact of reconfiguration on speed of treatment within the hospital.
- Clinicians should take a leading role in explaining the proposals to the public and stakeholder groups.
- Workforce issues will be key and understanding the views of staff will be important.

- It will be particularly helpful within the overall consultation plan to target groups with a specific interest in stroke services, such as the Stroke Association, carers groups, stroke survivors and their families as they bring invaluable insights into experiences of existing services and informed views on potential new models of care.
- It will be important to ensure that the consultation activity covers all areas affected by the proposals, including those outside Kent and Medway. In East Sussex this is likely to be particularly the High Weald area, but also northern Rother.
- It will be important to bear in mind the potential impact of the proposals on hospitals outside Kent and Medway which would be called upon to take additional patients. We would expect the relevant Trusts to have been consulted, and for the potential impact to be examined as part of the scrutiny process.
- Although the review focuses on acute stroke services it will be important to consider links to and availability of community rehabilitation services, particularly in terms of how these can minimise stays in acute hospitals and enable patients to receive appropriate ongoing care at, or as close to home as possible.

I would be grateful if these comments could be taken into account as part of your discussion on the 12<sup>th</sup> and I look forward to reading the minutes of your meeting.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Colin Belsey  
Chair, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee