

10 October 2017

Stockton Health Centre (Tithebarn) – Registered Patient GP Service

Summary

Stockton Health Centre at Tithebarn provides a GP service for c. 2000 registered patients. The original contract ended on 31 March and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) proposed retaining a service in Tithebarn, as part of a branch surgery.

Following consultation, the CCG was not able to secure a provider to provide the service as a full-time, branch surgery. More recently the CCG has undertaken to attempt to commission a *part-time* branch surgery and consulted on that basis in March and April. The Council's response in support of this proposal was finalised in May and submitted to the CCG.

The CCG has subsequently undertaken procurement work in order to identify a provider of a part-time service. The CCG has recently written to patients in order to confirm that this was also not successful, and that the service would close.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) note the update to be provided at the meeting
- 2) confirm next steps as appropriate.

Detail

1. Stockton Health Centre at Tithebarn provides a GP service for c. 2000 registered patients. The majority of registered patients live in the Hardwick and Salters Lane Ward. Until recently, the same location also provided walk-in services for unregistered patients requiring urgent care.
2. The walk-in service for unregistered patients ended on 31 March, and similar services are being provided through 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.

4. At the meeting on 11 April, Members were informed that following engagement with local Practices, the CCG had not been able to secure a provider to provide the service as a full-time, branch surgery. It 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. Copies of the Engagement Plan and survey materials were shared with the papers for the meeting, which the CCG attended. An extract from the minutes is attached at **Appendix 1**.
6. At the meeting, the Committee confirmed that it viewed any changes to the service to be a substantial variation to local services (under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013¹). Under the Regulations, the NHS is required to consult local authority health scrutiny functions in relation to 'substantial variations' to local services, and the local authority must have a process in place to respond.
7. A consultation response was therefore prepared on that basis, and agreed by Council on 3 May. This is attached at **Appendix 2**.
8. The CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC) met on 16 May (the same day as the next Committee meeting) and considered the Council's response within its discussions. The PCCC is the CCG body that makes decisions in relation to primary care and agreed to undertake a tender process to progress the part-time branch surgery option.
9. At the Committee meeting on 16 May, it was noted in a verbal update provided on behalf of the CCG, that due to the general election period, information on the future of the service, and the identity of a provider if secured, would not now be announced until after the election.
10. The procurement processes were ongoing at the time of the June and July Committee meetings.
11. The CCG has recently written to patients in order to confirm that this was not successful, and that the service would close. Copies of the letters sent to patients and stakeholder briefing are attached at **Appendix 3**.
12. The Clinical Commissioning Group has been requested to provide an update on the situation, and outline the next steps.
13. Under the Guidance, should the Committee and CCG initially disagree on the proposed way forward, both should take reasonable steps to reach agreement.
14. When considering proposals for substantial variations to local services, the local authority ultimately has the power to make a referral to the Secretary of

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

State for Health in certain circumstances. At Stockton, it is Council that retains the ability to exercise this power of referral, following a report from this Committee. Details of this process are attached at **Appendix 4**.

15. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to consider other options should it have concerns regarding changes to services, for example outlining its concerns to the relevant Government department and/or NHS body.

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