

Sussex Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service – Health and Overview Scrutiny report

Current position

- Feedback from provider trusts whose patients use the service, and from patients themselves, is that the service is much improved from its poor start. However, we know that the improvement is not embedded across the whole of Sussex.
- In September drivers employed by Dockland Medical Services (DMS) arrived at work to find their work stations locked and the CCGs were informed that some staff had not been paid.
- This clearly unacceptable and we are grateful to staff who continued to make themselves available for work despite not receiving pay.
- Coperforma provided additional capacity to mitigate this loss of DMS and hospital Trusts informed the CCGs that this situation did not impact on the service.
- The CCGs have been speaking regularly to Coperforma and the unions to fully understand the situation and in view of this dialogue the GMB stood down their planned strike action.
- The CCGs have worked with Coperforma and the unions to put in place a mechanism coordinated by the GMB to pay DMS staff any outstanding payments via a third party payroll.
- The CCGs continue to work with Coperforma and the unions to find a solution for DMS staff.
- CCGs are utilising the powers available within the NHS standard contract and enacting these where Coperforma's performance falls below what is expected.

Since the last meeting:

Patient safety

- Patient safety is our priority and the CCGs have established a Patient Safety Group, led by a GP, with representatives from HealthWatch, local authority safeguarding, hospital Trusts to oversee patient safety and experience.
- Members of the group have been visiting hospitals, in particular renal departments, speaking to patients and front line staff to get their feedback on the service.
- This work programme is continuing; the team will next visit oncology departments.
- These visits so far indicate that the physical health of patients has not been harmed by the problems with the transport service. However, too many patients have suffered stress at what is already a difficult time in their lives, and for that we are very sorry.

Issues between Coperforma and some of its contractors

- Some Sussex CCGs received an email early in September from a number of contractors saying that they had not been paid for work they had done for Coperforma.
- The status of this email was unclear; it was unsigned, came from a generic email account, and three of the organisations listed as a signatory have since informed us that they had not consented to their inclusion.
- We facilitated a meeting between Coperforma and Docklands Medical Services (DMS), and have now been informed by DMS that they have received the money owing to them.

Performance

- The feedback we are receiving from patients and staff tells us that the service has improved since April. The latest patient user survey shows patient satisfaction at 4.1 out of 5.

- Coperforma sends us regular reports on its performance and their figures show that around 9 out of 10 patients are getting to hospital and home again within the performance targets set out in the contract.
- Although the improvements are still not Sussex-wide.
- CCG and CSU representatives met with Coperforma to understand in detail how their performance reporting operates and how raw data is extracted and handled to generate the performance reports. This has identified some data anomalies which require Coperforma to investigate and respond.

Maintaining improvements

Summary of actions and improvements taking place:

- New Transport Providers added to the transport framework and introduced into Sussex.
- Formation of a 'High Acuity Team' to oversee the transportation of priority patient groups, including renal, oncology, and frail patients and those travelling to specialist hospitals in London
- Phased implementation of Operational Zones for the booking, dispatch and delivery of transport across Sussex.
- Continued use of dedicated private ambulances by Acute Trusts to manage and maintain hospital patient flow.
- Implementation of the local service development improvement plans.
- Coperforma working with transport providers to enforce professional standards.
- Engagement with Healthwatch and Patient Forum to assist with building public and patient confidence in PTS and gain patient feedback.

TIAA Report

- Since the last Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee meeting the independent investigation report compiled by TIAA, reviewing the adequacy of the mobilisation arrangements for the new Patient Transport Service contract has been released.
- It was shared with the Sussex CCG Governing Bodies throughout July and stakeholder groups in early August, before it was released into the public domain.
- The report makes 10 recommendations. An update on each is presented in the attached appendix.
- The Sussex CCGs, procurement and commissioning teams have committed to adopt the learning from the report for future procurements and have acted on the recommendations that pertain to the current transport service contract.

However, separately from the TIAA report, allegations came to light concerning potential irregularities in the booking and despatch of patient transport, which are being investigated.

Specialist advisor

- The TIAA report recommended that we recruit a transport expert to oversee the contract.
- A Specialist Advisor has been recruited who is working with the CCGs and Coperforma to review the accuracy of the data, assess the sustainability of the current service, and ensure that improvements to date are maintained.

Contingency plans

- The CCGs continue to monitor the PTS situation closely and have / are developing contingency plans based on scenario planning to enact should anything happen that may adversely impact on service delivery.

Appendix

Rec.	Recommendation	Priority
1	<p>An independent patient transport service specialist be considered to support the CCG to oversee Coperforma's remedial action plan and service resilience until the PTS is operating as 'Business as Usual'</p> <p>Management Update: Agreed. Following a competitive interview process the CCG appointed Derek Laird on a six month contract with effect from 30th August 2016 to provide specialist PTS support. Derek has a wide range of experience within PTS provider organisations at a senior level and has direct experience of PTS contract mobilisation.</p>	1
2	<p>Each of the Trusts in Sussex be requested to identify additional costs they have incurred and submit theses to HWLH CCG for contractual discussion with Coperforma.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. All provider organisations have been requested to submit details of additional transport costs incurred directly for reimbursement by Coperforma. All organisations with the exception of Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust have responded to this request. Coperforma have been advised to provide for costs from BSUH at c£80,000 per month.</p>	1
4	<p>Consideration should be given to establishing whether there are grounds for financial recovery due to the contract failure in terms of number of journeys not properly delivered during April and May 2016.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. The full contract is with Blake Morgan for review to ensure that the terms and conditions of the contract are enforced in full. A further update will be available once this review is complete and action considered and agreed by the CCG.</p>	1
8	<p>Contingency arrangements be built into the planning process for major contracts where significant service changes are anticipated.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. This recommendation is being shared with South East CSU and South of England Procurement who provide specialist advice to Sussex and East Surrey CCGs. Derek Laird has been asked to develop short term and long term contingency arrangements in the event that the current contract is terminated by the Provider or Commissioner prior to its end date.</p>	1
3	<p>Consideration should be given to establishing whether there is legal entitlement to recover CCGs additional costs arising from Coperforma's failures of contract performance.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. The full contract is with Blake Morgan for review to ensure that the terms and conditions of the contract are enforced in full. A further update will be available once this review is complete and action considered and agreed by the CCG.</p>	2

Rec.	Recommendation	Priority
5	<p>The terms of reference for any mobilisation Board or similar be agreed at the first meeting.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. This recommendation is being shared with South East CSU and South of England Procurement who provide specialist advice to Sussex and East Surrey CCGs.</p>	2
6	<p>Failure to attend key mobilisation meetings should be noted and escalated appropriately (internally and externally).</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. This recommendation is being shared with South East CSU and South of England Procurement who provide specialist advice to Sussex and East Surrey CCGs</p>	2
7	<p>Legal advice be taken to confirm that the tender and contract documentation can make it explicitly clear that the signature of the appropriate person from the lead CCG is legally binding and signatures from the other participating CCGs are not required before contract mobilisation can commence.</p> <p>Management Response: The CCG understands that a Collaboration Agreement signed by CCGs participating in procurements provides the necessary governance framework for lead CCGs to sign service contracts on behalf of associate CCGs once individual GB approval of contract award is made. The CCG will share this recommendation with South East CSU and South of England Procurement who provide specialist advice to Sussex and East Surrey CCGs to ensure Collaborative Agreements and the contract signature process are more clearly expressed during the procurement process.</p>	2
9	<p>Consideration should be given to including within the contract specification for major contracts where significant service changes are anticipated that a phased transition approach by bidders would be welcomed.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. . The CCG will share this recommendation with South East CSU and South of England Procurement who provide specialist advice to Sussex and East Surrey CCGs.</p>	2
10	<p>Consideration be given to commissioning independent consultants to monitor and advise on the mobilisation for major contracts where significant service changes are anticipated.</p> <p>Management Response: Agreed. . The CCG will share this recommendation with South East CSU and South of England Procurement who provide specialist advice to Sussex and East Surrey CCGs.</p>	2