

The case for change at Southern Health

As a new board we are planning for the future and thinking about the organisation we aspire to become. What does outstanding care look like and how do we get there?

Before we can answer this question we need to clearly understand where we are now, and be honest with ourselves about the scale and breadth of change required. This can sometimes make for difficult reading but only with a frank and accurate assessment of our current state can we set realistic and achievable goals for the future.

In making this assessment we have:

- Reflected on past failings, most recently highlighted by the prosecution of the Trust but also our wider work with families.
- Looked at changes already made over recent years to improve, in many cases in response to failings or serious incidents, but also as part of other change programmes
- Examined the findings of the staff survey and other feedback from our workforce.
- Examined feedback we have had from patients, carers, and families
- Taken findings and guidance from key sources such as inspection reports and national reports aimed at improving care in the NHS*
- Considered how we compare with the best NHS Trusts in the country
- Considered our values of Respect, Partnership, and People & Patients First

There is evidence that changes have happened and are making an impact: it's important to recognise this. We thank colleagues who have worked hard to deliver these changes so far, and the patients, carers, families and others who have shared their time, expertise, and experiences to help us improve. We have also seen real examples of excellent practice happening across Southern Health. Furthermore, we are very confident that the vast majority of our 6,000 staff are compassionate and dedicated people who have chosen to work in the NHS because they want to make a difference.

This is a strong foundation upon which to build.

Whilst progress has been made, we have identified that significant further change is needed in a number of key areas:

Improving quality, safety, and consistency of care

- Past health and safety failings have resulted in avoidable deaths in our care. We must keep striving to ensure our services are as safe as possible.
- There is too much variation in quality and approach between different parts of the trust – this leads to a variation in outcomes and experience for patients.

OUR VALUES



- We don't have a consistent, evidence-based approach to quality improvement embedded across the whole organisation.

Involving people

- We do not consistently involve and work in partnership with people who use our services, their families and carers, and other people affected by what we do.
- Many staff do not feel actively involved in decisions about the trust and their services.
- We must challenge ourselves to be as open and transparent, yet accessible, as possible

Joining up care

- Although we provide both mental and physical health services, we are only scratching the surface of what integrated care can bring to patients.
- We are not working as effectively as we could with other organisations that support the same population.

Supporting our workforce

- We don't do enough to support the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, and to create the environment where employees feel comfortable speaking out if they have concerns. Not all our staff feel that we operate a just culture.
- More needs to be done to retain our staff and make Southern Health an attractive place for prospective employees to come and build their careers.

Transforming care pathways

- We have opportunities to improve every part of our patients' journey – from prevention to crisis care. By making this better we can tackle long-standing issues such as the placement of some patients in hospitals far from home and supporting health and social aspects of recovery.

Meeting these challenges will require more than discrete, incremental changes. We must go beyond this and seek to fundamentally transform the way we do things. This won't be easy. It will take time. But we are convinced it is the best way to truly deliver the outstanding care our patients deserve.

Next steps

We are developing a new vision and strategy for Southern Health which will describe how we will address the challenges set out above. In the meantime we are keen to hear any feedback you may have on our case for change.

The Board of Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

June 2018



***Key references:**

- [Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry, Robert Frances QC, 2013](#)
- [Review into the quality of care and treatment provided by 14 hospital trusts in England, Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, 2013.](#)
- [A promise to learn – a commitment to act: Improving the safety of patients in England, 2013](#)
- [Learning from Deaths in the NHS, NHS Improvement, 2017](#)
- [Valued care in mental health: Improving for excellence, NHS Improvement, 2018](#)
- [Driving Improvement: Case Studies from seven mental health NHS trusts, Care Quality Commission, 2018](#)

OUR VALUES



Patients &
people first



Partnership



Respect