

## **Procurement for non-emergency patient transport service (PTS)**

### **Introduction**

Following the comprehensive report on transport undertaken by the Kent and Medway LINKS in 2010, NHS Kent & Medway agreed to undertake a procurement project to deliver an improved service. This paper reports on the current status of the procurement for the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (also known as "PTS"). The process will address several of the recommendations of the report, includes the consistency of eligibility criteria, booking arrangements and travel for all residents of Kent and Medway who are eligible for patient transport journeys. This would encompass both standard and renal dialysis PTS, going to/from a patient's place of care and residence and to/from all hospitals, clinics and providers of NHS healthcare.

### **Background**

PTS transport is provided for patients with an assessed medical need for transport to/from their place of care or residence and a premise providing NHS healthcare, and between premises providing NHS healthcare. This can and should encompass a wide range of vehicle types and levels of care consistent with the patients' medical needs. This is defined in the 'Eligibility Criteria for Patient Transport Services (PTS)' by the Department of Health in 2007.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_078372.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_078372.pdf).

PTS for patients receiving NHS renal dialysis treatment varies from other non-emergency PTS, in that patients receiving hospital dialysis treatment attend their dialysis unit three times a week, every week of the year. A session of dialysis lasts for approximately 4 hours and often has a significant physical impact on patients, with their eligibility for transport changing between arriving at hospital and departing.

Patients who are receiving NHS healthcare are ordinarily expected to make their own way to and from a provider of NHS healthcare. However, PCTs are required to provide PTS to patients who qualify for NHS-funded transport based on an assessed medical need for the duration of the journey, in accordance to the national eligibility criteria for PTS mentioned above for standard PTS. Renal dialysis PTS eligibility criteria had historically varied depending on the provider of the service. However, extensive audits and a national Learning Set have identified the need for a consistent and fair approach to renal dialysis PTS.

### **Summary of current situation**

PTS is currently provided across Kent and Medway, either directly or through subcontracts, by several providers, including:

- Healthcare Transport of East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT);
- South East Coast Ambulance (SECAmb);
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW);
- Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust (DGT);
- Kent Community Health NHS Trust (KCHT);
- Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSFT); and
- King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (KCFT).

The current legacy contracts are managed separately and lack the key features needed for cost-effective operation which are principally a clear service specification based on outcomes, visibility of levels of activity and associated costs, performance measures and incentive schemes. This new service will improve the current needs through better integration, hours of operation and same day access, etc. and will initially use the previously agreed South East Coast Eligibility Criteria (see attached). We will also work with the future provider to consolidate and clarify any other eligibility criteria, as well as institute an ongoing process to work with the new provider after implementation to streamline and clarify the different interpretations of said eligibility criteria.

The PCT Cluster Board identified a need to review and re-procure the services to improve patient care and efficiencies in a variety of ways. It is envisioned that some of these efficiencies will be achieved through choosing a cost effective provider and others through decreasing aborted and cancelled journeys.

The project team is currently undertaking a review of all activity, finance and provider vehicle and staffing data to help identify the total PTS project scope, which will include renal transport. It is not expected that cardiac or paediatric transport will be included as this service has recently been re-tendered and will not be part of this procurement. It is proposed to continue to commission mental health PTS via the Kent and Medway Partnership Trust as this requires a different type of service which is currently being delivered/contracted for effectively by the provider.

Eligibility to access volunteer transport is based on social need and therefore, does not align with the national criteria for standard and renal dialysis PTS which is based on an assessed medical need. There will be a requirement for the Provider of the new service to work in partnership with volunteer organisations who provide volunteer car schemes for people receiving NHS healthcare and who do not qualify for PTS.

## **Timeline**

The target date for the new service to be operational is 1 April 2013, to tie in with giving existing providers the required period of notice, while achieving the expected benefits from the new procurement at the earliest practicable opportunity. The official procurement process will commence in mid April. Prior to that time, engagement events with the public and patient representatives will be held, to build on and confirm any further issues subsequent to the LINK report. A bidder event will also be held. Subsequently, we expect to select the final bidder by the end of October 2012.

An engagement subgroup has been created to allow service users and patient representatives to feed into the Project, help inform the service specification, procurement documentation and other issues that may arise during the process.

It is believed that based on comparable procurement projects undertaken in east Kent, the project would need approximately five months from initiation to having selected the preferred provider(s). The time required to complete implementation will be influenced in part by the number of providers who are selected, but is expected to be between four and five months.

### **Procurement objectives**

A procurement across Kent and Medway would achieve the following:

- a. Better Value for Money
  - Reduced costs as a result of (i) a competitive process and (ii) more effective service provision.
- b. High Quality
  - Managed, booked and transportation services that meet the identified need.
  - Service specification based on outcomes.
- c. Simplified Processes
  - Clear eligibility criteria in line with Department of Health guidelines for access to PTS, applied across Kent and Medway.
  - Clear process providing a single point of access to PTS.
- d. Robust Contract Management
  - Stringent contract management and agreed Key Performance Indicators.
  - Regular reporting on performance and financial spend of the contract.
  - A robust contract is in place to support handover to the Clinical Commissioning Groups.

### **Public, patient and stakeholder engagement**

Although engagement was previously undertaken through PTS steering groups around identifying areas for improvement and the development of local service specifications, engagement will continue throughout the entire procurement, mobilisation and continuing through the term of the contract. This will start with several engagement events and will continue by using the engagement workstream that feeds into the Project directly. This will include various forums including Kent LINK, Medway LINK, patients and the public, local health and non-health transport groups, Kent County Council events, two patient groups covering Kent and Medway, providers of transport, commissioners, clinical leads and all other key stakeholders. This is to ensure that engagement will be adequate and effective both in supporting the proposal for a PTS procurement and in the development of not only the service specification but also documents such as the procurement documents. It is envisaged that engagement will continue through to the selection of successful bidders, during the mobilisation period and into the implementation stage of the contract.

## **Conclusion**

It is not the project team's intention to change the service currently provided under the various PTS contracts but rather, to improve it. The aim of this procurement is to streamline the booking service and making easier access available to the eligible residents of Kent and Medway. Additionally, alongside the procurement, it is expected that we will work to improve the booking systems with trusts to reduce the number of aborted and cancelled journeys.

It is intended that the new PTS service provide a more equitable service for all residents, a reduction in costs and the ability to provide a greener, more effective service overall.

The project team will provide regular updates to HOSC during the procurement and mobilisation stages of this project and request that HOSC support this project.