

How are primary care out of hours services currently provided and what plans do the Trusts have to develop these services in the future?

OUT OF HOURS PROCUREMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper provides the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Kent County Council with an overview of the current Primary Care out-of-hours service across NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent. This is broken into two elements: an outline of the service that is currently provided together with current plans describing how these services will be developed in the future.

2 CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent serves a population of approximately 760,000 residents across the eastern half of Kent and includes the localities of Canterbury, Swale, Dover, Thanet, Dover, Ashford and Shepway. A Primary Care (GP) Out-of-Hours service is currently provided across all localities by a single provider, South East Health Ltd (SEHL). These services are provided between the hours of 18:00 – 08:00, Monday – Thursday, 18:00 Friday – 08:00 Monday and on Bank Holidays.

For those residents in the west of the Swale locality where it borders the Medway Unitary Authority who are registered with GPs in NHS Medway, this service is linked with the similar Meddoc Primary Care out of hours provision.

The scope of South East Health Ltd's service provision encompasses the following elements:

- i. **Telephone access to an out-of-hours GP service:** This is typically via the automatic forwarding to one of South East Health Ltd's call centres following a patient's initial call to their registered GP surgery, although there are instances where the patient is redirected to the out-of-hours provider via a recorded message.
- ii. **Telephone assessment:** Patient assessment, advice streaming and triaging is provided through South East Health Ltd's call-handling service, limiting the need for GP attendance unless clinically appropriate.
- iii. **Primary Care treatment:** Where the patient requires primary care intervention, such treatment is provided in a variety of settings. Patients may be directed to receive treatment in a Primary Care centre available in a range

of locations across localities. Alternatively, if a GP home visit is clinically appropriate, South East Health Ltd provide and transport on-call GPs to the patient to administer the appropriate care.

South East Health Ltd operates two call centres in east Kent from which all out-of-hours calls are handled; these are located in Ashford and Sarre (between Canterbury and Margate).

Where patients require primary care treatment but not necessarily a GP home visit, such treatment is provided in the following locations:

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate
- Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury
- Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Herne Bay
- Victoria Hospital, Deal
- Buckland Hospital, Dover
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
- Sheppey Community Hospital, Minster
- Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital, Sittingbourne
- Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone

South East Health is performance managed on a monthly basis against thirteen National Quality Requirements (NQR) for out-of-hours primary care services.

The current contract with South East Health Ltd is valued at £7 million per annum and runs until 30th June 2010. Notice has been served on the current provider in line with the procurement of a new service which is described below.

3. PROCUREMENT OF NEW SERVICE

Re-tendering of the primary care out-of-hours service commenced in May 2009 with the objective of having a new contract awarded in January 2010 which can be mobilised from April 2010 (allowing suitable handover of contracts between providers) and in place from 1st July 2010.

The principle drivers behind the re-tendering are to stimulate improvements in patient experience, quality of service and value for money, whilst providing a seamless transition between service contracts

i) Governance

A Procurement Project Team has been established with representatives from across the PCT with expertise to inform the project. The team will meet on a regular basis throughout the procurement process. The team consists of representatives from Urgent Care Commissioning, Workforce, Information Management & Technology, Communications, Patient and Public Engagement, Human Resources, Legal, Market Management, Medicines Management, Finance, Infrastructure, and Contracting and Procurement.

A Clinical Project Team has been established with representation from each of the PCT localities and the Local Medical Committee. This team is contributing towards the development of the service specifications.

The out of hour's procurement project is being overseen by the PCTs Urgent Care Commissioning Steering Group.

ii) Service Specifications

Two sets of service specifications have been developed to represent the two aspects of the Service i.e. Lot 1 – Access and Assess and Lot 2 – Treat. Each of the two specifications has individual sets of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a service credit regime for failure to perform against KPIs has been developed. This approach to KPIs will permit each aspect of the Service to be measured and managed independently.

The Clinical Project Team has provided extensive input to the specifications and have been invited to attend dialogue sessions with each of the Bidders. This is to ensure the service specifications have had the appropriate levels of clinical scrutiny and input from all localities.

The procurement project team have also reviewed and provided input to the service specifications which have been refined following dialogue meetings with each of the Bidders.

iii) Patient and Public Engagement

Patient representatives will be involved in the evaluation of bids by attending bidder's presentations. Patient representatives will also be invited to sit on the procurement project team.

A survey was carried out in June 2009 to understand public perception of the out of hours service. Over 300 responses were received and the results of the survey have been taken into account in the development of the service specifications. The survey has also been shared with Bidders.

iv) Procurement update

The procurement is on track to award contract(s) in January 2010 and for service implementation and mobilisation to commence thereafter and achieve full service commencement in July 2010. The long mobilisation period is necessary to address any TUPE issues which may arise. The Contract will be based on the standard Community Services Contract as mandated by the Department of Health.

Currently two Bidders are scheduled to submit outline solutions and complete the Financial Model Template on the 2 November 2009. These will be subject to evaluation and clarification with the Bidders prior to a request, following PCT Board approval, for submission of final tenders.

An evaluation team has been established with representatives from the Clinical Team, Urgent Care Commissioning, Workforce, Information Management & Technology, Communications, Patient and Public Engagement, Human Resources, Medicines Management, Finance, Infrastructure, and Contracting and Procurement. This team will be responsible for scoring final tenders and production of an evaluation

report for submission to the PCT Board with a recommendation as to the preferred Provider and Contract award.

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