

**Report to:** East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

**Date of meeting:** 30 June 2016

**By:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Title:** Patient Transport Service

**Purpose:** To consider the performance of the Patient Transport Service in Sussex following a change of provider from 1 April 2016.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) to consider and comment on the report from High Weald Lewes Havens Clinical Commissioning Group**
  - 2) to consider whether any further action is required**
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### **1 Background**

1.1 The Patient Transport Service (PTS) is a Sussex-wide service that helps people access healthcare appointments. The service provides some 25,000 journeys per month for people who are unable to use public or other transport owing to medical conditions. The service is booked for people who meet certain medical criteria which would otherwise prevent them from getting to their appointment. PTS is free at the point of use for all eligible patients. It is a non-emergency transport service and is quite separate from emergency ambulance services, which are commissioned separately.

### **2 Supporting information**

2.1 On 1 April 2016 a new PTS went live across Sussex. The new service is provided by Coperforma, following a procurement process led by High Weald Lewes Havens Clinical Commissioning Group (HWLH CCG) on behalf of the seven CCGs in Sussex.

2.2 Before April 2016 the transport element of PTS in Sussex was provided by South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB), with some private and voluntary providers. The booking element of the service was provided by the Patient Transport Bureau (PTB), which was hosted by HWLH CCG.

2.3 The procurement process was initiated by a decision in March 2014 by SECAMB to serve notice on its contract to provide PTS in Sussex beyond the expiry date of 31 March 2015. A one year extension was agreed with SECAMB to continue delivering the service until 31 March 2016 to enable the seven CCGs in Sussex to undertake a process of commissioning a new provider.

2.4 A new service specification was developed by commissioners, informed by public, user, staff and clinical engagement to learn about people's experiences of using PTS and how a new service could meet patients' needs. Following a competitive tendering process Coperforma, a large independent sector organisation specialising in patient transport, were awarded the contract in November 2016. Although other organisations had participated in earlier stages of the procurement process, Coperforma were ultimately the only provider to submit a bid. They commenced delivery of the PTS on 1 April 2016.

2.5 Since 1 April PTS performance has been unacceptable, with many patients experiencing severe delays or not receiving transport at all. There has been considerable media coverage of the problems experienced by patients and concerns have been raised with patient groups and elected representatives. The impact is particularly great on patients who need transport for frequent appointments such as renal patients requiring regular dialysis or cancer patients undergoing treatment. Both Coperforma and Sussex CCGs have issued a public apology to those affected.

2.6 HWLH CCG has engaged TIAA, an independent company which provides assurance services to the public sector, to carry out an independent enquiry into the transition and mobilisation of the new PTS. The enquiry is supported by all three organisations (CCGs, Coperforma and SECAMB). The TIAA report is expected to be published in July.

2.7 On 17 June local media reported that one of the sub-contractors used by Coperforma to provide transport (a company called VM Langfords, which reportedly provides 40 vehicles) had gone into the preliminary stages of the administration process.

2.8 HWLH CCG will present a report to HOSC (**appendix 1**) which covers the procurement and transition processes, service issues experienced since 1 April, the remedial action plan, and current performance. Representatives of Coperforma and SECAMB will also be in attendance. The service issues have impacted on local hospital trusts in terms of delayed or missed appointments, and additional costs of providing alternative transport to enable patients to return home. Representatives of East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust will also be in attendance.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 HOSC is recommended to consider the report from HWLH and question the attendees on the issues arising. The Committee will wish to consider whether everything possible is being done to improve the service for patients and to ensure lessons are being learnt for any future procurement and transition processes.

3.2 HOSC is also recommended to consider whether any further scrutiny of this issue is required.

**PHILIP BAKER**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**

Contact Officer: Claire Lee, Senior Democratic Services Adviser  
Tel. No. 01273 335517  
Email: [Claire.lee@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.lee@eastsussex.gov.uk)