

Central Bedfordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Briefing paper

Subject: Non-Emergency Public Transport
Briefing date: 13 July 2017

Background

In January 2016, Medical Services Limited (MSL), who provided Non-Emergency Transport for Bedfordshire, Herts Valleys, East and North Herts and Luton served notice on their contract, three years ahead of schedule. The Consortium of CCGs agreed to appoint a caretaker contract, while a full and robust procurement process was entered into.

In February 2017, the Consortia of CCGs contracted with Private Ambulance Service (PAS) for a period of 12 months.

Issues

Since the start of the contract with PAS, the Consortia has experienced significant operational issues, which has led to a high number of complaints from patients. These include:

- Difficulty accessing the call centre,
- Delayed pick up of patients after hospital appointments
- Late delivery of patients to hospital appointments
- Concerns about the quality of the service provided.

In addition, the Consortia has raised concerns about:

- The risk to patients who are being transported for renal dialysis
- Little or no data provided by the contractor.

What has been done to improve performance?

These risks and poor patient experience prompted Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to put in place a Renal Remedial Action Plan in May this year and in June, the Consortia added a 17 point Remedial Action plan to improve performance and ensure that Private Ambulance Service met the KPIs outlined in the contract.

The Consortia is actively working with Private Ambulance Service to manage the items on the plan.

A decision was also taken on 13 July 2017, by the Bedfordshire CCG Executive team to agree an individual Remedial Action Plan with PAS, to ensure that Bedfordshire concerns are reviewed separately and appropriately by the contracts team. Contractual penalties will also be implemented to ensure that PAS are being held to account during the remainder of the contract.

In addition to the Remedial Action Plan and the Renal Action Plan, the quality team has worked closely with the contracts team to address concerns raised by patients and elected members. Our clinicians have been liaising directly with the clinical lead for PAS to highlight concerns and ensure that measures are taken to improve delivery of service to patients.

Our quality team has undertaken two announced visits to PAS at the Bedford Hospital site to inspect vehicle compliance and infection control issues, and one visit to the Renal Unit to talk with patients and staff about their current experience of the service.

The outcomes of these visits are being shared with PAS and with the contracts team to inform the formal contractual monitoring process. We will continue to undertake both announced and unannounced visits to support the quality monitoring of changes being implemented and to check that these are reflected in the experience of users of the service.

What happens next?

Together with Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, we are working to undertake a full and robust procurement of the Non-Emergency Transport Services contract. This is being led by Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, with support from Attain. As part of the procurement, Luton CCG is liaising with the Luton and Dunstable Hospital and Bedfordshire CCG is working with Bedford Hospital, to ensure that all learning from previous contracts is considered in the process and reflected in the new contract.

What are the timescales for procurement?

Procurement for the new Provider has begun. A full specification has been drafted and we plan to go out to market in August. We will follow a robust procurement process and expect that the new contract will commence in April 2018.