

Maidstone Borough Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Joint Overview and Scrutiny Sub
Committee
Recommendation for Future Work Programme

1. NHS Consultation: Improving care for people in a mental health crisis

- 1.1 The following press release was made by the Kent and Medway NHS Trust on 27 July 2012 on a consultation on plans to improve care for people suffering a mental health crisis.
- 1.2 The Maidstone Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee conducted a major review into Adult Mental Health Services. The review report was launched in July 2010.
- 1.3 The Joint Committee have made consultation responses on behalf of its respective authorities in the past, calling expert witnesses and the appropriate officers from each council.

Improving care for people in a mental health crisis

AN NHS consultation on plans to improve care for people suffering a mental health crisis has launched.

Around 3,000 people in Kent and Medway with a serious mental health problem experience a crisis every year and need urgent treatment. A crisis is used to describe someone who may be experiencing delusions, hallucinations or be very distressed.

Most people who have a crisis prefer to be treated at home, supported by friends and family, and this has been shown to result in a quicker recovery. However others, particularly those with more complex needs and who are a danger to themselves or others, need to be treated in specialist hospital units.

NHS Kent and Medway, which plans and buys mental health services, and Kent and Medway NHS and Social Partnership Trust (KMPT), which provides crisis care for people at home and in hospital, have carried out a

comprehensive review of services across Kent and Medway.

They have found there are not enough hospital beds in east Kent, unsuitable inpatient services in Medway and better psychiatric intensive outreach services are needed in east Kent.

As a result, the NHS wants to hear the public's view on plans to:

- treat people in three centres of excellence in **Dartford, Maidstone** and **Canterbury**. These will offer state-of-the art accommodation, with en suite rooms and improved access to consultant psychiatrists, nursing and therapy teams
- **increase the number of beds in east Kent**, by converting the current Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit in Canterbury
- **expand the psychiatric intensive care outreach service**, a specialist team which supports ward staff to prevent patient's condition deteriorating, across the whole of Kent and Medway
- **consolidate the psychiatric intensive care beds** into one unit in Dartford
- **invest £297,000 a year in additional Crisis Resolution Home Treatment (CRHT)** staff from April 2013 to enable more patients to be treated at home.

These plans mean 'A Block' at Medway Maritime Hospital, which is not suitable to for crisis care, would no longer provide acute mental health hospital care.

People from Medway, Sittingbourne and Sheppey who need admission to hospital would be treated in one of the three centres of excellence instead – which all have single rooms, en suites and access to outdoor space.

People in Medway would access the centre in Dartford. However the NHS is consulting on three options for people in Sittingbourne and Sheppey at either Maidstone, Dartford or Canterbury, and two options for Swanley patients – either Dartford or Maidstone.

Dr Rosarii Harte, Assistant Medical Director for KMPT, said: "Over the last eight years, there has been a transformation of mental health services for seriously unwell people in Kent and Medway.

"Most people prefer and are able to be treated at home and this is by far the best option for many people. However when home treatment is not the best option – usually because there is a real risk to the patient or a lack of family support – access to high quality care on an inpatient unit is

essential.”

Lauretta Kavanagh, Director of Commissioning of Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services for NHS Kent and Medway, said: "Research shows that for this group of seriously unwell people to get the best possible care, the environment and the staff are vitally important. There needs to be enough highly trained, expert, staff to provide a safe, flexible, resilient service with a full range of therapeutic interventions as well as modern, purpose-built accommodation that is comfortable, relaxed, safe and secure and preserves people's dignity and respect. It is also vital that we have good Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment (CRHT) teams who can support people at home. This is exactly what we are striving to achieve with this review.

"We have drawn up our plans after speaking to service users, carers, mental health professionals, GPs and other interested parties. We want to know what you think of these proposals and the options for people from Sittingbourne, Sheppey and Swanley – as well as if there is anything else we should consider.

"Your views could help us make the best decisions about future services and care for people in a mental health crisis who need urgent treatment. To make sure you have your chance to influence this debate and help us to make the right decisions over these vital services, please take 10 minutes to read our information and respond to the consultation."

Both the full consultation document and a summary, including a survey for people to give your views, can be read at www.kmpt.nhs.uk/acute-mental-health-review or for a copy, please email pals@kmpt.nhs.uk or call 0800 085 6606 or 01227 791281.

You can also visit one of the six roadshows being held in Kent and Medway:

1. **SWALE:** 10 August, 1pm to 4pm, UK Paper Leisure Centre, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne.
2. **MEDWAY:** 4 September, 2pm to 5pm, Corn Exchange, Rochester.
3. **WEST KENT:** 18 September, 2 to 5pm, Maidstone Community Centre, Marsham Street, 39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone.
4. **SWANLEY:** 28 September, 1pm to 4pm, Swanley Banqueting, Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley.
5. **MEDWAY:** 2 October, 6pm to 9pm, The King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham.
6. **EAST KENT:** 4 October, 10am to 1pm, Norman House, Beaver Business

Park, Beaver Road, Ashford.

The closing date for responses is 26 October 2012.

Around 3,000 of the 1.1million people of working age in Kent and Medway with serious mental health problems experience a mental health crisis every year and need urgent treatment.

Dramatic improvements to mental health crisis services, have facilitated 2,245 people (1,813 from Kent and 432 from Medway) to be treated effectively at home last year. A total of 1,545 were admitted to hospital (1,225 from Kent and 320 from Medway).

A 'mental health crisis' is the term used to describe someone who may be experiencing delusions, hallucinations, be very distressed, seriously neglecting themselves, or at risk of causing severe harm to themselves or others.

Anyone suffering from a mental health crisis needs the right treatment, in the right place to protect them from harm and assist them to recover. These services, called acute care, are currently provided by psychiatrists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists and other highly trained staff, working for Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT). The services are commissioned (planned and paid for) by NHS Kent and Medway.

The review concluded that there were:

- an insufficient number of inpatient beds in east Kent resulting in people being transferred to inpatient units across the county resulting in them losing links with their own crisis team and a potentially prolonged hospital stay
- serious and longstanding concerns about the inpatient unit 'A Block' on the Medway Maritime site which currently provides care for people from Medway, Sittingbourne and Sheppey. 'A Block' is deemed to be less suitable than other units in Kent and due to the nature of the building, it cannot be reconfigured to bring it up to standard
- very effective psychiatric intensive care outreach services in west Kent and Medway, which allows people to receive their care in one place rather than having to move between services such as to an intensive care unit. East Kent is currently without an equivalent a service.

5 The centres of excellence would be at:

- Priority House, Maidstone
- Little Brook Hospital, Dartford
- St Martin's Hospital, Canterbury.

1.4 **Recommended: That the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee agree to convene to make a response to the NHS consultation: Improving care for people in a mental health crisis.**