

Kent Community Health NHS Trust – Consultation on becoming a Community NHS Foundation Trust

Consultation Response from Sevenoaks District Council

Question 1

Do you agree with our Vision?

In principle, Sevenoaks District Council agrees with the aims within the vision for the Trust. It is important that the Trust recognises the key role that local authority partners at District/Borough Council level are already playing in improving the health of local communities. Services such as health improvement, leisure, housing, environmental health, drugs and alcohol work, domestic abuse and advice as well as environmental, social and economic wellbeing are all planned for, delivered and impacted by the work of District and Borough Councils. Providing more support for families will be even more challenging with most families in need of health services facing cuts in benefit support.

Other challenges include the provision of services close to home, particular in rural areas and in places where mergers lead to provision being moved further afield. For example, the latest consultation on mental health bed provision shows those in need of acute services from the Swanley area could have to travel to outside Maidstone for treatment isolating them from their communities and carers.

The proposed merge of the Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust with Medway Trust could lead to greater distances for patients needing acute services. The north of Sevenoaks District has also been disadvantaged with the recent closure of A&E at the Queen Marys Hospital, Sidcup and although none of these provisions are the direct responsibility of the proposed new foundation they do apply pressure on services and affect patient pathways.

Question 2

Do you agree with our top four priorities for service development?

- This Council agrees with the four priorities. It is important to recognise the needs for health prevention initiatives to reduce health inequalities and prevent ill health within priority one. This priority needs to recognise the benefit of working with District and Borough Councils at a local level to achieve targeted and population outcomes, based on local data and knowledge. It is important that these priorities mirror the Kent wide and local District/Borough area priorities to avoid confusion and to ensure that all organisations are working to the same agenda.
- Staff membership is valuable but needs to be proportionate as all institutions end up for the benefit of staff (see Goffman). Users and carers need to have the largest say.

Question 3

Do you agree with our proposals for public membership?

We agree that public representatives should reflect all 12 District Council areas. If the Trust is not achieving this aim, they can work with District councils who can support and recruit for this membership from within their communities.

Question 4

Do you agree with our proposals for staff membership?

No observations on this.

Question 5

Do you think we have the right number of Public Governors?

We support the proposal to have each District represented by a Public Governor, although it may be more helpful to ensure that this Governor is democratically elected by seeking nominations from District and Borough Councils.

Question 6

Do you think we have the right number of Staff Governors?

No observations.

Question 7

Do you think we have the right number of Appointed Partner Governors?

No. It is important that the Stakeholder Governor includes representation from District councils as well as Kent County Council thus mirroring the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board structure and. It is important that the Trust has a strong relationship with District Councils who are closely and directly involved in the health and wellbeing of their communities.

Question 8

Do you think there are other partner organisations that should appoint Governors?

As previously mentioned, it is important that the Stakeholder Governor includes representation from District councils as well as Kent County Council thus mirroring the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board structure and. It is important that the Trust has a strong relationship with District Councils who are closely and directly involved in the health and wellbeing of their communities, District Councils should be able to appoint local Governors.