



South East Coast  
Ambulance Service  
NHS Foundation Trust



Saving Lives,  
Serving Our Communities



Our Trust Strategy  
2024 - 2029

# Forward from our Chair

On behalf of the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) Board, I am proud to present our strategy for the future. This strategy has been **developed through close collaboration with our patients, communities, people, and partners**, ensuring that it reflects the needs and aspirations of those we serve.



As the demand for our services continues to grow, we recognise the urgent need for change to improve patient outcomes and ensure long-term sustainability. Our purpose going forward is clear - we are here to save lives and serve our communities, and we will do so by embracing our core values of Kindness, Integrity and Courage.

Our vision for the future is to collaborate closely with health and social care providers across the southeast, ensuring the delivery of high-quality patient care and creating an environment where our people enjoy working at SECAmb. We are committed to consistently providing timely and essential ambulance responses for those in critical need, while also expanding our role in care navigation and virtual care for patients requiring non-emergency support.

Our transformation journey begins now, and we have developed plans to start implementing these changes in 2024/25. As we embark on this path, I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to shaping this strategy and would also like to pay particular tribute to my predecessor, David Astley, who played a pivotal role in it's development. We look forward to working closely with our patients, our people and our partners as we deliver these essential changes.

Together, we will build a stronger SECAmb, ready to face the challenges of the future and provide the highest quality care to the communities we serve.

**Usman Khan**  
Chair

## About us

We are **South East Coast Ambulance Service**, providing 999 Services across **Kent, Surrey, Sussex** and **North East Hampshire**, as well as 111 services across Kent and Sussex.

We answer over **2 million calls** each year through our 999 and 111 services – that's more than 4 calls every minute.



We employ more than **4,300 people** – 80% provide direct care to our patients and are supported by strong corporate teams.

We are truly lucky to be supported by more than **400 volunteers** including CFRs, Chaplains, Welfare Volunteers and Governors. They give thousands of hours every year to support our patients and our colleagues.



Our people work from more than **100 sites across the region**, including twelve Make Ready Centres. We were one of the first ambulance services to introduce the Make Ready system which sees specialist teams clean, check and re-stock our vehicles.



**The communities we serve** are diverse, including areas of affluence as well as some of the most deprived areas in the country.





# Our Vision

Our vision is to transform patient care by delivering prompt, standardised emergency responses while enhancing care navigation with seamless, accessible virtual services for non-emergency patients.



## Purpose

Saving Lives,  
Serving Our Communities

## Our Strategic Aims



### Delivering High Quality Care

We are committed to delivering high quality care, ensuring every patient receives the best possible treatment and onward health management.



### Our People Enjoy Working at SECamb

We strive to make SECamb a great place to work by promoting a supportive and rewarding work environment where all team members feel valued and motivated.



### We are a Sustainable Partner

We are committed to being a sustainable partner within an integrated NHS, focusing on practices that enhance system integration and promote long-term resilience and efficiency.



# Our values

At SECAmb, our values are more than just words - they are the principles that guide our actions and influence how we behave, both internally among our teams and externally in how we deliver our services.

They shape how we want people to experience our organisation, ensuring that every interaction reflects the high standards we uphold. Our commitment to these values fosters a positive, fair, and equitable culture, essential for delivering outstanding patient care and creating a supportive workplace.

We advocate with **courage**, serve with **kindness**, and uphold **integrity** for **exceptional healthcare**.



## Kindness Being Compassionate, Caring, and Respectful Towards Others

At the heart of SECAmb, kindness defines our approach to care. We are committed to being compassionate and respectful in every interaction, ensuring that every patient, colleague, and community member feels valued and supported.

## Courage Standing Up for What Is Right and Treating Everyone Fairly to Ensure Exceptional Patient Care

At SECAmb, courage is fundamental to delivering exceptional care. It means standing up for what is right, advocating for fair treatment, and striving for excellence in patient care.

## Integrity: Being Accountable, Honest, and Doing the Right Thing

Integrity underpins every aspect of SECAmb, ensuring we act with honesty and transparency. We are committed to making fair and ethical decisions, maintaining consistency in our practices. By embedding integrity in all we do, we uphold the highest standards of care and build trust with everyone we serve.

Kindness

Courage

Integrity



# Our service model

By doing things differently we will modernise how we care for our patients.

We will do this through:

## Fast & accurate triage:

We will improve our triage with the support of artificial intelligence to ensure we rapidly and consistently identify patients who need a prompt physical response.

## Faster dispatch of resources:

We will use digital solutions to optimise how we deploy our ambulances to ensure our emergency patients are seen quickly.

## Virtual care for non-emergency patients:

For patients who have a non-emergency condition, they will receive a virtual video or audio assessment from a clinician. This initial clinical assessment will enable patients to be cared for directly or seamlessly referred to the most appropriate care provider.

## Timely care for emergency patients:

We will support our people to deliver the highest possible quality of care and a fast response to our emergency patients.

## Connecting patients to the right care:

Following initial assessment, patients whose conditions do not require an ambulance will be seamlessly directed to appropriate health services or agencies. This ensures that every patient receives the right level of care, optimising resource use and patient outcomes.

By ensuring we play a full part as a system partner, we can ensure that patients receive the most appropriate form of care for their condition, that unnecessary admissions to Emergency Departments are avoided and that care is provided in the community where possible.



We are transitioning from a predominantly ambulance-based response model to a more differentiated approach, where the type of response is **tailored to the individual needs of our patients.**






# What this means for our patients, our people & partners




Our service model & patient experience



**1.** We deliver **high quality patient care**



**2.** Our people **enjoy working** at SECAmb



**3.** We will be a **sustainable partner** as part of an integrated NHS

- + **Patients** with emergency care needs will receive timely physical care
  - + **We will increase** cardiac arrest survival rates by 5%
  - + **We will reduce** the time to specialist treatment for patients having a stroke
- + **Patients** with non-emergency care needs will be cared for remotely by appropriately trained clinicians
  - + **Callers** who don't require care from us will be signposted to the most appropriate service
  - + **We will** focus on reducing health inequalities within our area
- + **Our people** will be supported with the right training and feel empowered to effectively care for all their patients
  - + **Our culture** will be inclusive, compassionate, and transparent, reflecting all forms of diversity that make up SECAmb
- + **Our people** will have a variety of career pathways and portfolio opportunities
  - + **Our Volunteers** will be an integral part of our delivery model
- + **The gap** between Urgent and Emergency Care and other health services will be narrowed, and patients will get the right response at the right time
  - + **We will increase** the utilisation of alternatives to Emergency Departments from 12% to 31%
  - + **Data sharing and collaboration** will enable healthier communities and will reduce health inequalities in our region
- + **Investment** in our people, technologies and processes will lead to a financially sustainable model
  - + **We will reduce** our operating costs by 8% against our 2023 baseline and configure our services to be able to respond to a forecasted increase of 15% by 2025
  - + **Our partners'** Emergency Departments will receive fewer, more appropriate patients, enabling them to provide the best service they can
  - + **We will reduce** our conveyance rate to Emergency Departments to 39%



# Our service model & patient experience



## 1. We deliver **high quality patient care**

### We will:

Provide **early & effective triage** of patient need

- ✦ **Set up** a smart triage function that will enable us to determine the level of emergency for a patient's needs, using data and new technologies. This will ensure patients receive the right response from us.

Deliver **timely & consistent care** for emergency patients

- ✦ **Ensure patients** who need an emergency physical response will have their care led by a clinician who has the right skills to deliver the most appropriate treatment.

Respond to our **non-emergency patients virtually**

- ✦ **Set up** a virtual consultation capability, led by senior clinicians who will ensure all non-emergency patients receive the right care at the right time.



### This will deliver:

- ✦ An improvement in response times, including achievement of both the Category 1 and 2 mean and 90th centile response time targets
- ✦ An increase of 5% in cardiac arrest survival rates
- ✦ A reduction in the time to specialist treatment for patients having a stroke



# Our service model & patient experience



## 2. Our people enjoy working at SECAmb

### We will:

Create an **inclusive & compassionate environment** where our people are happy

- + **Create** a supportive and flexible culture where all our people feel safe, are able to speak up, and benefit from compassionate leadership.
- + **Increase** the development offered to our leaders to ensure they can better lead and support our people.
- + **Promote and champion** all forms of diversity within our workforce, making SECAmb a truly inclusive and equitable place to work and care.

### Invest in our people's careers to better meet patient needs

- + **Implement** a new workforce model and training. This will enable our people to develop their skills to better meet the changing needs of the populations we serve.
- + **Recognise and support** the career aspirations of our people and support them with clear career pathways and learning and development opportunities for both clinical and non-clinical roles.



### This will deliver:

- + Improved career development opportunities for all of our people, resulting in 70% agreeing they have the opportunity to develop their careers
- + A reduction in our turnover rate from 16% to 10%
- + Improvements in workforce race and disability standard indicators, making SECAmb an open and inclusive place to work
- + Improvements in our people recommending SECAmb as a place to work, with over 60% of those surveyed agreeing



# Our service model & patient experience



## 3. We are a **sustainable partner** as part of an integrated NHS

### We will:

Become a **sustainable, & productive** organisation

- + **Invest** in new technologies to help us provide the best care to our patients and ensure we can continue to improve our productivity.
- + **Build** an organisation that is financially and environmentally sustainable.
- + **Reduce** waste and optimise our corporate and operational functions to ensure we can deliver a service that can sustain itself financially in the long term.
- + **Reduce** the number of unnecessary journeys that our fleet make, helping us to achieve our green ambitions.

**Collaborate with our partners** to establish our role as a UEC system leader

- + **Work with** our health and care partnerships, integrated care systems and regional partners to co-design our role as the navigator of urgent and emergency care. This will ensure that we are seen as a leading partner for assessing, referring, and signposting non-emergency patients for further care.
- + **Utilise data** to continuously refine our service delivery, ensuring that our decisions are informed by real-time data and evidence-based practices.



### This will deliver:

- + A reduction of 50% in our direct carbon emissions, compared to the 2019/20 baseline
- + A reduction in avoidable conveyances to emergency departments from 54% to 39%.
- + A change in how we deliver our services to avoid the need to increase our annual expenditure by 32% just to achieve the same standard of service



# Our Improvement Journey

## Our Preceding Trust Strategy (2017-22)

Through the previous strategy cycle, the Trust delivered a number of key programmes, including new Make Ready Centres at Banstead and Brighton, and a multi-million pound centre at Medway housing 999, 111 and field operations.

### CQC Inspection

June 2022

In 2022 SECamb was inspected by the CQC and we were found to require improvements in Board effectiveness and connectivity to frontline services, governance and culture. The quality of care provided by our people was deemed to be good.

### Having an impact through improvement

We started an Improvement Journey which was focussed on four core pillars:

- + Delivering Quality Improvements
- + Providing Responsive Care
- + Improving the Culture for our People
- + Sustainability & Partnerships

### Shaping our future together

In 2023 the Board began the process to start shaping the new direction for the Trust.

Development of the strategy was based on a strong programme of engagement with our people, our communities and our partners.

We set an aspiration to develop a strategy that secures long-term sustainability for the organisation, meets the needs of our patients, supports our people to provide the best possible care and integrates us fully with our partners.



## Saving Lives & Serving Our Communities

After extensive engagement, our new strategy was presented to the Trust Board in June 2024. This marks the start of a transformation journey that will build on our earlier Improvement Journey.







We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy. Extensive engagement with our people, our partners, and our patients has been crucial.

From local engagement sessions to town halls, design workshops, and direct community interactions across our region, we have clearly heard the imperative to change our service for better patient outcomes. These voices have directly shaped the content of this strategy.

This strategy has been co-designed by everyone at SECamb, our partners, and our communities. It is intended for our people and our partners, all in service of our patients and the communities we serve.

The Board looks forward to embarking on the next stage of our transformation and is eager to track progress against the ambitious outcomes we have set for the coming months and years.



## Saving Lives, Serving Our Communities

### **Our Trust Strategy 2024 - 2029**

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