

Item 4 - Wheelchair Services in Kent

By: Jill Kennedy-Smith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 13 September 2018

Subject: Wheelchair Services in Kent

Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by Thanet CCG.

It provides additional background information which may prove useful to Members.

1. Introduction

- (a) The Committee received notification in June 2018 from Thanet CCG, as lead CCG for wheelchair services for patients in Kent & Medway, that there was pressure on the service provided by Millbrook Healthcare; patients were experiencing longer waiting times for equipment, repairs and assessment.
- (b) Subsequently, Healthwatch Kent notified the Chair about concerns received from service users at the Kent Physical Disability Forum regarding access to wheelchair equipment and repairs.
- (c) Steve Inett (Chief Executive, Healthwatch Kent), Professor Mike Oliver (Representative of the Kent Physical Disability Forum) and Ailsa Ogilvie (Chief Operating Officer, Thanet CCG) addressed the 20 July 2018 Committee. In response, Members expressed concerns about the service user experience; the procurement of the contract and performance monitoring by NHS Thanet CCG; and continuing with the current provider.
- (5) At the conclusion of the item, the Committee agreed the following recommendation:

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (a) *expresses grave concerns about the wheelchair services contract and its management by NHS Thanet CCG.*
- (b) *writes to all Kent CCGs to express its concerns about the wheelchair services contract and its management by NHS Thanet CCG.*
- (c) *requests that NHS Thanet CCG provide a written response to the Committee, within two weeks, as to whether it is considering terminating Millbrook Healthcare's contract and the reasons for that choice; and to provide an action plan detailing how the issues will be resolved in the interim.*

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- (d) *upon receipt of the written briefing, determines whether to have an additional meeting of the Committee or to have an item at the September meeting of the Committee.*
- (6) The CCG requested an informal briefing with the Committee which was held on 15 August 2018. At the conclusion of the briefing the Chair, in consultation with the Members present, decided that there should be an additional meeting of the HOSC to consider this item.
- (d) The attached reports have been prepared for the Committee's consideration:

Thanet CCG Report
Quality Impact Assessment - Millbrook

pages 9 - 17
pages 19 - 21

2. Recommendation

RECOMMENDED that the reports be noted and Thanet CCG be requested to provide an update to the Committee in three months.

Background Documents

Kent County Council (2018) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (20/07/18)*',
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/g7919/Public%20reports%20pack%2020th-Jul-2018%2010.00%20Health%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

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Appendix – Draft Minutes for Wheelchair Services in Kent Item – 20 July 2018

Ailsa Ogilvie (Chief Operating Officer, Thanet CCG), Professor Mike Oliver (Representative of the Kent Physical Disability Forum) and Adrian Halse (Thanet CCG) were in attendance for this item.

- (1) The Chair introduced the item by explaining that Healthwatch had made a request for the item to be looked at and welcomed Steve Inett and Professor Mike Oliver to the Committee.
- (2) Mr Inett explained that Healthwatch supported the Kent Physical Disability Forum, who had been proactive in raising concerns with Millbrook Healthcare, the current provider, and the CCG. The forum had collected feedback from its members on the issues being raised; a summary of those concerns was presented in the report.
- (3) Professor Oliver informed the Committee that he had used wheelchair services for 56 years and had a personal and professional connection with the service. He expressed significant concerns about the current service and outlined engagement between service users, the CCG and Millbrook. He stated that he did not accept the proposal for the CCG to continue working with Millbrook to resolve the problems. He noted that the forum had invited the CCG to come back in early August; the forum was also considering writing an open letter to CCG Clinical Chairs to express their view that the contract should not be continued.
- (4) The Chair invited the CCG to respond. Ms Ogilvie apologised to service users and welcomed the support of Healthwatch and the continued opportunity to work with the forum. She reported that the CCG and Millbrook had agreed additional funding to clear the backlog; discussions regarding additional investment from the eight Kent & Medway CCGs were being held. She noted that the audit had been undertaken to understand the extent of the backlog. Millbrook had been asked to develop an improvement plan to deal with the backlog at pace; the availability of additional staffing had been identified as a potential risk. Millbrook had also been asked to present improved data, to distinguish between the inherited and new backlog, to the CCG. She stated that further assurance was being sought from Millbrook about complaints, risk assessments and prioritising patients with the highest needs; a quality visit had found that patients were not being harmed as a result of their wait. Ms Ogilvie highlighted that she was taking personal responsibility to get the contract back on track.
- (5) Members expressed concerns about service user experience; the procurement of the contract and performance monitoring. The Chair enquired if terminating the contract had been considered. Ms Ogilvie stated that it had not been considered. She explained that the backlog was not known at the time of awarding the contract and since the contract began, there had been significant requests for powered chairs that had exceeded procurement expectations. She confirmed that a further clinical audit, to understand the categorisation of referrals,

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would take place in August. In response to a specific question about wheelchair fitting, Ms Ogilvie stated that a full clinical assessment by a clinician took place to determine what equipment was required.

- (6) RESOLVED that the Committee:
- (a) expresses grave concerns about the wheelchair services contract and its management by NHS Thanet CCG.
 - (b) writes to all Kent CCGs to express its concerns about the wheelchair services contract and its management by NHS Thanet CCG.
 - (c) requests that NHS Thanet CCG provide a written response to the Committee, within two weeks, as to whether it is considering terminating Millbrook Healthcare's contract and the reasons for that choice; and to provide an action plan detailing how the issues will be resolved in the interim.
 - (d) upon receipt of the written briefing, determines whether to have an additional meeting of the Committee or to have an item at the September meeting of the Committee.