

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

Date of meeting: 11 December 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Re-Provision of Uckfield Day Surgery Unit

Purpose: To update HOSC on proposed changes at Uckfield Community Hospital Day Surgery Unit

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

Consider whether the service change proposals relating to Uckfield Community Hospital Day Surgery Unit set out in Appendix 1 constitute a ‘substantial variation’ to health service provision requiring statutory consultation with HOSC under health scrutiny legislation.

1. Background

1.1. East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) provides day surgery activity at Uckfield Community Hospital in a unit equipped for elective procedures under local anaesthetic. The Day Surgery Unit (DSU) delivers approximately 13% of ESHT’s overall day surgery activity. Surgery provided at the DSU in Uckfield includes vascular, maxillofacial, dermatology, ophthalmology and urology procedures.

1.2. Uckfield Community Hospital is a community building overseen by the Integrated Care Board (ICB), NHS Sussex. ESHT leases space within it for the DSU as well as other services. The proposed changes to the DSU do not affect other services provided at Uckfield Community Hospital, by ESHT or other providers.

1.3. ESHT is proposing to relocate all DSU activity and staff at Uckfield to its two main acute hospital sites, Eastbourne District General Hospital (EDGH) and Conquest Hospital. This report includes an overview provided by ESHT of proposed changes to the Uckfield DSU, and evaluation of the 6-month pilot of the proposals conducted from December 2024 to June 2025. HOSC is asked to consider whether the proposals constitute a substantial variation to health service provision under health scrutiny legislation, requiring formal consultation with the HOSC.

2. Supporting information

Proposals for Uckfield Day Surgery

2.1. The report from ESHT is attached as **Appendix 1** and sets out the Trust’s proposals for the reprovision of day surgery services at Uckfield Community Hospital, the case for change and evaluation of the pilot. ESHT has shared the outcomes and evaluation of the pilot with the ICB, which has endorsed the proposed change as being a benefit to patients.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Role

2.2. When planning to make significant changes to services, NHS organisations are required to inform relevant local HOSCs. Under health scrutiny legislation, NHS organisations are required to formally consult HOSCs about a proposed service change that would constitute a ‘substantial development or variation’ to services for the residents of the HOSC area.

2.3. There is no national definition of what constitutes a ‘substantial’ change. Factors such as the number or proportion of patients affected, the nature of the impact (positive or negative), the effect on a particular group or community, and the availability of alternative services are often taken into account in coming to an agreement between the HOSC and the NHS on whether formal consultation is required.

2.4. If HOSC agrees that the proposals do constitute a substantial change, the Committee will need to consider the plans in detail in order to respond to the NHS with a report and any recommendations. The Committee may wish to consider how it would undertake this task, which could be through establishing a Review Board to conduct a review on behalf of the full HOSC, with the Committee agreeing any recommendations before they are submitted to the NHS.

2.5. Where the HOSC does not consider a proposal to be a substantial variation to services there are alternative options for further scrutiny work if required, including submitting a written response to any public consultations, informal HOSC board meetings to scrutinise the proposals in more detail, and further reports to the Committee as the proposals are agreed and implemented.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1. This report presents HOSC with proposals for the reprovion of day surgery services at Uckfield Community Hospital by closing the Day Surgery Unit and delivering activity instead at ESHT's main acute hospital sites.

3.2. The Committee is recommended to consider whether the service change proposals set out in **Appendix 1** constitute a 'substantial variation' to health service provision requiring statutory consultation with HOSC.

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