

Appendix 1: Update on Mobilisation of the new Sussex Patient Transport Service PTS).

1.0 Overview

This report provides an update on the Sussex Patient Transport service following the recent transfer of the PTS contract from Coperforma to South Central Ambulance NHSFT. (SCAS)

Prior to the service transitioning from Coperforma to SCAS there was an intense period of negotiation to agree the detail of the service specification along with the key performance indicators and information reporting requirements for the service, as well as the financial model for year one of the contract.

Following this the contract for the service has been signed on behalf of Sussex CCGs by High Weald Lewes Havens as the lead commissioner and by SCAS as the provider.

In support of the transition SCAS undertook a considerable amount of training in advance with health care professionals regarding use of the online booking system, and awareness training regarding the operating hours and scope of the service on offer. This was supported by guides produced for both healthcare professionals and patients.

SCAS have now established contact centres and vehicle bases for their operations in East and West Sussex.

Staff who previously worked for the private transport company Dockland Medical Services (DMS), many of whom are ex-SECamb employees, transferred to SCAS under TUPE in advance of the transition to receive relevant training in support of their mobilisation as SCAS employees.

Similarly, the vast majority of Coperforma staff were transferred to SCAS under TUPE and are now working in their contract centres across the county.

Finally, SCAS have agreed flexible contracts with a range of fully vetted private providers to enable them to deliver the majority of activity for the service over the initial months of the contract. During the first year of the contract it is anticipated that SCAS will transfer the majority of activity over for delivery by their in-house crews.

Dedicated discharge vehicle, although not prescribed within the contract were initially continued to ensure the effective patient flow throughout Sussex.

2.0 Transition Plan

The transition of the Sussex PTS took place in 2 phases.

The first phase comprised the following activity (15% in total) and commenced on the 1st March 2017:

- transfers - from treatment centres in Sussex to any other treatment centres
- discharges - from treatment centres in Sussex to a residence in Sussex
- repatriations - of Sussex patients back into the county from out of area
- out of area placements – of non-Sussex patients back to their home

The second phase comprised the following activity (the remainder of the activity) and commenced on the 1st April 2017:

- outpatient appointments
- day cases including surgery
- renal and oncology treatment
- admissions for treatment

3.0 Phase 1

The first phase of the transition went well, receiving generally positive feedback from acute and community trusts.

In order to support this transition phase a number of dedicated vehicles were allocated in support of discharges and transfers from hospital sites across the county. These vehicles are now being withdrawn in a phased manner (5 remain operational out of an original 22), as SCAS gains a better understanding of activity and the resources required to meet demand. Also, SCAS have now fully mobilised ex-DMS staff that transferred to SCAS under TUPE in support of the service.

To support trusts the CCG collated their queries with regard to phase 1 activity and subsequently issued answers to these queries to guide trust staff in the future.

Finally, there were reports of very positive joint working between SCAS and trust staff to quickly resolve any issues that were identified.

4.0 Phase 2

Again, the second phase went generally very well, with largely positive feedback from trusts and minimal negative feedback from patients.

In support of this major transition phase data on transport bookings from the 1st April was transferred from Coperforma to SCAS in advance of this date to enable SCAS to arrange necessary transport journeys. To support this process SCAS opened up their service to accept post 1st April bookings from health care professionals in advance of this date.

The biggest issue facing the service is call centre volumes. The service is currently receiving on average over 500 calls day, when it would expect only 300 per day for a contract of this size. To address this issue SCAS and the CCG are working together

to increase the number of bookings made by health care professionals online. The CCG is sharing data with trusts where phone bookings are high and SCAS will be undertaking targeted training with these trusts to support their staff.

The CCG and SCAS are also supporting trusts to effectively manage the repatriation of non-Sussex patients back to the area they are registered in, through the provision of contact details for patient transport service providers in neighbouring areas such as Kent and Surrey Downs.

SCAS are working with Thames, one of their private providers, to address concerns raised in a recent CQC inspection report. Thames has produced a plan to address the concerns raised by the CQC, and SCAS are working with Thames to ensure the plan is implemented. SCAS have committed to keep the CCG fully informed of any issues that may arise as a result of this.

With regard to any outstanding issues for trusts SCAS are setting up regular communication channels with each trust, and the CCG will continue to facilitate a monthly Trust Group meeting with SCAS.

Finally, SCAS have reported that to date they are dealing with a relatively low number of formal complaints raised by patients. Given the scale of this countywide service and the number of formal complaints that were raised in the first few months of the contract with Coperforma in 2016, this number is low, but SCAS and the CCG are taking seriously each and every one raised.

5.0 Next Steps

The first month's contract data (April 2017) is due from SCAS on the 22nd May 2017.

This data will be reviewed by Sussex commissioners in advance of the first Contract Review Meeting with SCAS on the 14th June 2017.

At the end of quarter one the CCGs will undertake a review of activity and expenditure with SCAS to determine a forecast financial envelope for the remainder of the year and to agree any actions or amendments to the service that may be required to ensure the contract remains within that envelope.

The CCG will also be reviewing with SCAS and other partners a number of potential areas for service development, comprising:

- London Hospital Activity – there are a number of London hospitals that commission their own patient transport services and then re-charge Sussex CCGs for this activity – there may be opportunities to achieve cost savings by transferring this activity to the Sussex PTS contract, while also ensuring equity of service
- GP Urgent Referrals (See and Convey) – at the present time GP urgent referrals for transport to healthcare centres are undertaken by SECamb under their 999 contract – again there may be opportunities to transfer some of this activity to the PTS contract

- Sectioned Patients – this cohort of patients are excluded from the PTS contract but again there may be an opportunity to transfer transport activity for low risk patients to the PTS contract