

Kent and Medway Urology Commissioning Review

Summary of briefing note provided by Medway Primary Care Trust

The services with which this review is concerned involve highly specialised urological surgery, representing just under two per cent of all urology operations. The underlying issue is the familiar one of the need for appropriately sized catchment populations in order to ensure the necessary "critical mass" for high surgical standards.

A review undertaken by Prof Tony Mundy in March 2007, as part of "Fit for the Future", noted lack of progress towards centralising urology services in Kent and Medway. Prof Mundy expressed support for providing services on a single site – while recognising that a staged development towards this might be required.

A Urology Commissioning Steering Group (UCSG) was set up on behalf of the three Kent and Medway Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in October 2007, to develop a Commissioning Specification and facilitate a process leading to contracts / Service Level Agreements to provide services until 2012.

Once the UCSG had agreed the process to be undertaken and the detailed content of the Commissioning Specification, acute Trusts were asked to respond to the Specification. A separate Evaluation Panel considered the responses, evaluating them against the Specification, using predetermined scoring and weighting methodologies. This was Stage 1 of the commissioning process (concluding at the end of December 2007).

Three responses were received, from the four current providers:

- East Kent Hospitals Trust;
- Medway Trust / Dartford and Gravesham Trust; and
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust.

In aggregate, these responses proposed three multi-disciplinary teams on three sites.

The Evaluation Panel agreed that there should be two multi-disciplinary teams, one in East Kent and one in West Kent. The external surgical members of the panel further stated that in West Kent there should be one surgical site for highly specialised urology, and indicated that additional work was required regarding: casemix; identification of the appropriate site; and impact on patient experience.

The procedures to be undertaken at the single West Kent specialist urological surgery centre were agreed by the consultant urologists in January 2008. These are fourteen selected radical urological procedures – all complex operations for urological cancer. It was agreed that patients would have their outpatient and diagnostic appointments, and treatments other than surgery

(including follow-up treatment, where appropriate), from their local Trust and only travel to the specialist surgical site for their pre-surgery assessment and surgery.

Stage 2 of the commissioning process, to determine the site from which the core casemix for specialist urology will be delivered in West Kent, has been in progress since February 2008, following the setting up of a new workstream, the West Kent Urology Site Feasibility Group.

It is intended in West Kent to: move to a single multi-disciplinary team by 1 July 2008; set out detailed plans on the implementation of a single surgical site for highly specialised Urology by the end of July 2008; and implement the single-site surgical solution by 1 April 2009.

Analysis of data regarding West Kent has shown that:

- total selected radical procedures for the three most recent years (2004-5 to 2006-7) were 477, of which 85 were at Dartford and Gravesham Trust, 218 at Medway Trust, and 174 at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust;
- the patients treated at Dartford and Gravesham Trust mainly came from Dartford, Gravesham or Sevenoaks;
- nearly two-thirds of the patients treated at Medway Trust came from the Medway area, with most of the remainder living in Swale;
- the patients treated at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust mainly came from Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, and Tonbridge and Malling with a few from other areas.

Two prospective providers, representing three organisations, have completed a site feasibility questionnaire and been interviewed by the Evaluation Panel:

- Medway Trust / Dartford and Gravesham Trust (as "the Medway and Darent Unit"); and
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust.

Before Stage 2 can be concluded (with a preferred option for the single West Kent site going to the UCSG and the PCT Boards), the views of the Kent and Medway HOSCs are required on the following questions:

1) Do the HOSCs support the approach being taken within Stage 2 of this Review?

2) Do the HOSCs require any further information in relation to the process that we are following, or a presentation to the HOSCs at one of its meetings?

3) It is understood that the HOSCs will need to decide upon whether they consider any of the elements within Stage 2 to be of a nature that

may require further consultation, either with the HOSC or more formally with the public. We would be grateful for this advice if at all possible before the end of June to allow us to incorporate this into our paper to the three PCT Boards for their July meetings.

4) Would it be helpful for representatives from the Urology process to meet with a smaller group of members from both HOSCs to brief more fully to obtain a firm steer on process?

Extract from the draft minutes of Medway Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, 22 May 2008

The Chief Executive of Medway PCT stated that if the Urology Review were not dealt with by the Committee until the next meeting on 10 July this would set back the process until September. She queried whether this could be dealt with in a different way by means of a task group. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator explained that this would need to be the joint Committee with Kent County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would need to ensure that the Committee were given delegated authority to respond to the Trust on behalf.

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