



Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

Via email
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Dear Sajid Javid,

East Kent NHS Transformation Programme

The Kent and Medway Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) are writing in support of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust's (EKHUFT's) Expression of Interest for allocation of critical and vital capital funding under the government's Health Infrastructure Plan and New Hospitals Programme. Although we are a cross-party committee, we are united in our view that acute NHS care in east Kent is not sustainable in its current form and the case for investment is undeniable.

Leaders and clinicians across Kent and Medway are in no doubt that to delay capital investment in acute care will have dire consequences for east Kent residents, knock-on effects across the wider health and care system, and result in a worsening of the already apparent situation: not meeting waiting time targets in both A&E and planned care; a lack of capacity which leads to cancelled operations; and difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

A significant part of east Kent's hospital estate is over 50 years old, has come to the end of its useful life and is no longer fit for purpose. The Kent & Canterbury Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate continue to provide clinical services from buildings originally built in the 1930s. Looked at against the backdrop of a health and care system that is in the process of recovering from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for significant investment has never been more urgent.

If the Trust fails to secure adequate capital investment during this round of the HIP, there is a real danger that they will be forced into a series of inefficient, unsustainable and temporary emergency service moves that will serve only to paper over the cracks for a short time, rather than making the long-term and truly transformational changes that will bring huge benefits to staff, patients and the whole community.

This programme has been in discussion for over 20 years, with comprehensive and robust work undertaken over the last five years to develop a compelling investment case to safeguard our hospital services and the wider health and care system in east Kent for current and future generations - there is no easy or immediate plan B. To wait for another round of investment in a few years' time is not an option – the residents of east Kent cannot and should not wait any longer for the funding and clarity that they need and deserve.

Our committee implores you to treat EKHUFT's Expression of Interest with the urgency and responsibility it deserves.

Kind regards,

Paul Bartlett

**Chair, Kent & Medway Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Kent County Council**

cc. Roger Gough, Leader of Kent County Council
Kent District Leaders
Kent MPs