

Stockton Health Centre – Registered Patient GP Service

Summary

Stockton Health Centre at Tithebarn provides a GP service for c. 2000 registered patients. The service was reviewed last year as the existing contract runs out on 31 March. At the time it was proposed to retain the service by procuring it as a full time branch surgery, and consultation took place on this basis.

The CCG was not able to secure a provider to provide the service as a full-time, branch surgery.

The CCG has therefore extended the existing contract for a further three months to allow for further engagement on the possibility of providing a service as a part-time, branch surgery.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

1. confirm that any changes to this service would be considered to be a 'substantial variation' to local health services;
2. consider the proposals in order to provide feedback to the CCG;
3. agree that the draft consultation response be circulated to the Committee with agreement of final version delegated to the Chair and Vice-Chair, prior to consideration by Council, and submission to the CCG;
4. agree to receive a further update following the CCG's decision.

Detail

1. Stockton Health Centre at Tithebarn provides a GP service for c. 2000 registered patients. The same provider also provides walk-in services for unregistered patients requiring urgent care. The majority of registered patients live in the Hardwick and Salters Lane Ward.
2. As the Committee is aware, the walk-in service for unregistered patients ended on 31 March, and similar services are being provided by the new integrated Urgent Care Service based at North Tees Hospital.

3. The registered patient service was reviewed last year as that element of the existing contract was also due to end on 31 March. At the time it was proposed to retain the service by procuring it as a full-time branch surgery, and consultation took place on this basis. The Committee responded to this consultation with a letter as follows:

‘The Committee is pleased to see the proposal to retain the registered patient element of the GP service at Stockton Health Centre, in Tithebarn, Hardwick.

Members are very keen to see the retention of a base for GP care in this area, primarily due to:

- the health and transport needs of the local community;
- potential impact on the Urgent and Emergency Care services on the North Tees Hospital site;
- the potential impact on other Practices in the Stockton/Billingham area should the service close;
- the projected and actual housing developments in Hardwick and adjoining areas.

The Committee therefore supports the process to identify a Practice to take on the service as a Branch surgery and looks forward to further updates in due course.’

4. Following engagement with local Practices, the CCG has not been able to secure a provider to provide the service as a full-time, branch surgery. It has therefore extended the existing contract for a further three months to allow for further engagement on the possibility of providing the service as a part-time, branch surgery.
5. The CCG will be in attendance at this meeting in order to provide an update on the proposals and feedback gathered to date. Copies of the following are attached for Committee:

Appendix 1 - Stakeholder Briefing

Appendix 2 – Engagement Plan

Appendix 3 – Patient Letter

Appendix 4 – Patient Survey

6. Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, the NHS is required to consult local authority health scrutiny committees in relation to ‘substantial variations’ to local services.
7. Under the Regulations and associated statutory guidance¹, ‘substantial variation’ is not defined and is subject to local discretion. It is considered that this proposal (and any potential loss of service) would constitute a ‘substantial

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324965/Local_authority_health_scrutiny.pdf

variation' to local health services under the Regulations, and should therefore be responded to on that basis, should the Committee agree.

8. In line with standard practice at Stockton for responding to substantial variations, a consultation response will then be prepared on behalf of the Committee and then would be considered by Council for agreement, prior to submission to the CCG.
9. It is proposed that the meeting of Council on 3 May would be used to agree the final response, and it would be proposed to submit the consultation response by 4 May.

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