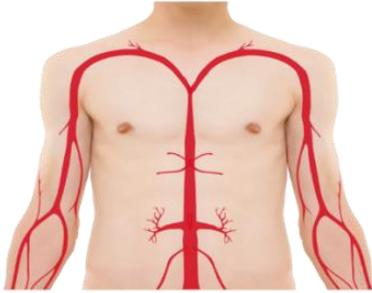


# Improving vascular services across East Kent, Medway, and Maidstone

**EASY READ**



# What do we want to do?



We want to have a vascular centre of excellence in Kent and Medway.



It will help us make sure that patients who need vascular surgery get the best care.



There will be lots of special doctors and nurses around 24 hours a day.

These people will have the right skills and equipment to help patients.



The vascular centre of excellence will follow special national rules.

# How will we do it?



To make the vascular centre of excellence, doctors and nurses must work together across East Kent, Medway and Maidstone.



They will give people most of their care at their nearest hospital, unless they need special surgery.



If they need special surgery, they would go to the vascular centre.



Right now, none of the hospitals in the area can be a vascular centre of excellence on their own.

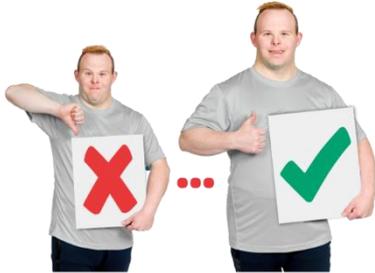


There will be consultation to decide which hospital will be the final vascular centre.

This means we will ask patients and families what they think.



Finding out what people think and making the final changes could take many years.



But we need to make vascular services better now.



We think that for the next few years we should have a temporary vascular centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.



This will be where patients who need vascular surgery and have to stay in hospital will go.



Other vascular appointments will still be at your local hospital.



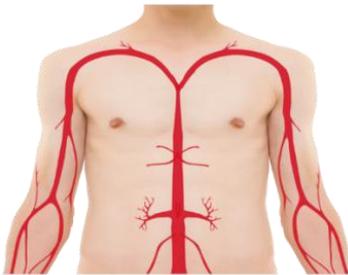
In this document, we talk about our idea for a vascular centre of excellence at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

We want to know what you think about it.

# What are vascular services?



Each year 1,200 people are looked after by vascular teams in Kent and Medway.



Vascular care means unblocking or repairing arteries.

This is so blood can flow around the body.



Vascular services help to stop strokes and lower the risk of death.



In 2021, people are living healthier lives so less people need vascular surgery. This is because:

- Less people smoke
- There is a test that finds out if you have bad artery walls
- You can get many treatments without having a big operation.



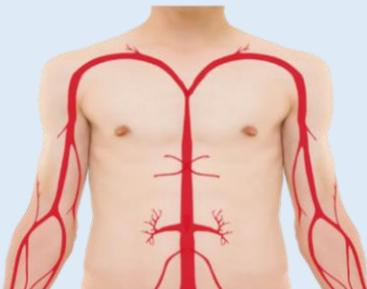
The people who do need vascular surgery should go to a vascular centre.

Not every hospital has a vascular centre.



Vascular services should be provided by doctors and nurses who have the best skills and equipment.

## Vascular health



Many vascular problems are caused by the arteries thickening.

This is sometimes called 'furring up', 'hardening' or 'clogging' of the arteries



Arteries become less flexible and slowly stretch.

This means that sometimes they can't take the pressure of the pulse, which comes from the heart.

There are things we can do to keep our arteries healthy:



- Healthy eating
- Lots of exercise
- Being a healthy weight
- Not drinking too much alcohol
- Quit smoking

Some health problems may mean you are more likely to get vascular disease, like:



- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol



If you have any of these health problems, you will be monitored by your doctor.



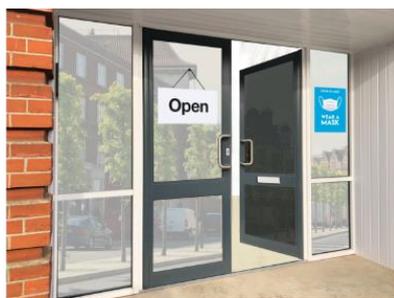
You can read more about vascular health on these websites:

[Vascular Society](#)  
[Circulation Foundation](#)  
[NHS](#)

# What happens now?



People in Kent and Medway get vascular care at special hospital centres.



There are two special vascular centres in Kent and Medway.

There is also one in London at Guys and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.



The London vascular centre cares for patients from:

- Pembury Hospital in Tunbridge Wells
- Dartford and Gravesham NHS Foundation Trust



The two vascular centres in Kent and Medway are at:

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital, which looks after patients who live in East Kent.



- Medway Maritime Hospital, which looks after patients who live in Medway or West Kent.

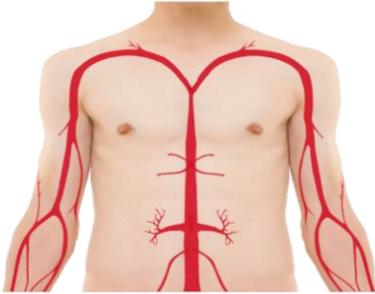


When vascular patients need tests or appointments, they go to other hospitals in Kent.



At the two Kent vascular centres, 697 patients are seen each year.

# Why do vascular services need to change?



The way vascular care is given in Kent and Medway will be changing.



Because vascular care is better than it used to be, less people need life-saving operations.



People who need vascular treatment are less likely to die if they are looked after by special doctors and nurses.



To stay experts, doctors need to treat a local population of 800,000 people.



East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust treats a population of 720,000 people

Medway NHS Foundation Trust treats a population of 420,000 people.



This means they don't care for enough people, so the doctors can't be experts.



There should be care 24 hours a day for vascular patients.



Every day and night, the vascular centre should have

- 6 full-time vascular surgeons
- 6 full time radiologists
- specialist nurses



There are not enough vascular surgeons, radiologists and nurses at East Kent and Medway.



The surgeons and radiologists want to work in vascular centres with a big populations so they can be experts.



Sometimes, East Kent and Medway have to share services and information so they can give vascular care 24 hours a day.



ALL vascular surgery for people living in East Kent, Medway and Maidstone should now be at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.



This means the vascular centre would have a local population of 1.1 million people.



This will make surgeons and radiologists want to work there.



Anyone who used to have vascular surgery at Medway Maritime Hospital will now go to Kent and Canterbury Hospital.



There will be no changes at any hospital where other vascular appointments are held.



The change will mean hospital staff can work across lots of hospitals as one big team.



They will be able to offer care 24 hours a day.

# What we thought about when planning future services



NHS England and NHS Improvement has thought a lot about what vascular services in Kent should be like in the future.

This is what everyone has agreed is most important:



- Hospitals should stick to the NHS rules of best practice



- There should be enough vascular surgeons and radiologists



- Doctors need to see lots of patients and do lots of operations so they can still be experts



- It should be easy for the South East Coast Ambulance service to take vascular patients to hospital at night when there is an emergency.



- It should be easy for visitors to come and see vascular patients by bus, train or car.



- Changes to vascular services should be quick and not cost too much.



The public have been asked what they think about the changes.



They want one vascular centre in Kent and Medway, with links to the big London hospital.



This means that there will be no change for vascular patients from North Kent.



They will still have their treatment in London.



Vascular patients in Kent and Medway will go to one vascular centre.

It has been decided that the centre should be at one of the East Kent hospitals.



Medway Maritime Hospital will still have vascular appointments.



NHS England and NHS Improvement, and Kent and Medway CCG think the vascular centre should be at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

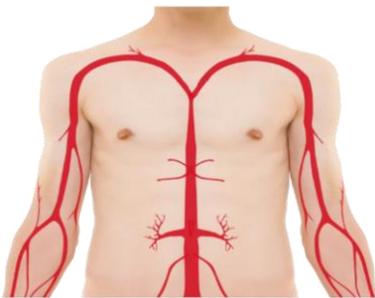
They think it should be at Kent and Canterbury Hospital because:



- East Kent needs a new vascular centre



- Most vascular operations already happen at Kent and Canterbury Hospital



- In Thanet, lots of people go to hospital with vascular disease



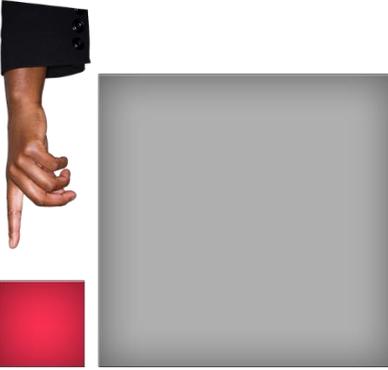
- Medway Maritime Hospital is too far away for people who live in Deal or Dover



- Patients who have kidney disease sometimes need help from vascular doctors. Canterbury is where kidney patients already go



- Kent and Canterbury Hospital has a special vascular ward



- Medway Maritime Hospital is too small.



You can read more about how the decision was made on this website:  
[Join the Conversation](#)

# What our patients have told us



For 7 years we have asked patients and families what they think about the changes to vascular services.

They told us they wanted:



- A good service



- Excellent staff



- To get treatment quickly



- To feel involved in their care



- To know what's going on



2015

In 2015 we had some events for the public to hear what they thought about vascular services.



2016

In 2016 we had a workshop with doctors and patients.

They told us what they thought about our plans.



2017

In 2017 we held 2 events at the Canterbury and Medway hospitals.

We talked about which site we could use as the vascular centre.



2019

In 2019 we held 2 workshops and 2 interviews.

We told people about our idea to use the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.



If you want to see what the patients and public told us at our events, you can read this link [Join the Conversation](#)

# What does this mean for the changes?



We need to make vascular services better now. We think the Kent and Canterbury Hospital is the best place for the vascular centre for now.



This means that big vascular treatments or operations where you have to stay in hospital will be done in one place.

As the vascular centre, this hospital will have:



- A vascular ward with extra beds



- Special vascular nurses



- Care 24 hours a day



Four other hospitals in the area will still provide vascular services where you don't need to stay in hospital.

These are:

- Medway Maritime Hospital
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital
- William Harvey Hospital
- Maidstone Hospital



Hospital staff who work in vascular services will be one big team.

Doctors will work across the five hospitals.



These changes mean we can employ staff who want to work at a vascular centre of excellence.

# How will the service work?



The vascular centre will be at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.



This is where big operations happen, and patients need to stay overnight.

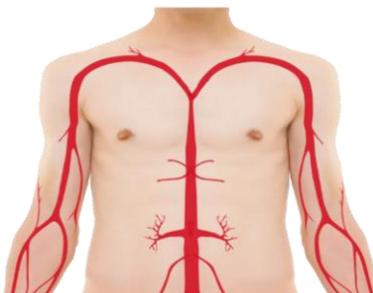


All types of vascular service can happen at the vascular centre, even small appointments.



In 2020, emergency surgery was moved to Kent and Canterbury from Medway Maritime. This was to keep patients safe.

This is what will happen at the vascular centre



- Big operations like bypass surgery
- Balloon or stent treatments
- Blood clot dissolving
- Surgery on the big artery that goes through down the body through the tummy
- All vascular services

Network hospitals are the local hospitals where all other vascular services happen.



These are the hospitals:

- William Harvey Ashford
- QEQM Margate
- Medway Maritime
- Maidstone Hospital

These are the vascular services at the network hospitals:



- Initial appointments
- Follow up appointments
- After-surgery care
- Ongoing care
- Looking at your condition before and after surgery

# What will this mean for patients and families?



Some health services let you choose to have treatment at your nearest hospital.



But vascular services are special, so you don't get a choice of where you go.



If you live in East Kent, Medway and Maidstone and need vascular surgery, you can usually go to Kent and Canterbury Hospital or Medway Maritime.



This will soon change so you will only go to Kent and Canterbury Hospital for vascular surgery.



Going to a special vascular centre will mean you might have to travel further.



But it means you will get much better care



There are 1,200 patients in this area who need vascular treatment each year.

697 of these people need special treatment where they stay in hospital.



Having one vascular centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital will mean patients from Maidstone and Medway need to travel further.



This will affect 265 patients a year.



The vascular society tell us how far is ok for patients to travel.



Patients can apply to use special public transport services to get to their vascular appointments if it's too far to travel.



To find out about the special public transport, click this link - [km-pts.co.uk](http://km-pts.co.uk)



Or call this number - 0800 096 0211



If you are not allowed to use the special public transport service to get to your appointment, you can use voluntary transport.



Click this link for voluntary transport in Kent – [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

Click this link for voluntary transport in Medway. [www.abettermedway.co.uk](http://www.abettermedway.co.uk)



Some patients might be able to use the NHS Healthcare Travel Scheme.

You can click this link to find out more - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



After a vascular operation, patients will either be sent home or back to their local hospital.



Medway Maritime will be a special network hospital. It will give all vascular services apart from ones where you need to stay overnight.



Most vascular patients do not need big operations. They will go to their local hospital for treatment.



Visitors might have to travel further to see the patient.



You can find information about how to plan your visit to the vascular centre by clicking this link – [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk)

# Do the changes reflect what patients told us?



You said you want a good service that is available 24/7.



You said you want the vascular centre to have great staff that work across all five hospitals.



You said you want patients and families to have a say in their care.



You said It should be easy to access vascular services.



You said that travel times were important when deciding the location of the vascular centre.



You said you want the change to fit in with future plans.



You said you want better training for GPs.



You said you want to be supported in making choices about what care you get.

# Have your say: 2021



We want your thoughts about our idea to have a vascular centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.



We want to listen to your views about how it will affect patients and families.

We want you to tell us:



- Why you think having a single vascular centre is a good or bad idea



- If our idea will help local people



- How we can make sure that patients get the best care



- If we need to think more about travel and transport for people getting to the vascular centre



- Anything else you think about the change



You can tell us what you think in a few different ways:

You can come to one of our virtual listening events. These are the dates:

9 February

22 February

1 March

8 March

If you want to join one of the meetings click the link [Join the Conversation](#)



You can complete an online survey.

Click this link to go to the survey - [Join the Conversation](#)





You can ask for a printed copy of the consultation document to be sent to your home address.

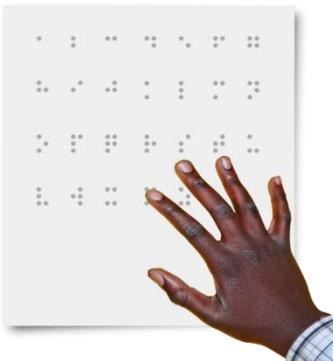
You can ask for this by email or phone.



Email - [england.seconsultation@nhs.net](mailto:england.seconsultation@nhs.net)



Call this number - 01634 974040



Let us know if you need the consultation document in large print, braille, audio or another language.



To ask for this, please email [england.seconsultation@nhs.net](mailto:england.seconsultation@nhs.net)



If you have a printed copy of the document and have written in the feedback section, you can send this back by post to:



**Freepost**  
MEDWAY NHS FT MEMBERSHIP OFFICE

**Closed**

The consultation closes on 15 March 2022 at midnight.

## Questionnaire



Before you answer the questionnaire, you need to read all of the information about each of the vascular hospitals in East Kent, Medway and Maidstone.



This will help you understand the changes we want to make.

**Understand**