

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that, following the annual assessment by NHS England of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) nationwide, all four of the east Kent CCGs have been placed in special measures.

This was the automatic result for NHS Ashford, Canterbury and Coastal, and South Kent Coast CCGs of being rated 'inadequate' in the 2017/18 annual assessment process.

NHS Thanet CCG was rated 'requires improvement' but was placed in special measures with its neighbours because it shares the same challenges and this ensures the whole system can move ahead together. You may see some media coverage about this in the news.

The challenges that we need to address are:

- the financial position of the CCGs in east Kent
- delivery of constitutional standards at East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (such as A&E waiting times, cancer waits, 18-week waits)
- the need for more effective east Kent-wide working.

Work is well underway to make the necessary improvements. This started with a detailed review of our governance and the development of a financial recovery plan. We are making changes to bolster and streamline our decision-making processes, reducing duplication, so we can move ahead at pace.

As you know, a major priority for us – because of the clinical quality, financial and system impact it will have – is to transform the way we look after frail older people and people with complex health and care needs.

This will see people getting far more joined-up care resulting in less time in hospital beds, which is much better for them, and will enable hospital staff to deliver the specialist care and treatment, that only they can provide, to greater numbers of people.

We are also working hard with our partners on a pre-consultation business case for changing the way health services in east Kent are organised and delivered. This is key to the long-term clinical and financial future of our system.

Having all four east Kent CCGs under the special measures regime opens up better opportunities to work together across east Kent to bring about rapid change, and give us access to greater support from NHS England.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Selkirk
Managing Director of Ashford, Canterbury and Coastal, South Kent Coast, and Thanet clinical commissioning groups