

NHS Dartford Gravesham and Swanley and NHS Swale CCGs
Adult Community Services Procurement

HOSC Briefing – January 2017

Introduction

1. On 13 January 2016 NHS Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley (DGS) and NHS Swale Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's) confirmed the award of the contract for adult community services to Virgin Care Services Limited (Virgin Care).
 2. The decision was made following a year-long procurement process which saw Virgin Care assessed as the best provider following thorough evaluation involving local clinicians, patients, commissioners and other subject matter experts. Virgin Care has a strong track record of running NHS community healthcare services over the last ten years, free at the point of need, to many people across the country.
 3. As previously discussed with the HOSC in March and June 2015 and again in January 2016, the procurement was undertaken on 'an-is' basis. This meant that patients would continue to receive the same range of adult community services as was previously available. The new contract is for seven years with the potential to extend a further three years. From the outset, the CCGs specified that the successful organisation would need to be responsive to any future changes in local health requirements over the period of the contract. However, any change in future service provision would need to follow formal due process as appropriate, including consulting the Committee about a potential substantial variation of service.
 4. The new contract was due to be mobilised on 1st April 2016 but following a legal challenge by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT), contract award was suspended pending conclusion of the legal process.
 5. The CCG's applied to the High Court to have the suspension lifted on the grounds of needing to install the new provider in good time to support effective planning for winter and on-going concerns over service provision.
 6. Following a successful challenge by the CCG's, the Court gave the CCG's leave to proceed with the contract award in June and mobilisation re-commenced.
 7. The transfer of services to Virgin eventually took place on 26th September 2016.
 8. The new contract has now been mobilised and Virgin Care are now providing the range of services previously provided by KCHFT and Medway Community Health.
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9. Most of the staff employed by the previous providers who provided the applicable adult community services, transferred to Virgin on the go live date, carrying with them their continuous services and the same terms and conditions of employment.

Background

10. The challenge for health and social care both nationally and locally is predominantly:

- Long-standing health inequalities across the population
- A year on year increasing number and complexity of morbidities, particularly within the elderly population. This is however, true for all age groups with long term conditions
- Resources, both financial and human are finite and require further efficiency gains

11. How to respond to these challenges is central to the CCG's five year commissioning strategies and operational plans. These strategies are designed to tackle the above issues alongside the expected demographic changes linked to the planned and significant housing growth in both CCG areas.

12. It is widely acknowledged that in order to respond to the increasing requirements in the community there needs to be greater flexibility, improved responsiveness and closer integration between all health & social care providers. Models of care need to reflect a joint response with all parties needing to work together around the service users and centred on promoting health, independence and safety, thus reducing dependence on hospitals and long term care. Core to the successful delivery of the CCG plans are adult community health services.

13. As a result the CCG agreed to 'test the market' for a suitable provider of adult community services, given the view that the quality and flexibility of the existing service provision needed to be improved and that there were a range of providers who should be given the opportunity to bid for the contract. This would provide the CCG's with the opportunity to ensure that the best provider was engaged to support delivery of the strategic and operational plans.

Current position

14. The new contract went live on 26th September 2016 with Virgin Care taking responsibility for the provision of the Adult Community Services.

15. Issues immediately prior to 'go-live' presented some concern over the mobilisation period, namely:
- a. Incomplete transfer of all staff records
 - b. Incomplete transfer of some patient records
 - c. Staff shortages, particularly in the Community Hospitals and with some specialist nursing services in Swale
 - d. Operation of the Care Coordination Centre
16. Virgin Care worked extraordinarily hard in the first weeks to support staff and ensure the safe delivery of services. There were a small number of individual incidents concerning patient care which were dealt with quickly and reported accordingly.
17. A list of residual issues has been managed carefully, whilst every effort is being made to ensure that services are provided and patients are cared for appropriately. These are mainly associated with continuing difficulties with recruitment and some transfer anomalies.
18. It's fair to say that whilst the vast majority of services are running effectively, there have been some teething problems and some GP's have been dissatisfied with some elements of the service, primarily the handling of referrals and in a small number of cases the responsiveness of services. This is being carefully monitored and Virgin Care is being held to account via the monthly Contract & Performance meetings.
19. Equally Virgin Care are actively seeking service delivery improvement and efficiency opportunities both internally and across the economy, using their experience elsewhere, objective enquiry and preliminary observations.
20. Virgin Care are becoming more integrated into the local health & care economy now and are part of the Executive Programme Board and the Sustainability & Transformation Planning.

Conclusion

21. The HOSC are asked to note the progress with mobilisation of the new contract for Adult Community Services.

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