Making stroke services better

This document is about plans to make stroke services better in Kent and Medway.

We want to know what you think about our plans.
Please let us know what you think by 13 April 2018

EasyRead version of: Improving hospital-based urgent stroke services in Kent and Medway Consultation summary – February 2018
About this document

This document is about our plans to make stroke services in Kent and Medway better.

A stroke is when blood cannot get around the brain. The blood could be blocked by something inside the blood vessels. Or there could be a bleed in 1 of the blood vessels.

We want to make sure anyone who has a stroke gets the best care. It is very important for someone having a stroke to get the right care quickly. This is to lower the chance of death or disability from having a stroke.

To make this happen we need to organise stroke services in Kent and Medway differently.

We want to know what you think about our plans for stroke care.
Please read this information. Then answer the questions on the response form. You can fill it out online at: [www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/stroke](http://www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/stroke)

Or you can post it to: Freepost Kent and Medway NHS

You can also give your answer over the phone. You can call us on 0300 790 6796.

Please tell us what you think by 13 April 2018.
Caring for people having a stroke

A stroke is very serious. Every year around 3000 people get treated for stroke in Kent and Medway.

How well people are after a stroke depends on how quickly they were treated. And how good the treatment was.

The best way to care for someone having a stroke is at a specialist unit that is open day and night every day of the week with:

- Expert stroke doctors, nurses and therapists.
- Equipment like scanners, and drugs that break up blockages in the blood vessels.

It is important for specialist units to treat around 500 stroke patients a year. This is to help staff keep their skills up to date.

In other places in England these units have worked well. They have saved lives. And helped people recover more fully.
Stroke services in Kent and Medway

At the moment our stroke services are not good enough. This is because:

- We cannot run specialist stroke units all day and night every day of the week.

- Specialist stroke units need to treat at least 500 people every year. This is to make sure staff keep their skills up to date. Only 1 hospital in Kent and Medway treats more than 500 stroke patients now.

- 1 in 3 people who have a stroke in Kent and Medway do not have a brain scan quickly enough. Brain scans are very important. They show how the stroke was caused. So doctors know what treatment to give.

- Only 1 in 2 people having a stroke in Kent and Medway get the drugs they need quickly enough.
Our plans for making stroke services better

These plans are about making our *stroke* services better. It is not about saving money. We would need to spend around £40 million to make these improvements.

We have done a lot of work looking at how good our *stroke* services are. And what we could do to make them better.

We want to set up 3 specialist *stroke* units in 3 hospitals. They would be open all day and night. They would be open every day of the week.

They would give the best *stroke* care quickly. And they would keep giving specialist care until the person is ready to leave hospital.

But this would mean that there would be no *stroke* services at other hospitals.
We want to know if you think we should have these special stroke units, open all day and night, every day of the week. We also want to know if you think 3 is the right number, and where you think the units should be.
Why we think we need special stroke units in Kent and Medway

To make sure special stroke doctors, nurses and therapists can treat patients all day and night, every day of the week.

To make sure that the special units can see at least 500 stroke patients each year.

To help reduce the number of people who die from stroke.

To help reduce the number of people with disabilities after a stroke.

Why we think 3 is the right number

If we had less than 3 it could take ambulances too long to get stroke patients from some places in Kent and Medway to 1 of the units.

If we has less than 3 and 1 had to close for a short period due to a fire or other problem we might not have enough beds for everyone.
To provide the best care each unit must be open all day and night every day of the year. It would be difficult to find enough doctors and nurses to keep more than 3 units open all the time.

There are already empty jobs for doctors and nurses in stroke services and it is hard to find more people with the right skills.

We came up with 5 options for where the 3 units could be based. There are good points and bad points to all of them. We think all the options would mean people get good care for stroke. But we want to hear what you think about the different options.
The options

Option 1

Specialist stroke units at:

- Darent Valley Hospital
- Medway Maritime Hospital
- William Harvey Hospital.

Good and bad things about option 1:

This is the worst option for the number of people who can travel to a specialist unit within 30 minutes. By car or by ambulance. But there is not a big difference between all the options.

This will cost the 2nd least amount of money. It is the best use of money in the long run.

We would need 8 extra expert doctors to make this option work. This is the same for all options.
Option 2

Specialist stroke units at:

- Darent Valley Hospital
- Maidstone Hospital
- William Harvey Hospital.

Good and bad things about option 2

This is the 2nd worst option for the number of people who can travel to a specialist unit within 30 minutes. By car or by ambulance. But there is not a big difference between all the options.

This will cost the 2nd most amount of money. It is the worse use of money in the long run.

We would need 8 extra expert doctors in Kent and Medway to make this option work. This is the same for all options.
Option 3

Specialist stroke units at:

Maidstone Hospital

Medway Maritime Hospital

William Harvey Hospital.

Good and bad things about option 3:

This is 3rd best for the number of people who can travel to a specialist unit within 30 minutes. By car or by ambulance. But there is not a big difference between all the options.

This will cost the most to do. It is the 4th best use of money in the long run.

We would need 8 more expert doctors in Kent and Medway to make this option work. This is the same for all options.

And we would need 2 more expert doctors in hospitals outside Kent and Medway. This is because some people living in our area would now be closer to specialist units outside of our area.
Option 4

Specialist stroke units at:

- Tunbridge Wells Hospital
- Medway Maritime Hospital
- William Harvey Hospital.

Good and bad things about option 4:

This is best for the number of people who can travel to a specialist unit within 30 minutes. By car or by ambulance. But there is not a big difference between all the options.

This is the 3rd most amount of money. It is the 3rd best use of money in the long run.

We would need 8 more expert doctors in Kent and Medway to make this option work. This is the same for all options.

And we would need 2 extra expert doctors outside of our area to make it work. This is because some people living in our area would now be closer to specialist units outside of our area.
Option 5

Specialist stroke units at:

- Darent Valley Hospital
- Tunbridge Wells Hospital
- William Harvey Hospital.

Good and bad things about option 5:

This is 2nd best for the number of people who can travel to a specialist unit within 30 minutes. By car or by ambulance. But there is not a big difference between all the options.

This will cost the least. It is the 2nd best use of money in the long run.

We would need 8 more expert doctors in Kent and Medway to make this option work. This is the same for all options.
Good points about all the options

The good points about these plans would be:

- People in Kent and Medway would get the best possible care for stroke. People would have better experiences of care.
- More people would get brain scans and the drugs they need at the right times.
- Fewer people would die from stroke.
- People would have less disability after having a stroke.
- Fewer people needing ongoing care and being put in care homes after having a stroke.
- Staff would have good experiences in work. They would have better team work and the chance to develop their specialist skills.
Some people have already told us about some worries they have. These are:

- Would travel times to the specialist units be too long for some people?
- Would having more than 3 units be better to keep stroke services closer to where people live?
- Would moving stroke services from some hospitals lead to other services moving in the future?
- Will it be difficult to find and keep enough stroke doctors and nurses?

We will keep thinking about these worries and any more people tell us about before making our final choice.
More information

You can find out more about our plans on our website: [www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/stroke](http://www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/stroke)

You can come and talk to us at 1 of our public events. At these events you can learn more about the plans, talk to us and let us know what you think.

You can find out when the events are happening on our website [www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/stroke](http://www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/stroke)

We would also be happy to come and speak to community groups. You can ask us to come and visit your group by e-mailing km.stroke@nhs.net or calling 0300 7906796.

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