

Stakeholder Briefing

Patient Transport Service - Greater Manchester

On 9th October 2015, NHS Blackpool CCG (BCCG) received a letter from Arriva Transport Solutions Limited (ATSL), disclosing how they had identified a level of management failure with the reporting of performance against the delivery of its contract in Greater Manchester, following an extensive investigation by the company.

This means that they had previously provided incorrect information, which shows a higher level of performance than is the case. These reports are one of the sources of intelligence used to assess ATSL's performance against the contract.

BCCG immediately referred this to NHS Protect and wrote to the Chief Officers of the 12 Greater Manchester (GM) CCGs, to inform them of the position. ATSL has undertaken an extensive investigation and shared this information with BCCG. ATSL continues to cooperate with NHS enquiries too.

BCCG is now issuing this Stakeholder Briefing, for CCGs to use to brief their stakeholder groups including MPs and local Healthwatch organisations.

The contract commenced on the 1st April 2013 incorporating significant increases in core operating hours and improvements in quality over the previous service requirements. ATSL failed to meet the quality requirements (mainly appointment arrival, return pick up times and hospital discharges) resulting in a letter requiring improvement being sent to the company in August 2013 followed by a Contract Notice in January 2014. This required a Performance Improvement Plan that was duly provided by ATSL, which set out how they would subsequently achieve the required quality performance standards. The plan included increased staffing levels, changes of working hours, a new operating site, planning and control changes etc. These initiatives were implemented and resulted in performance improvements being reported by ATSL that met contractual requirements.

It is important to note that the provider for the other four PTS contracts in the NW had similar levels of poor performance at the start of the contracts and were also issued with a Contract Notice and required to produce a Performance Improvement Plan, in January 2014. This provider also improved performance over the majority of performance quality requirements.

During 2014 and 2015, assurances have been given to CCGs, stakeholders, patients, the public and the media, based on what is now known to be incorrect information provided by ATSL. This was brought to BCCG's attention by ATSL disclosing how they had identified a level of management failure with the reporting of performance against the delivery of its contract in Greater Manchester, following an extensive investigation by the company. NHS Protect is currently conducting an investigation; BCCG is also arranging for an independent financial audit. ATSL has conducted its own extensive internal investigation into the management failure.

The current contract expires in 2016 and BCCG is presently in the final stages of a further re-procurement exercise. Given the circumstances, ATSL has withdrawn from this process but has firmly committed to cooperating fully with the new provider to provide a seamless transfer of services to ensure minimum disruption of services. ATSL recognises that this matter is unacceptable, is taking it extremely seriously and has committed to do their utmost to improve on the current performance for the remainder of the current contract. They have brought in new management and developed an intensive operational turnaround plan. This plan includes increased staff numbers, which will result in additional ambulance hours throughout the day and evening, as well as a management focus upon accurate and efficient planning and dispatch of resources in control.

Additional notes

BCCG is the co-ordinating commissioner for the five county level PTS contracts in the North West (NW) and performs the Contract Monitoring and Management functions on behalf of all the 33 CCGs. BCCG does this for the ATSL contract, on behalf of the 12 GM CCGs. Performance information provided by ATSL is used to monitor against the Contract and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) through monthly contract meetings. Additionally there are bi-monthly quality meetings, which include the review of a range of other data, in order to further examine and monitor provider performance. These include information on Complaints, Incidents, Training, Workforce and Infection Control. Both the contract and quality meetings are also attended by GM CCG representatives, who feedback to the local GM ambulance commissioning governance. This includes a monthly ambulance commissioning meeting and regular tripartite meetings between individual CCGs, ATSL and their local Acute Trusts.

Stakeholder engagement Key messages

9th October NHS Blackpool received a letter from ATSL explaining their findings of management and process failures within their organisation.

ATSL has started a full investigation into this issue.

NHS Blackpool has contacted NHS Protect and an investigation is underway.

NHS Blackpool has appointed an independent company to carry out a financial audit and any overpayment of monies has been paid back by ATSL.

ATSL has introduced a performance plan to rectify their current performance for the remainder of the contract as well as a new management team and increases in staffing.

The procurement process is continuing and NHS Blackpool will be announcing the new provider for the Greater Manchester contract on the 4th December 2015. Under the scrutiny of the Greater Manchester commissioners ATSL will continue to provide patient transport services in Greater Manchester and will work with the new provider to ensure a seamless handover.

Media handling

Attached is a press statement from BCCG that will be released on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 14:00 to the Manchester Evening News. Please share this with your communication leads for them to use locally. Any amendments should be done, by using the lines given in this briefing. Any further

media enquiries should be directed to Hadrian Collier at NHS Blackpool CCG, h.collier@nhs.net / 07803772815.