

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

Date of meeting: 21 September 2023

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: NHS Sussex Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) update

Purpose: To provide an overview of the delivery of the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service and the ongoing re-commissioning of the service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
 - 2) consider whether it would like to receive further updates on any elements of the NEPTS.
-

1. Background

1.1. The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) for Sussex contract is currently delivered by South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) which commenced on 1st April 2017. As a result of system pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and changes brought about by the national review of NEPTS, the re-procurement process was deferred from its intended timeframe of 2021/22.

1.2. Following advice taken from NHS England (NHSE), in September 2022, NHS Sussex initiated an informal joint working arrangement to work collaboratively with neighbouring ICBs of Frimley, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB), Hampshire & Isle of Wight, and Surrey Heartlands.

1.3. In December 2022, based on the market feedback and the timelines of other ICBs, NHS Sussex approved the option to extend the current contract to 31st March 2025 and endorsed the revised procurement timeline for the new service to go-live on 1st April 2025. Following this mandate and to meet statutory requirements, the NEPTS service in Sussex is currently out to tender. The tender is due to conclude in September 2023 with evaluation and assessment thereafter, and contract award January 2024 to allow for the required 12 months mobilisation and support contract commencement on 1st April 2025.

1.4. Whilst the current contract no longer matches the needs of the healthcare system in Sussex, it has largely been delivered effectively since 2017. The new service will represent a major step-change in the patient transport service for Sussex patients and will take into account several national and local changes to patient transport requirements established in recent years.

2. Supporting information

2.1. Non-emergency patient transport is defined as the non-urgent, planned transportation of patients with a medical need for transport to and from premises providing NHS healthcare and/or between providers of NHS-funded healthcare. The overarching principle of patient transport, as defined by NHS England, is that most people should travel to and from hospital independently by private or public transport, with the help of relatives or friends if necessary. NHS-funded patient transportation is intended for when it is considered essential to ensuring an individual's safety, safe mobilisation, condition management or recovery. The NEPTS service is based on healthcare needs rather than wider social care needs and therefore there is a requirement that the service operates a set of eligibility criteria.

2.2. The report, which is attached as **Appendix 1** provides an update on the Sussex NEPTS including:

- the current service
- the proposed new service model and its objectives
- the procurement timeline
- performance and optimisation of the current service

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The HOSC are recommended to note the report and consider whether there any areas it wishes to scrutinise further, including if it would like to receive further updates on the procurement of the NEPTS.

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Patrick Major, Scrutiny and Policy Support Officer

Tel. No. 01273 335133

Email: patrick.major@eastsussex.gov.uk