



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SERVICES AND HEALTH COMMISSION 17 July 2006

Report of the Corporate Director, Corporate and Adult Social Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Out of Hours Call Handling and Triage Services

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To consider and comment on the changes being proposed by the Primary Care Trusts to the Out of Hours Call Handling contract.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 In 2004 the GP General Medical Services (GMS) contract was introduced by the Government as part of the Agenda for Change Programme for NHS. The new contract gave GP practices greater flexibility to deliver a range of services to their patients. It also transferred to PCTs the responsibility for providing out of hours care (outside 8.30am – 6.30 pm weekdays) including the out of hours call handling and triage services.
- 2.2 National guidance at the time recommended that NHS Direct should be the single point of access out of hours. However, limited capacity at the NHS Direct meant that they could not fully take on this role and as a result hybrid arrangements were put in place in the North and South Derbyshire. This resulted in NHS Direct taking on call handling and the triage provision whilst the rest of the workload was taken on by Derbyshire Healthcare and Derbyshire Medical Services.
- 2.3 Towards the end of 2005 Healthcare Foundation was commissioned to look at the services provided by DMS and NHS Direct in relation to call handling and triage. The report from Healthcare Foundation found a number of problems with the existing arrangements. This was backed by the National Audit Office report on the "Provision of Out of Hours Care in England" published in May 2006 which also identified shortcomings in existing services. The National Audit report made a number of recommendations aimed at PCTs including benchmarking costs against other geographically comparable PCTs and improving access to services.
- 2.4 Under local arrangements, North East Derbyshire PCT was asked to take the lead responsibility and review the options available to improve the service. It has held a series of meetings with PCT representatives, provider representatives and local GPs to consider how the current model could be improved. It has also looked at specifications for call handling and triage from Nottingham PCT and Bassetlaw PCT.

- 2.5 During the review it became clear that there needs to be a significant change to current service. It has therefore concluded that going out to tender on the basis of a new specification would provide the best service to the local population. The new specification seeks to improve the service by providing a single point of contact, reduce the average number of call backs to patients, reduce inappropriate referrals to A&E and maximise cost efficiencies.
- 2.6 Health scrutiny legislation requires local health bodies to consult with relevant overview and scrutiny committees on proposals for substantial development or variation to their services. John Hutchison Primary Care Manager, Out of Hours at the Central and Greater Derby PCTs has been invited to give a brief outline the proposed changes to the contract and explain how the services will be improved for patients in Derby.

For more information contact:	Mr M Hussain 01332 255597 e-mail mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None

Legal

2. The Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002 require local NHS bodies to consult their overview and scrutiny committees on any proposals for substantial development or variation in the provision of their service.

Personnel

3. None.

Equalities Impact

4. None.

Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 Through our services and in partnership with others, we will work to build healthy and independent communities by improving the health of our communities.