

News story: Health and Social Care Secretary commits £12 million to get South East Coast ambulances back on the road more quickly

Patients in South East England will benefit from £12.28 million in new funding to support paramedics to get on the road faster, Matt Hancock confirmed today.

The South East Coast Ambulance Service will benefit from government capital funding, including £6.52 million for Medway, £5.52 million for Brighton and £0.24 million for Worthing.

Speaking on a visit to the Medway Maritime Hospital, the Health and Social Care Secretary announced the additional funding to quickly turn around ambulances so paramedics are more readily available to help patients.

Matt Hancock, Health and Social Care Secretary said:

I'm delighted to give the go-ahead to more state-of-the-art ambulance hubs, which patients in Medway, Worthing and Brighton will soon have up and running in their areas.

Our heroic paramedics represent the frontline of our NHS, and it's vital they can support patients in need as quickly as possible – that's why we're backing patients and paramedics alike in the South East with over £12 million of investment.

The 'make ready hubs' allow ambulance trusts to improve turnaround times for their ambulance fleets by using specialist staff and facilities to quickly restock, refuel and clean ambulances, getting them back on the road faster and maximising paramedic time with patients.

Brighton already benefits from a make ready hub, and today the hub will receive an investment of £5.52 million to allow them to expand even further, as well as recruiting more staff to improve the ambulance coverage in the area. Worthing will also have their ambulance station expanded into a central hub for staff thanks to £240,000.

Not only will the funding expand existing services, but it has significant potential to save money in the future through more efficient ways of co-ordinating and preparing ambulance vehicles for their shifts, as they typically spend 12 hours on the road at a time before returning to their hub.

This summer the Department of Health and Social Care also provided £36.3 million to ambulance trusts across the country to better equip services ahead

of this winter. This included funding for 256 new state-of-the-art ambulances, which have the flexibility to respond to any incident and treat patients at the scene if necessary.

Together with the new money announced today, this will give ambulance trusts the resources needed to respond to calls more quickly and effectively as part of the government's commitment to improving services and standards of care for patients and staff.

Daren Mochrie, Chief Executive of South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) said:

I welcome this announcement of significant investment, which will allow us to continue to develop our facilities to improve our services across the Medway, Worthing and Brighton areas.

The make ready system has been shown to deliver real benefits for our patients and staff and I am delighted that this funding allows us to continue to roll this out.