

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

Date of meeting: 7 March 2024

By: Assistant Chief Executive

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

Purpose: To provide an overview of the procurement of the non-emergency patient transport 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. Non-emergency patient transport (NEPTS) 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.

1.2. The non-emergency patient transport service for Sussex contract is currently delivered by South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) which commenced on 1 April 2017. This original SCAS contract was due to expire on 31 March 2021, however this was extended initially for one year, and then until 31 March 2025. This was as a result of system pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, changes brought about by the national review of NEPTS, and the indicative timescales for a mobilisation period of one year based on market engagement.

1.3. At its meeting in September 2023, the HOSC received an update on the recommissioning of the NEPTS, and heard how the proposed new service model would operate. The NEPTS contract was out for tender at the time of that meeting and the HOSC therefore agreed to receive an update from NHS Sussex at this meeting, which is its first following the award of the contract.

2. Supporting information

2.1. The report, which is attached as **Appendix 1** provides an update on the procurement and mobilisations of Sussex NEPTS including:

- Background including on the current service, national policy, the NHS Sussex NEPTS pathfinder, known commissioning gaps, engagement including with Healthwatch;
- the new service model;
- the procurement process and outcome; and
- mobilisation of the contract.

2.2 In February 2024, NHS Sussex approved the award of the Sussex NEPTS to the winning bidder for a period of five years beginning 1 April 2025 (with an option to extend a further five years). All bidders were then provided with letters stating the outcome of the procurement exercise

and explaining that, as required under procurement regulations, a 10-calendar day standstill period would be observed before entering any contract. At the time of HOSC agenda publication we are still in the standstill period, meaning that NHS Sussex is not able to provide written confirmation of the winning bidder in the attached report. Subject to the successful completion of the standstill period, an award notice will be published on Find a Tender, at which point the details of the winning bid will be shared.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The HOSC are recommended to note the report and consider whether it would like to receive further updates on any elements 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