



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Briefing
East Kent NHS 111 and GP out of hours services
November 2017

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Background

Primecare was commissioned in 2016 to provide an integrated NHS 111 and GP out of hours (GP OOH) service across the four east Kent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) following a competitive procurement process. The aim of the service was to provide a seamless transition for patients between NHS 111 and GP out of hours services. The lead CCG for the contract is NHS Canterbury and Coastal CCG.

Following a planned mobilisation phase, the GP OOH service went live on 28 September 2016 with NHS 111 following shortly afterwards in a phased approach starting from November 2016.

The contract has been closely performance managed on a monthly basis since the service went live. A key part of this process is to monitor the arrangements to ensure that patients are provided with a safe, effective service and that patient experience is reviewed regularly and lessons embedded into the service.

Regular contract management identified some concerns in relation to quality of care. The CCG has been working with Primecare to oversee improvements and support Primecare to make the necessary changes.

Care Quality Commission inspection

The CQC carried out an inspection in May 2017 and the report was published on 3 August. The CQC report identified a number of concerns and the overall rating was inadequate. The provider was placed in special measures. The concerns identified by the CQC replicated concerns that the CCG had already raised with Primecare.

Following the inspection, the CQC took enforcement action against the provider, namely the issuing of three warning notices.

The warning notices covered:

- **Safe care and treatment** (care and treatment must be provided in a safe way for service users). Primecare had failed to ensure that the risks to the health and care of service users were properly assessed, particularly in respect of reporting, recording and learning from significant events.
- **Good governance** (systems or processes must be established and operated effectively). Primecare demonstrated a lack of key senior staff, used interim staff, staff were not fully

aware of their roles and responsibilities, the disaster /recovery plan was unclear, and there was an absence of patient feedback.

- **Staffing** (sufficient numbers of suitably qualified, competent, skilled and experienced persons must be deployed). Primecare did not have enough staff to meet the needs of patients and there was a lack of induction and mandatory training.

Primecare ratings for each area inspected

Are services safe? Inadequate

Are services effective? Inadequate

Are services caring? Requires improvement

Are services responsive to people's needs? Requires improvement

Are services well-led? Inadequate

The full inspection report can be viewed on the [CQC website](#).

Progress since previous report to the HOSC

The NHS England Quality Oversight Group for Primecare continues to meet regularly to both provide support, hold Primecare to account and to ensure timely action to addresses the concerns raised during the CQC inspection.

Primecare exercised its right to serve an accelerated notice period of three months on 29 September 2017, in accordance with a joint agreement signed by both parties on 30 August 2017. This followed several weeks of intensive support from the CCG to enable the provider to deliver the required service.

The notice period was due to expire on 31 December 2017. However, the CCG took the view that to implement a new service during the holiday period would not be sensible and therefore took the decision to implement a new service on 1 December.

The CCGs have signed an agreement with Integrated Care 24 (IC24), a not for profit social enterprise, to take over the running of the NHS 111 and GP OOH service from 1 December. IC24 has more than 25 years' experience providing healthcare services, including GP OOH care and NHS 111 services across the east and south of England.

IC24 is completely committed to providing patients with a safe and efficient service and will be working closely with the CCGs and all other healthcare providers across east Kent to ensure they receive a good and safe service.

Current situation

Primecare is facing challenges with the delivery of the services, particularly in relation to the staffing for the GP out of hours bases. Primecare submitted a proposal to the east Kent CCGs to close some of the bases due to the low utilisation rate. This supports Primecare to consolidate staff across the main sites and deliver home visits.

The following bases temporarily closed on 31 October 2017.

| Site | Current Utilisation rate |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Romney Marsh | 21 per cent |
| Herne Bay | 44 per cent |
| Deal | 24 per cent |

This arrangement is an emergency measure due to the urgency of the situation and the need to ensure that the service is safe. This will be reviewed in the New Year.

Mobilisation of new contract

The project team is working closely with IC24 to ensure that the GP OOH service is delivered to the specification and within the required timescales. While the timescales are tight, the CCG is confident that IC24 will provide a safe service.

The IC24 GP OOH service will initially not re-open the above bases. However, this will be fully reviewed post-Christmas and will involve representation from patient groups and Healthwatch.

IC24 is an experienced provider of NHS 111 and GP out of hours services. IC24 operates the integrated urgent care service in both Norfolk and South Essex. It also operates the NHS 111 service in North Essex and the out of hours GP led service in West and North Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Northampton. The organisation also provides the nurse-led healthcare at the Sheppey Cluster of prisons. These services cover 6.4million people. In October, 70,322 patients used the 111 service and 49,144 used OOH.

In the last year IC24 has implemented a clinical assessment service in Norfolk and Waveney, has moved to a locality model and has reduced corporate services to move resources to the 'front line'. IC24 has also introduced a raft of 'people focused' initiatives such as a staff forum and a reward and recognition scheme to ensure that staff are consulted on decisions and change within the organisation, and are recognised for their contributions.