

# Annual Report 2022/23

South East London and Kent Regional Spinal Network



**Authors: Cecilia Clarke, Network Manager and Gordan Grahovac,  
Lead Neurosurgeon Consultant**

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## Summary

The South East London Kent (SELK) Spinal Network includes seven acute hospital trusts. The network was set-up to ensure equity of access for patients to a comprehensive range of spinal services regardless of geography; as recommended by Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT), the national review of spinal surgery by Mike Hutton (January 2019) and the National Low Back and Radicular Pain Pathway 2017.

GUY'S AND ST THOMAS' SPECAILIST CENTRE	KING'S COLLEGE SPECIALIST CENTRE	EAST KENT HOSPITALS SURGICAL CENTRE	MEDWAY HOSPITAL SURGICAL CENTRE	DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM NON- OPERATIVE	MAIDSTONE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS NON- OPERATIVE	LEWISHAM AND GREENWICH NON- OPERATIVE
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During 2022/2023, the SELK Spinal Network continued to engage with stakeholders across the sector and facilitate collaborations between them. The network board was refreshed and ten deliverables were identified, ranging from British Spinal Registry compliance to reducing length of stay and on the day cancellations (see page 10 and 11 for full list of deliverables). Working in the context of the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic added to the challenge of engaging with stakeholders, as well as commissioners who were transitioning into the new body of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). Despite this, the determination of network stakeholders to make improvements has created traction and has resulted in significant achievements.

## Key Achievements

- ✓ Direct PACS access to MRIs across all trusts in south east London and Kent. This means King's Neurosurgeon Consultants on call can see patients' images in real time and advise appropriate care.
- ✓ Developed a model suspected Cauda Equina Syndrome pathway. This was used by GIRFT as the pilot exemplar pathway in south east London and Kent, and influenced the development of the national suspected the Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES) pathway, which was launched in February 2023.
- ✓ Improvements to the spinal fractures referral pathway and management of patient communication and follow-up appointments.

- ✓ Influenced and encouraged the extension of MRI provision across the region, with all Trusts now having increased service hours to 8am to 8pm, with exception of Lewisham and Greenwich Hospital Trust.
- ✓ Strengthened pathway between surgical service and pain management, aligned to National Back Pathway.
- ✓ Supported the implementation of Out Patient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT) in collaboration with Infectious Diseases and Microbiology team at King's, Denmark Hill.

## Looking Ahead

The launch of national suspected CES pathway in February 2023 provided a great opportunity to leverage improved engagement with ICBs and NHS Trusts by bringing this important pathway to their attention. CES is a rare and serious spinal condition if left untreated may lead to life changing disabilities. In order to diagnose this correctly, an MRI scan is required along with identification of red flag signals.

An essential component to the successful implementation of the suspected CES pathway is the expansion of out of hours MRI provision across the region, which as noted above, has been possible in most sites. However, this continues to be a challenge and colleagues across the network identified clinical radiology support as an issue as also noted by the Royal College of Radiologists: *“In 2022, the clinical radiology workforce grew by just 3%. In comparison, demand for diagnostic activity is rising by over 5% annually and by around 4% for interventional radiology services”*.

**Going Concerns**

Engagement from the ICBs is essential to achieve ambitions for 2023 /24

Despite the National Back Pathway being in place for more than five years, not widely known by GPs and some GPs still have direct access to order MRIs

Lack of metrics to measure progress

**Actions/Mitigations**

Identified ICB leads and opened up communication

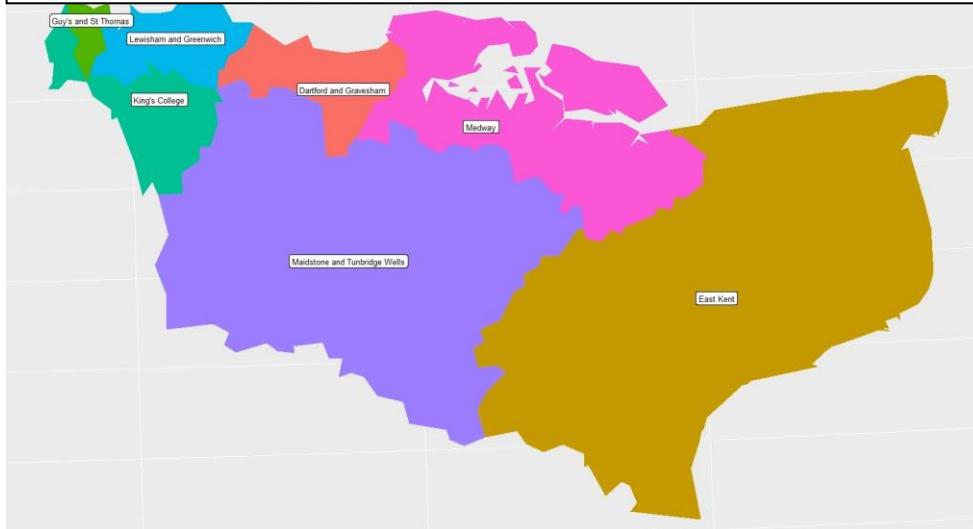
GPs communications plan and GP training developed

Pan London Network Senior data analysis employed and working on producing key data sets

# STAKEHOLDERS

The SELK Spinal Network Management Team includes two lead consultant neurosurgeons, Gordan Grahovac (King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust) and Baharam Fakouri (Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust), MSK Consultant Physiotherapist Andrew McCarter, Network Manager Cecilia Clarke, and a Spinal Administrator. The SELK Action Board has regional representation from surgeons, community MSK practitioners, pain management, radiology, A&E consultants. The ambition going forward is to include representation from the ICB, GPs and Spinal Nurses.

South East London and Kent Spinal Network MAP







## Provider Organisations

Primary Care	Secondary Care	ICBS
<a href="#">Circle Health</a> <a href="#">Healthshare Ltd</a> <a href="#">Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust</a> <a href="#">Level Health UK Ltd</a> <a href="#">Medway Community Healthcare CIC</a> <a href="#">Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</a> <a href="#">Vita Health Group</a>	<a href="#">Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust</a> <a href="#">East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust</a> <a href="#">Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust</a> <a href="#">Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust</a> <a href="#">Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust</a> <a href="#">King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust</a> <a href="#">Medway NHS Foundation Trust</a>	<a href="#">Kent an Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB)</a> <a href="#">South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB)</a>

# NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

## Work plan Progress 2022/23

Deliverables	Achievement status	Metrics/ evidence
<p>1. British Spinal Registry compliance</p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Planning, Operational &amp; Recovery</p>	<p><b>Partially achieved, Carry over back to Best Practice Tariff in 2023/24:</b> No Best practice Tariff during 22/23 block contracts so did not influence Trusts. BRS compliance achieved at Guys and St Thomas and East Kent Hospitals</p> <p>None compliance: King's College, Medway and Maidstone Tunbridge Wells</p>	 BSR Compliance SELK 22-23.pptx
<p>2. Service Level Agreement (SLA) with district hospitals to specify the type of elective surgery for transfer to tertiary centre.</p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Transformation/ Population health Approach / Workforce</p>	<p><b>Not achieved. Aborted,</b> Agreement to stand this down as no capacity to complete</p>	
<p>3. Pilot exemplar national CES Pathway.</p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Transformation/ Population health Approach / Workforce</p>	<p><b>Partially achieved, Carry over to 2023/24:</b> Aspects of the SELK CES pathway influenced the national CES pathway launched in Feb 2023. Model SOP developed by Medway shared with trust as best practice.</p>	 CES SOP.docx
<p>4. Strengthen pathway between surgical service and pain management. Aligned to National Back Pathway</p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Transformation/ Population health Approach / Workforce</p>	<p><b>Partially achieved:</b> Mapped and identified that the majority of pain teams are working with surgical service. (Three services yet to respond)</p>	 Pain Teams Mapping.pptx
<p>5. Drive extension of 24/7 MRI service in Kent at the community diagnostic in</p>	<p><b>Not achieved: Carry over to 2023/24:</b> Initial meeting with the Kent Diagnostics Imaging Network for exploratory discussion. No further</p>	

<p><b>Maidstone Tunbridge Wells. To serve the Kent reducing the need for patients to travel to King's for out of hours MRI</b></p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Transformation/ Population health Approach / Workforce</p>	<p>engagement or response after initial meeting. Carried over to next year.</p>	
<p><b>6. Improve management of neurosurgery fracture pathway</b></p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Planning, Operational &amp; Recovery</p>	<p><b>Achieved:</b> Improved turnaround times of referrals, communication, text message information leaflet</p>	
<p><b>7. Reduce waiting lists and increase capacity for elective surgery in Kent</b></p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Planning, Operational &amp; Recovery</p>	<p><b>Achieved; see pages 11/12 in pdf in next column</b></p>	<p> SELK Network revisit_2023.09.06.pc</p>
<p><b>8. Embed National Back pathway with GPs and MSK Kent</b></p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Transformation/ Population health Approach / Workforce</p>	<p><b>Not achieved: Carry over to 2023/24.</b> Developed GP questionnaire to measure level of awareness</p>	<p> GPs Managing Spinal Pain and Ost</p>
<p><b>9. Revise format and governance of stakeholder</b></p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Organisational development</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p>	
<p><b>10. Reduce length of Stay and on day cancellations for surgery</b></p> <p>NHSE Core theme: Transformation/ Population health Approach / Workforce</p>	<p><b>Partially achieved for elective:</b> Enhanced recovery nurses in post at King's, working to optimize pathways for elective patients and seeing reduced LOS.</p> <p>Learnings: Deliverable was non-specific. It should be separated into two deliverables 1. Reduce LOS and specified elective or emergency. See evidence in row of SELK Network (pages 43 to 44) revisit document above in row 8.</p> <p>2. On the day cancellations was put on hold carried over to 2022/3</p>	<p> ERAS Spine January 2023 Report.pdf</p>



# NETWORK'S FINANCE

## Network Funding

NHS England allocated £149,300 for April 2022 to March 2023 to King's College NHS Trust, the host site for the South East London and Kent (SELK) Regional Spinal Network.

This funding covers the following roles:

- Enhanced Recovery Nurse - full time
- Spinal Network Administrator - full time
- Spinal Network Manager - part time (4 days per week)

End