

HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel held on Friday 21 February 2020 at 11am in the Guildhall.

Present

Councillor Chris Attwell (Chair)
Hugh Mason
Vivian Achwal, Winchester City Council
Arthur Agate, East Hampshire District Council
Rosy Raines, Havant Borough Council

11. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Trevor Cartwright, Graham Heaney, David Keast, Lee Mason and Philip Raffaelli.

12. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

No interests were declared.

13. NHS England Plans for Provision of NHS Dentistry in Portsmouth (AI 3)

Councillor Cal Corkery made a deputation regarding the importance of having a dental surgery in Portsea which is one of the most deprived areas in the city.

The panel read the paper entitled Procurement of NHS Dental Services in Portsmouth that had been tabled at the meeting. A copy of this will be published on the website with the agenda shortly after the meeting.

Julia Booth, Head of Primary Care, South East and Verna Easterby-Smith Dental Clinical Adviser gave the panel this update:

The procurement process is underway. The invitation to tender was published on 4 February.

There were some problems procuring interim activity so feedback was sought from existing Portsmouth providers and potential future providers to ensure that NHS England understood the market before the tender document was completed. Recruitment was a significant issue locally and nationally. The number of dentists from Europe and the rest of the world has reduced since April 2019 and the majority seem to prefer to work in London.

The aim is to procure good dental services that last. There are detailed questions in the invitation to tender that bidders will need to respond to.

NHS dental services are provided by independent contractors; the commissioners cannot stipulate exactly what they do e.g. use a particular premises.

In response to questions, they clarified the following points:

The basis for NHS Dental contracts (which are national) is the Unit of Dental Activity (UDA) payment rate which covers all aspects of the contract. There

are no separate payments. NHS England has offered higher than average rates for the two new Portsmouth contracts. The Hampshire average is £26. NHS England is offering £28. The contract in the South of the city will be for 21,500 UDAs and in the North for 10,000 UDAs. There are annual uplifts to all contracts each April.

Would-be providers were asked how much they would expect to be paid. The responses ranged from £25 to £34.

The closing date for bids is at the start of March.

When Ms Easterby-Smith had visited the Portsea practice two years ago it needed updating. Since then Colosseum had invested in the premises.

The University of Portsmouth Dental Academy has a training facility for dental students. Each area has eight bays and one lecturer supervising the work. Students from Kings and Guys in London are on placement here for two months each. In England some dental students from some universities work as near as possible to a general practice set up.

The council could make an offer to provide the premises for a dental provider. The relationship would be directly with the dental provider.

The cost of setting up a dental practice with one surgery is approximately £40,000 capital. At the John Pounds Centre there could be two or three surgeries (consulting rooms). A decontamination room costs £20-£30,000 to set up. An x ray machine costs £20-25,000. The plumbing and electricity would be additional costs. However, the cost of staffing (because of competition) rather than the property is the main challenge for dental providers. Some dentists lease, rent or buy a property.

NHS England is offering a 7 plus 3 years contract.

It is unlikely that previously unknown companies will bid for the contract. Bids are expected from well-established individuals, a company or a partnership.

The contract will be advertised in the traditional journals which are a recognised means of advertising these contracts.

The contract does not preclude people having private treatment. Providers in areas of deprivation, tend to have considerable fewer private patients. One dentist practice in Hampshire changed from a social enterprise to a limited company in order to offer private treatment and improve its finances.

NHS England had requested a named contact they could signpost potential bidders to discuss potential premises. It is difficult to imagine what the council could do make setting up a dental practice in Portsea and Paulsgrove more attractive. Perhaps free parking permits or free bus pass for dental staff.

Once the bids are submitted at the start of March, they will be assessed by different people for each question. The outcomes will be moderated and then

the outcome will be announced. Afterwards, there will be a stand-still period to allow for any challenges. The decision is expected to be published early in June.

Many patients would like dental practices to be open in the evenings and at weekends. Providers were asked for their views on extended opening hours and some responded that their staff would not feel safe in some areas after dark. There is typically one receptionist, one nurse and one dentist and they have drugs and money on the premises. Additionally, English may not be their first language.

Colosseum provided three contacts for approximately 9,000 patients in three areas, two of which are the most deprived in the city. The amount of activity that is being sought is more than was provided by Colosseum. Prior to Colosseum ending their contract, Paulsgrove had one practice with 7,000 UDAs. NHS England is seeking 10,000 UDAs there and 21,500 in the South of the city.

Nationally there is a move towards dental contracts with more than one surgery. It is better for clinical support and peer review. This tends to be a more robust model of working.

Providers may conclude that Portsea and Paulsgrove are good places to be as there is less competition.

RESOLVED that NHS England write to the HOSP outlining the timeline and attend the meeting in June.

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Councillor Chris Attwell
Chair