


Agenda Item 6

		THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LINCOLNSHIRE	
Boston Borough Council	East Lindsey District Council	City of Lincoln Council	Lincolnshire County Council
North Kesteven District Council	South Holland District Council	South Kesteven District Council	West Lindsey District Council

Open Report on behalf of NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Report to	Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire
Date:	16 March 2021
Subject:	Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service – Update

Summary:

This report provides an update from NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) for the period from the previous report considered by the Committee in October 2020 to date.

The main NEPTS contract for Lincolnshire remains with Thames Ambulance Service Limited (TASL).

The CCG continues to lead work to have in place a new contract for patient transport in Lincolnshire on expiry of the current TASL contract on 30 June 2022. Key Lincolnshire health service providers and Healthwatch have been invited to and joined the project group. It is expected that Invitation to Tender Documents for the new contract will be published in April 2021.

TASL have continued to work closely with the CCG and health service partners in Lincolnshire during the last 5 months to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and TASL crews have responded extremely well during continued difficult circumstances to the challenges presented by Covid-19.

There have been a number of instances where service delivery and performance has been poor and where this has happened TASL and the CCG have worked closely to seek to ensure that this is addressed. The CCG has requested that TASL undertake concerted action to improve service delivery for fast-track patients.

Actions Required:

The Health Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and note the content of this report.

1. Background

Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (LCCG) commissions non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) for the patients of Lincolnshire. Thames Ambulance Service Limited (TASL) took over as contracted provider for the non-emergency patient transport service in Lincolnshire on 1 July 2017 following a competitive tender process.

The Committee has received a number of reports from the CCG since the start of the contract. The Committee passed a vote of no confidence in TASL in December 2017 and in December 2018 wrote to the CCG requesting the CCG seriously consider a managed and strategic exit from the contract with TASL, as soon as possible. The CCG has continued to assess and consider the risks associated with exiting the contract, has not given notice to end the contract and expects to continue with the current contract until its expiry in June 2022.

The CQC report published in February 2019 following inspection of the TASL service in October 2018 rated TASL as “Inadequate” for Safe, Effective, Responsive and Well Led and rated TASL as “Good” for Caring. A further report was published by the CQC in August 2019 and reported an improved position from that reported in October with a rating of “Requires improvement” for Safe, Effective and Well Led and “Good” for Caring and Responsive.

2. Lincolnshire CCG Commentary

Covid-19

TASL have continued to work closely with the CCG and health service partners in Lincolnshire during the last 5 months to support the on-going response to the Covid-19 pandemic. TASL crews have responded extremely well during continued difficult circumstances to the challenges presented to by the pandemic including the requirements for patient and staff safety including social distancing on vehicles, changing guidance and changes to ways of working in hospitals and other healthcare facilities with altered requirements and times for patient drop-off and pick-up.

During December TASL had a significant number of staff impacted by Covid-19 resulting in a reduction in availability of crews and the CCG provided additional support to TASL during this time. These issues are now largely resolved.

As previously reported, NHS England published guidance on the approach to patient transport services during Covid-19 on 27 March 2020, which included the suspension of eligibility criteria. Further guidance has subsequently been published re-instating the use of eligibility criteria. This has meant that some patients who had previously used patient transport from late March 2020 are no longer able to do so as they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

The issues in the early stage of the pandemic with a lack of supply of PPE have now been resolved. More recently, Lateral Flow Testing has been implemented for TASL staff and there has been a significant take up by TASL staff in Lincolnshire of Covid-19 vaccinations. Both of these measures provide added protection for patients and staff.

The arrangement for additional transport support to for discharges at Boston Pilgrim Hospital and Lincoln County Hospital and for additional elective patient transport arrangements for Grantham Hospital continues to be in place and safe systems of working are in place with this service.

Activity and Performance

A summary of the activity and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) position for TASL for the period to January 2021 is included as Appendix A to this report.

Activity has continued to be below pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels, but this is expected to progressively increase as the impact of the pandemic reduces, hospital and community health services are restored to more normal levels, and the Government's roadmap for exiting lockdown is implemented.

For January 2021, TASL achieved the contracted level of performance for 2 out of 15 KPIs and delivered month on month improvement for 14 KPIs, although improvement for 8 of these was marginal. Significant month on month improvement was achieved for call handling and the time patients spend on vehicles. KPI performance was generally poor during December 2020 due to the impact on availability of crew and call centre staff affected by Covid-19. The improvements in call handling and time of vehicle KPIs in January reflect the poor performance in December and restoration to more usual levels of performance rather than significant intrinsic improvement. Despite improved performance in January for fast-track pick up times, service and performance for this group of patients remains poor and the CCG has instructed TASL to develop action plans to improve this.

Planning for Patient Transport Services from July 2022

At the date of consideration of this report by the Committee TASL are in the 45th month of a 60 month contract which ends on 30 June 2022. Work has started in the CCG to have a new service in place from this date with both core and wider project groups in place with representation on the groups including key Lincolnshire health service providers and Healthwatch. The CCG will undertake work during March 2021 to engage with patients and health care professionals to inform the new service model and engage with interested providers.

An advertisement for expressions of interest to provide NEPTS services in Lincolnshire following the end of the current contract was published in January 2021 and over 25 responses have been received from interested providers. The new contract will also take account of the forthcoming National Review of Patient Transport Services which is expected to be published in the next couple of months. The CCG expects to publish Invitation to Tender Documents for the new contract in April 2021.

3. Conclusion

NEPTS services, including services in the main contract with TASL, have generally continued to respond well during the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to operate in accordance with relevant guidance. Covid-19 continues to present a number of uncertainties for the future and patient transport arrangements will continue to be reviewed and where necessary revised in line with national guidance and local progression of the disease. TASL had a significant number of staff affected by Covid-19 during December 2020 and this adversely impacted on services; albeit that additional support was provided by the CCG.

Linked to the reduction in crews, KPI performance for TASL was poor in December 2020, but generally showed improvement to trend levels in January 2021. Service and performance for fast-track patients is a key concern and TASL have been instructed to improve in this area.

The programme to have a new NEPTS contract in place from 1 July 2022, is on track.

Following assessment the CCG expects that the TASL contract will continue in place until expiry on 30 June 2022. However, all of the matters highlighted in this report remain under ongoing active review and consideration by the CCG.

4. Consultation

This is not a consultation item.

5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Activity and KPI summary

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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Activity and Performance against Key Performance Indicators – July 2017 to January 2021

Table 1: Activity Summary

	Jul 17 to Sep 17	Oct 17 to Dec 17	Jan 18 to Mar 18	Apr 18 to Jun 18	Jul 18 to Sep 18	Oct 18 to Dec 18	Jan 19 to Mar 19	Apr 19 to Jun 19	Jul 19 to Sep 20	Oct 19 to Dec 19	Jan 20 to Mar 20	Apr 20 to Jun 20	Jul 20 to Sep 20	Oct 20 to Dec 20	Jan 21
Patients	34,105	32,949	31,339	34,144	33,136	32,843	31,223	29,363	30,706	31,351	26,866	20,199	24,662	24,055	7,803
Escorts	2,274	2,425	2,221	2,552	2,296	2,755	2,228	1,912	1,959	2,057	1,628	413	707	838	257
Escorts	4,163	3,694	2,783	3,167	3,503	2,833	3,049	2,835	2,903	3,084	2,348	455	802	846	182
Total	40,542	39,068	36,343	39,863	38,935	38,431	36,500	34,110	35,568	36,492	30,842	21,067	26,171	25,739	8,242
Plan	48,792	48,029	48,030	47,268	39,730	39,109	39,109	37,868	38,935	38,431	36,500	34,110			
Variance	-8,250	-8,961	-11,687	-7,405	-795	-678	-2,609	-3,758	-3,367	-1,939	-5,658	-13,043	26,171	25,739	8,242
Aborts	2,627	2,730	2,909	2,123	2,816	2,879	2,725	2,338	2,590	2,868	1,761	1,197	1,475	1,498	477
Cancelled	11,000	7,441	7,693	6,874	7,722	8,962	8,447	8,144	8,230	8,204	7,782	5,683	9,036	10,100	2,942
ECJs	1,145	1,181	1,116	1,459	1,546	898	197	1,113	702	241	327	108	171	145	25

Note:

The activity plan is adjusted on each annual anniversary of the contract in order for the plan to reflect the most up to date actual activity.

The CCG changed the arrangement for ECJ activity from September 2019, bringing a number of journeys that would previously have been classified as ECJs into the core contract.

Table 2: KPI Performance Summary - January 2021

KPI	Description	Contract Target	Latest Performance (January 2021)	Change on previous month	Better / Worse than previous Month	Number of Occasions KPI has been achieved since start of Contract (43 months)	Best Achievement Since Contract Start	Average Achievement Since Contract Start
KPI 1	Calls answered within 60 seconds	80%	77.4%	24.40%	Better	7	88.7%	65.6%
KPI 2	Journeys cancelled by provider	0.50%	0.4%	0.74%	Better	15	0.0%	0.9%
KPI 3a	Same day journeys collected within 150 mins	95%	67.1%	0.83%	Better	0	93.3%	76.7%
KPI 3b	Same day journeys collected within 180mins	100%	74.5%	0.34%	Better	0	95.5%	82.4%
KPI 4a	Renal patients collected within 30 mins	95%	62.2%	-0.04%	Worse	0	85.4%	73.3%
KPI 4b	Non-Renal patients collected within 60 mins	95%	62.9%	0.46%	Better	0	82.0%	69.9%
KPI 4c	All patients collected within 80 mins	100%	77.8%	0.81%	Better	0	88.9%	80.7%
KPI 5	Fast track journeys collected within 60 mins	100%	47.1%	13.73%	Better	1	100.0%	68.8%
KPI 6a	Renal patients to arrive no more than 30 mins early	95%	53.6%	2.54%	Better	0	75.0%	60.0%
KPI 6b	Patients to arrive no more than 60 mins early	95%	63.3%	1.51%	Better	0	75.3%	67.1%
KPI 7	Journeys to arrive on time	85%	63.8%	0.63%	Better	0	83.8%	74.3%
KPI 8	Patients time on vehicle to be less than 60 mins	85%	73.3%	32.27%	Better	0	87.3%	73.2%
KPI 9	% discharge patients re-bedded where TASL have failed to collect within 2 hours of agreed pick up time	0%	4.0%	1.50%	Better	0	0.2%	2.4%
KPI 10a	% Patients waiting longer than 2.5 hrs for their outpatient or renal return journey	5%	4.0%	0.43%	Better	11	0.8%	3.7%
KPI 10b	% Patients waiting longer than 4 hrs for their outpatient or renal return journey	0%	0.5%	0.49%	Better	0	0.2%	0.6%

Note:
KPI9, 10a and 10b apply from February 2020.