

ICB Primary Care Commissioning Committee

Date of meeting	13 June 2024
Title of paper	Dental Referral Management Service Procurement
Presented by	Peter Tinson, Director of Primary and Community Commissioning
Author	David Armstrong, Senior Delivery Assurance Manager
Agenda item	5
Confidential	No

Executive summary		
<p>The purpose of this paper is to request approval to undertake a request for information (RFI) exercise to test the market for the dental referral management service. The exercise will inform the next steps for securing provision.</p> <p>The dental Referral Management Service (RMS) provides a single point of access for the processing of referrals from primary care dentists and orthodontists, ensuring a consistent quality of referrals, ability to monitor volumes, support demand management and triage referrals. The current contract is due to end on the 31 March 2025 and the RFI to test the market for potential providers is the first step in the procurement process.</p>		
Advise, Assure or Alert		
<p>Assure the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the Dental Services Group has reviewed and supports the recommendation of this paper. <p>Advise the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the recommendation is in line with the ICB Standard Financial Instructions and procurement regulations. 		
Recommendations		
<p>The Primary Care Commissioning Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the commencement of a request for information process to test the market for a dental referral management service. 		
Which Strategic Objective/s does the report contribute to		Tick
1	Improve quality, including safety, clinical outcomes, and patient experience	X
2	To equalise opportunities and clinical outcomes across the area	X
3	Make working in Lancashire and South Cumbria an attractive and desirable option for existing and potential employees	
4	Meet financial targets and deliver improved productivity	X
5	Meet national and locally determined performance standards and targets	X
6	To develop and implement ambitious, deliverable strategies	
Implications		

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Associated risks			X	
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?			X	
Financial Implications		X		
Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)				
Meeting	Date		Outcomes	
Primary Dental Services Group	23/05/2024		Recommend to the Primary Care Commissioning Committee the approval of a request for information process.	
Conflicts of interest associated with this report				
Not applicable				
Impact assessments				
	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Quality impact assessment completed			X	
Equality impact assessment completed			X	
Data privacy impact assessment completed			X	
Report authorised by:	Craig Harris, Chief Operating Officer			

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Dental Referral Management Service Procurement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The dental Referral Management Service (RMS) provides a single point of access for the processing of referrals from primary care dentists and orthodontists, ensuring a consistent quality of referrals, ability to monitor volumes, support demand management and triage referrals. NHS England originally commissioned the service in 2015, with Greater Manchester leading the contracting process. The total value of the contract is £440,292 plus VAT to manage approximately 69,000 referrals.
- 1.2 On 8 March 2024, the ICB's Chief Finance Officer approved the request to proceed to direct award of a 1-year contract to the current provider Referral Management Services Ltd of the RMS contract in Lancashire and South Cumbria as the contract was due to expire on 31 March 2024.
- 1.3 The direct award was for a period of 1 year, to 31 March 2025.
- 1.4 The purpose of awarding a contract to the current provider was to allow sufficient time to run a procurement process, the first step being the initial market engagement using the Request for Information (RFI) process.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Following the contract direct award, it was identified that a review of the General Practice (GP) RMS was underway and it was explored whether there were any opportunities to secure a combined GP and Dental RMS,
- 2.2 The review of the GP RMS will not report until September 2024 and therefore there would be insufficient time to consider the outcome of the review, determine whether there was an opportunity to secure a combined RMS and secure and mobilise either a combined or Dental only RMS service by 1 April 2025.
- 2.3 It is however intended to undertake a further review of all referral management services at a later date and consider the options for future service provision.

3. Request for Information

- 3.1 The RFI process will enable the ICB to gather information about potential providers and make an informed decision about the most appropriate and applicable procurement route.
- 3.2 Historically there has been few providers of this service.

3.3 There are no financial implications associated with this stage of the process.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The committee is asked to:

- Approve the commencement of a request for information process to test the market for a dental referral management service.

David Armstrong

Senior Delivery Assurance Manager

June 2024

Appendix 1

Current Summary of the Dental RMS Service specification

Scope of Service

The service specification is restricted to the management of referrals from NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board to providers for the following specialist dental services (* indicates clinical triage provided)

- Minor Oral Surgery (dento alveolar cases only)*
- Maxillo facial surgery*
- Oral Medicine*
- Orthodontics (without validation)
- Sedation*
- Specialist Paediatric Pathway
- Specialist Care Adults Pathway
- Follow up Care Access Pathway

Electronic and paper-based referrals (only the agreed practices known by NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board will be accepted by Referral Management Services Ltd. This provider will only accept email referrals from referrers who meet national information governance requirements e.g. nhs.net accounts, which will be provided to referrers by NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

Acceptable referrals will be processed in a timely manner; triaged (where appropriate) and allocated to the most appropriate service within 5 working days of receipt of referral. Referral Management Services Ltd will send 75% of referrals with 3 working days of receipt. Referrals will preferably be made available to providers via secure routes (e.g. nhs.net or PRESS) but may also use safe haven fax or recorded mail should the former not be available.

Referrals with radiographic or other referral-related attachments will be made accessible via secure IT storage systems or where this is not available, sent first class by Mail and signed for by the recipient.

Triage will be carried out by appropriately qualified clinicians.

A robust tracking system will be implemented to enable referred cases to be followed through the pathway from referral to service allocation and outcomes. This will include notification of rejected referrals.

Referral Management Services Ltd shall provide referral management and triage services until 31st March 2025.