

Statement re: North Kent Dermatology Service

9 July 2020

NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) suspended DMC Healthcare's contract to provide dermatology services in Medway, Swale, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley on 19 June 2020. This decision was taken to ensure patient safety after the CCG identified concerns about the provider's ability to meet NHS standard contract requirements.

Dermatology is the medical term for the treatment or management of skin conditions which can include rashes, lesions, lumps on the skin, changes to moles and skin cancer.

Wilf Williams, Accountable Officer at NHS Kent and Medway CCG, said: "Since we took the decision to suspend DMC Healthcare's contract for dermatology services, we have been working hard to put alternative provision in place to best meet patient needs.

"There are 1,855 patients who need procedures and these patients are being contacted and booked into clinics which will begin on Friday 10 July. The 18 Week Support team, which specialises in seeing a high volume of patients in a short space of time, will be running the clinics with support from West Kent Dermatology Service.

"West Kent Dermatology Service will also see new routine patients once the priority patients have been treated. The service is already receiving referrals and has the capacity to see more than 500 new patients per week. Services will be led by expert consultant dermatologists with a team of more than 20 consultants available to deliver services.

"Patients with newly diagnosed cancer and inflammatory skin disease will be seen and linked to other specialist services as required. This will include skin cancer support services provided at Queen Victoria Hospital and oncology services provided by Maidstone Hospital. Multidisciplinary clinics – which bring a range of clinicians from different specialities together – have already begun to ensure these patients are seen as quickly as possible.

"Both West Kent Dermatology Service and the temporary service being delivered in North Kent are fully supported by parent provider Sussex Community Dermatology Service

(SCDS). SCDS provides dermatology services across Sussex, Surrey and Kent with a proven track record of service delivery for more than 10 years, working in acute hospital trust and community locations.

“Although we are still in the process of clinically triaging and validating data provided by DMC Healthcare, we know there is a large waiting list of patients who need to be assessed so we are planning provision for them. Once we have clearer data, we will put plans in place to treat patients as quickly as possible. It has been important to prioritise the high risk patients which is what we have been concentrating on.”

Clinics will take place at Rainham Healthy Living Centre, High St, Rainham and Fleet Health Campus, Vale Rd, Northfleet.

The CCG has asked clinicians who see patients that have been waiting a long time to consider whether they believe any delays to their treatment may have caused harm.

As the situation develops, www.bit.ly/NorthKentDerm will be kept updated so please check for the latest information.

For more press information, please contact kmccg.comms@nhs.net or call 07825 844666.

Caroline Selkirk

Director of Health Improvement