

ICB Primary Care Commissioning Committee

Date of meeting	14 March 2024
Title of paper	Special Allocation Scheme Contract
Presented by	Peter Tinson Director of Primary Care
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Agenda item	6e
Confidential	No

Executive summary

Following a direct award by the Primary Care Contracting Group in March 2023, the contract for the Special Allocation Scheme service remains with the current provider FCMS Ltd until 31st May 2024.

To ensure continued access to General Medical Services for patients currently allocated to the Special Allocation Scheme, the Primary Care Commissioning Committee is required to decide the best option to secure ongoing service provision.

A market engagement exercise commenced in November 2023 to test the market's appetite to deliver this service for the Lancashire and South Cumbria area, further details on this exercise are listed in this paper. The report, presented to the Primary Care Committee in January 2024, detailed the outcome of the market engagement exercise and the options available for the future delivery of the service. It was confirmed that the RFI was viewed by two organisations with feedback provided by one organisation. Based on these responses, it was evident that there would be limited provider interest in the procurement opportunity for the Special Allocation Scheme.

An options appraisal setting out options for the long-term future of the service is being produced, informed by a patient engagement exercise. This exercise has taken longer than originally planned to ensure that this distinct group of patients is enabled and supported to provide feedback.

This paper therefore recommends the approval of a contract variation in line with the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) 2023 to the current provider (FCMS) for a period of six months from 1st June 2024 until 30th November 2024. This will enable appropriate consideration to be given to the engagement exercise and for the Committee to receive a fully informed options appraisal.

Advise, Assure or Alert

To advise the committee of arrangements currently in place to provide primary care services for patients who have been allocated to the Special Allocation Scheme.

Recommendations				
The committee is requested to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval a contract variation in line with the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) 2023 to the current provider (FCMS) for a period of six months from 1st June 2024 until 30th November 2024. 				
Which Strategic Objective/s does the report contribute to				Tick
1	Improve quality, including safety, clinical outcomes, and patient experience			✓
2	To equalise opportunities and clinical outcomes across the area			✓
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			✓
5	Meet national and locally determined performance standards and targets			✓
6	To develop and implement ambitious, deliverable strategies			✓
Implications				
	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Associated risks	✓			As detailed within the report.
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?	✓			
Financial Implications			✓	
Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)				
Meeting	Date		Outcomes	
Conflicts of interest associated with this report				
Not applicable				
Impact assessments				
	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Quality impact assessment completed				In process of completion
Equality impact assessment completed				In process of completion
Data privacy impact assessment completed			✓	No changes to service.
Report authorised by:	Craig Harris - Chief Operating Officer			

ICB Primary Care Commissioning Committee 14 March 2024

Special Allocation Scheme Contract

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Special Allocation Scheme (SAS) is provided on a Lancashire and South Cumbria basis by Compass Medical Practice which is part of Fylde Coast Medical Services (FCMS).
- 1.2. There is currently a contract in place until the 31st May 2024.
- 1.3. It was agreed at the Primary Care Committee in November 2023 to undertake a Market Engagement exercise. The Market Engagement report was presented to the committee in January where it was confirmed that two organisations had viewed the RFI but only one organisation had responded. Based on these responses, it was evident that there would be limited provider interest in the procurement opportunity for the Special Allocation Scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Provision for the SAS is set out in the General Medical Services (GMS) and Personal Medical Services (PMS) Regulations.
- 2.2 The SAS was first introduced as a Directed Enhanced Service (DES) in 2004 to provide general primary medical care services in a secure environment to patients who met the criteria for inclusion on the scheme.
- 2.3 The SAS allows commissioners to balance the rights of patients to receive services from GPs, with the need to ensure that specified persons including GPs, their staff, patients and others on the premises deliver and receive those services without actual or threatened violence or other reasonable fear for their safety.
- 2.4 In 2016 discussions with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across Lancashire and South Cumbria were undertaken in relation to the service model which was in place to deliver the SAS. At that time, service provision for the SAS constituted a number of separate agreements with GP practices as part of the DES. Under those arrangements the providers were only required to provide six months' notice to withdraw from the scheme. A number of practices withdrew from the scheme or / requested additional funding and as a result it became increasingly difficult to ensure that there was adequate provision of this service to meet patient need.

- 2.5 It was agreed that a procurement exercise would be undertaken to secure a single provider across Lancashire and South Cumbria. Appropriate advice was sought in relation to the scheme of delegation for co-commissioning arrangements and variations were signed by each CCG. The procurement exercise was undertaken by NHS England and an APMS contract was awarded to Compass Medical Practice (formerly PDS Medical which is a subsidiary of Fylde Coast Medical Services (FCMS), and the contract was novated to FCMS in September 2021.
- 2.6 The contract commenced on 1st June 2017. This contract was initially for a period of 5 years and contained a provision for a one-year extension until 31st May 2023.
- 2.7 Compass Medical Practice currently serves approximately 280 patients and operates to a specification that requires the practice to provide services within a 10-mile radius of a patient's home address. This is delivered either through agreements with local practices for access to rooms within practice buildings, or from the practice's mobile clinic.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 The original SAS core contract, held by the current incumbent provider was a 5-year contract from 2017 to 2022. This was extended for 12 months until 31 May 2023 in line with the provisions of the contract. Following a market engagement exercise, a direct award was agreed at a meeting of Primary Care Contracting Group on 31st March 2023 to the incumbent provider for a further year until 31st May 2024. The current financial envelope for the service is £712,535 per annum. It is proposed that this will be the baseline level of funding from 1st June 2024 onwards.
- 3.2 A market engagement exercise was undertaken by the North of England Commissioning Support unit (NECS) on behalf of the ICB and NHS England during November 2023 to test the appetite of the market and also enable the ICB to fully assess the risks in relation to any options. This allows the ICB establish the capability and capacity of a market in relation to a specific service, with the findings used to inform the most appropriate procurement option and the development of the service specification / service model.
- 3.3 The request for information covered key areas such as:
 - Preferred contractual model for delivery of the service
 - Viability and sustainability of the service model
 - Preferred contract length
 - Financial risks associated with the delivery of the service
 - Mobilisation requirements of the service
 - Premises requirements of the service
 - Any barriers to bidding for the service
 - Social Value deliverables of the service.

- 3.4 A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was published on Find a Tender, and an Early Engagement notice was published on Contracts Finder on 23 November 2023. The request for information (RFI) was viewed by two providers who registered on the NECS e-tendering portal.
- 3.5 Of the two providers who viewed the documentation, one indicated that they were going to submit a response and ultimately did so, this was the incumbent provider. The second provider did not submit a response. The organisation who expressed an initial interest but did not submit a response was subsequently asked for feedback via survey as to why they did not submit a response. The ICB did not receive a response to this request.
- 3.6 Engagement with patients has also been undertaken. A detailed communications and engagement plan and patient survey have been compiled by the communications team. Further work is being undertaken with the current provider of the service (FCMS) to review some of the findings in the report focussing on access and location of the service.
- 3.7 An options appraisal setting out options for the long-term future of the service is being produced and will need to incorporate findings from the patient engagement exercise and market engagement exercise to ensure that the most appropriate options for the long-term provision of the service are considered.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The ICB has a responsibility to ensure provision of services with the best outcomes for the public, working within the statutory frameworks that are in place. This includes understanding and responding to needs within communities that are unique and present both challenges and opportunities based on their location.
- 4.2 A continuation of arrangements with the current provider for a further 6 months as outlined in this paper, provides a safe, cost-effective service with the least risks to business continuity, whilst a longer-term option is explored, and due process has been followed to secure a more permanent position.
- 4.3 Whilst there are risks with a contract variation in line with the Provider Selection Regime 2023, on balance, the risk of legal challenge is low and is, arguably, significantly outweighed by the benefits for patients. High quality, safe, and effective services will be secured and supported to develop further with the stability of a long-term contract underpinning any service development.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Primary Care Commissioning Committee are asked to:
 - Approve a contract variation in line with the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) 2023 to the current provider (FCMS) for a period of six months from 1st June 2024



**Lancashire and
South Cumbria**
Integrated Care Board

until 30th November 2024.

**Mike Anderson
Sarah Danson
February 2024**