

**Report to:** East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

**Date of meeting:** 29 November 2018

**By:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Title:** East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Services Reconfiguration

**Purpose:** To provide details of the proposed reconfiguration of ENT services currently provided by East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT).

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) consider and comment on the ENT proposals;
  - 2) establish a Review Board to scrutinise the proposals in more detail and submit comments to the ESHT Board meeting on 5 February 2019; and
  - 3) request an update on implementation of the proposals at the June 2019 meeting.
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## **1 Background**

1.1 Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) services are hospital services that treat problems related to those areas of a patient's body. This may include hearing loss, sinus problems, and thyroid surgery, amongst many others.

1.2 ENT services are provided for the majority of residents in East Sussex by East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT). The Trust proposes to reconfigure the service on the grounds that the current configuration is clinically and financially unsustainable.

1.3 The Trust's engagement process around the reconfiguration plans includes presenting them to HOSC for consideration. The proposals are outlined in **appendix 1** to this report.

## **2. Supporting information**

2.1. The ENT service is currently split across Eastbourne District General Hospital (EDGH), Conquest Hospital, Hastings and Uckfield Community Hospital in the following configuration:

- Emergency ENT services at both main hospital sites with Emergency admissions at EDGH
- Adult inpatient services at EDGH
- Paediatric emergency/ inpatient services at Conquest Hospital (except for under 2s or children weighing less than 15kg).
- Outpatient services at both main hospital sites
- Planned day case surgery at all three sites; and
- Planned inpatient surgery at both main hospital sites.

2.2. ESHT's report indicates that the service has had continuous challenges over a number of years in providing clinically effective care due to medical staffing shortages. The Trust says this has had an impact on the ENT service out of hours and the capacity to manage waiting times effectively. It has also, the Trust indicates, compromised the delivery of effective training and supervision to trainee doctors, resulting in the loss of trainees which has further impacted on the long term viability of the service. Whilst the Trust has put pathways in place to safeguard patient

safety for the short term, through the use of an ad hoc temporary costly workforce and staff working additional hours, it argues that the current service is unsustainable. In addition, ESHT operated the service at a deficit of £1.7million in the year ending March 2018; a deterioration from a deficit of £987,000 in 2016/17.

2.3. The proposed reconfiguration aims to make the service safe and sustainable by addressing the workforce challenges through the following changes:

- Adult and paediatric day case and planned inpatient surgical activity currently undertaken at Conquest Hospital will be moved to EDGH (affecting approximately 494 patients per year, including 68 children).
- The emergency paediatric pathway will be redesigned so that children presenting with an ENT emergency requiring admission at either site will be diverted to the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital in Brighton (affecting approximately 9 patients per year).

2.4. In terms of the profile of those who would be affected, the 494 patients receiving planned surgery at Conquest in 2017/18 comprised 311 day cases and 183 elective inpatients who stayed on average less than one day. A total of 1,301 patients had planned surgery across the three sites that year.

2.5. The Trust plans to develop mitigating actions to reduce the impact of the proposed changes on the affected patients. These are set out in **appendix 1** (along with more details of the proposed changes) and include ensuring children attending EDGH for their planned surgery will be seen more frequently and in the mornings, reducing the need for transfer back to the paediatric ward at Conquest for an overnight stay.

2.6. The current timeline is for the ESHT Trust Board to agree the proposals at its meeting on 5 February 2019, and by the end of April 2019 all adult and children (paediatric) day case and planned surgical activity currently undertaken at Conquest Hospital will be transferred to EDGH.

2.7. This means that the proposals will be close to implementation by the next HOSC meeting on 28 March 2019. If the Committee wishes to look at the issue in greater detail before then it could agree to establish a Review Board for that purpose. The Board could then submit its comments to the ESHT Board ahead of its decision on 5 February.

2.8. The Clinical Commissioning Groups, as commissioners of the service, have indicated support for the trust's plans.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the ENT proposals set out in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Committee is also asked to consider whether a Review Board should be established to look at the proposals in more detail, including speaking with clinicians at both hospital sites where ENT services are currently provided. The Review Board could submit its comments to the ESHT Trust Board meeting on 5 February 2019.

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