

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service Surrey

A Briefing Paper for the Health Scrutiny Committee

November 2014

1. Introduction

This briefing paper seeks to inform the Surrey Healthcare Scrutiny Committee of the current performance monitoring processes that have been adopted to contract manage the Patient Transport Service (PTS) currently provided by South East Coast Ambulance Foundation Trust (SECAMB).

The paper also seeks to advise the committee of the planned procurement process being put in place to enable a re-procurement of the service following the expiry of the existing contract on the 30th September 2015.

2. Background

The transport service within Surrey is provided by South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB). It is a Surrey only contract and North West Surrey (NWS) CCG is the lead commissioner. SECAMB provide the vehicles, the crews and manage the day to day operation of the service. SECAMB also provide a web based e-booking system which enables them to receive details of the bookings both for pre-planned and on the day bookings. The e-booking system is predominantly used by hospitals/GP practises/HCPs who have web access. Surrey County Council provides a central booking service for patients requiring PTS which is a separate contract.

3. Current Performance

Whilst in general terms the current PTS service meets the needs of the users, SECAMB currently have not met a number of the contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), predominantly the discharge KPI's. The current complaints analysis also shows a consistent theme relating to timeliness. The issues relating to these failures are discussed at the regular hospital operational performance meetings and a number of reasons for the poor performance are acknowledged. The discharge of patients presents the most challenges with "on the day" bookings and patients not being ready acknowledged as a concern. There are very few issues with inward journeys with the majority of the KPIs being met.

4. Contract Management

On 1 April 2014 the responsibility for managing the PTS contract moved from NHS East Surrey CCG to NW Surrey CCG for itself and on behalf of the Surrey Collaborative CCGs. Since then the contract governance arrangements have been reviewed and contract management processes strengthened.

Commissioners of the Surrey Collaborative CCGs have a Commissioner Forum pre-meet to discuss issues and commissioning plans prior to the PTS Contract Management meeting. The Contract Management meeting is well attended by senior representatives from SECAMB and from the Surrey Social Information on Disability Group. This meeting looks specifically at performance and clinical governance issues and SECAMB are directly questioned on matters relating to KPI achievement, complaints and governance issues.

In addition monthly operational/stakeholder level meetings are held which involve the acute trusts and user groups. These meetings have been a key initiative in generating a constructive dialogue between users and the provider. Root causes of journey failures are discussed and actions put in place to try and avoid repetition. A typical example of the type of action taken is inviting hospital pharmacy staff to PTS meetings due to the fact that patients awaiting drugs are a constant cause of late discharge journeys. Some trusts now prioritise the dispensing of drugs for discharge patients travelling via PTS. KPI performance, complaints and clinical governance issues are fixed agenda items and are discussed each month and outcomes escalated as appropriate.

The SECamb report submitted to the Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) covers the main issues relating to the current performance. Whilst the issues persist there are positive steps being taken by SECamb and we are beginning to see signs of improvement.

5. Re- Procurement

The current Surrey wide PTS contract is due to terminate on the 30th September 2015. The contract has an option to extend by up to 1 year which, if agreed by both parties, could extend it to 30th September 2016. The provision of a PTS service is subject to the usual NHS Procurement guidelines and, as such, is subject to re-tendering on each occasion of contract termination.

The current service has 2 distinct elements with 2 separate providers both with their own contracts. South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECamb) provides the actual transport service with Surrey County Council (SCC) currently providing the telephone booking service.

Following a meeting of representatives from the Surrey Collaborative CCGs it has been agreed to commence preparation for a full re-procurement of the PTS transport and booking service. The procurement process and the role of Contracting Authority will be fulfilled by NW Surrey CCG on behalf of the Surrey Collaborative. NW Surrey CCG are exploring a procurement partner who will assist in the procurement process.

The procurement will focus on the delivery of a high quality, patient-focused service that is innovative, robust, cost effective and offers value for money. For these reasons, the project team will work closely with Surrey County Council to consider the benefits in a more integrated form of transport provision.

6. Termination Notice

NWS CCG have formally advised SECamb via the six month notice letter intentions that we intend to re-tender the PTS contract in order to have in place a new PTS contract on the 1st October 2015. The CCG has formally advised SECamb that it may be necessary to agree an extension of the existing contract due to procurement timescales. SECamb have agreed in principle that a contract extension will be possible but have advised that any extension would be subject to a review of existing rates. SECamb claim to be losing money on this contract and have therefore formally expressed this condition. Any such extension will be subject to revised KPIs.

7. Project Team

7 A project team consisting of representatives from the Surrey Collaborative CCGs, patient groups (users) as well as Surrey County Council including Business Intelligence and Finance staff from Surrey CCGs has been established. A procurement specialist will join the project team once the procurement service has been appointed. The main purpose of the project team is to initially review the various service options and to produce a draft specification that can be then presented to other stakeholders for comments and review. The input from the hospitals and other users of the service will be vital in producing a specification that meets the needs of the users but also reflects the need to ensure the service is cost effective, integrated, efficient and meets the needs of the wider health community.

It is acknowledged that the Patient Transport Service is a vital part of the healthcare environment and, to its users, it is a crucial service. The procurement process will ensure that all stakeholders, including members of the Surrey Collaborative, Health Scrutiny Select Committee and other user groups are kept aware of the procurement process and consulted with as required.

8. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- Receive and note the contents of this briefing paper