

## Iwade Health Centre

### Questions and answers for Iwade Health Centre patients

#### **Q1. Who is currently managing the GP practice at Iwade?**

Fleet Healthcare (Gravesend) Limited are currently managing the GP service at Iwade Health Centre. Fleet Healthcare holds a temporary APMS (Alternative Provider Medical Services) contract with NHS Kent and Medway (the PCT) which runs until mid-June 2013.

Fleet Healthcare is a limited liability company and was created several years ago by a number of GPs in the North of Kent to run one of the GP-Led Health Centre facilities. The GPs within Fleet Healthcare have a large amount of experience of general practice and have previously taken over operational management of practices that have faced difficulty.

This temporary contract was established to:

- ensure patients continue to have access to local GP services at Iwade Health Centre
- provide the practice with clinical leadership and managerial support
- stabilise and improve the service
- allow NHS Kent and Medway sufficient time to undertake a tender procurement through which it will secure longer-term contracting arrangements.

#### **Q2. There have been rumours that the current provider, Fleet Healthcare, is to withdraw from Iwade. Is this true?**

The rumour is not true. NHS Kent and Medway and Fleet Healthcare are absolutely committed to the current arrangement and ensuring patients continue to receive access to a GP service at Iwade Health Centre.

#### **Q3. What will happen to the service when the current contract with Fleet Healthcare comes to an end?**

NHS Kent and Medway has started a tender exercise and has invited bids for the future running of the GP practice at Iwade Health Centre.

The PCT is confident that a longer-term contract will be in place at the end of the current arrangement with Fleet Healthcare. The PCT is committed to ensuring this practice remains open and provides continuity of care for patients.

#### **Q4. Why is it necessary for the PCT to go out to tender?**

NHS Kent and Medway is required to choose and engage the provider best suited to deliver the services, to make the choice in a fair, open and transparent manner, and to obtain best value for the money spent. As there are many providers who are capable of running the service, the most appropriate way to make the choice and achieve best value is to run a competitive tendering process.

#### **Q5. What service is the PCT looking to commission through the tender process?**

NHS Kent and Medway will be commissioning a GP service for the registered patient list of Iwade Health Centre which will require the contractor to provide “essential” and “additional” services during the hours of 8.00AM to 6.30PM Monday to Friday (excluding bank and public holidays).

These services comprise the day-to-day management of patients who are unwell as well as screening, contraceptive services, and maternity care etc.

In addition the contract will require:

- The practice to be open between 8.00AM to 6.30PM, Monday to Friday (excluding bank and public holidays).
- Patients to be able to consult a health care professional within 24 hours and a GP within 48 hours.
- Appointment lengths to be tailored to the needs of individual patients, which for registered patients, shall be scheduled for no less than 10 minutes for a GP appointment and no less than 15 minutes for a nurse appointment.
- Consultations for patients who are booked to see a GP to commence within 30 minutes of the scheduled appointment time.

#### **Q6. How long will the tender process take?**

The actual tender process is expected to take 5-6 months. This will involve bids being invited, received and evaluated through a structured process. At the end of this process a preferred bidder will be identified. NHS Kent and Medway will then enter discussions with that preferred bidder to agree a contract for the provision of GP services to the registered patient list.

#### **Q7. Why does the tender process take such a long-time?**

The tender process is taken in two stages. First, there is a qualification stage to select a shortlist of bidders who have the capability and capacity to deliver the services. Second, the shortlisted bidders are invited to describe their solutions for providing the services.

The bidders need time to assess the details of the service in order to produce their bids. The regulations for procurement set out minimum timescales: 30 days for qualification stage and 35 days for the solution stage. NHS Kent and Medway needs time to assess the bids in detail, to resolve any questions which arise, and to complete the selection of the preferred bidder.

Finally NHS Kent and Medway and the preferred bidder need to complete the legal contract to enable services to be provided.

**Q8. Has the tender process started?**

Yes. Advertisements about the contract for the practice and the tender process were placed on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

**Q9. What will happen to the staff currently working at the practice under a new service contract?**

Staff will be entitled to transfer to the new provider under employment legislation. This is referred to as Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) – or TUPE.

**Q10. How will the views of patients be taken into account in deciding the outcome of the tender?**

The Patient Participation Group at Iwade Health Centre has a representative selected to provide a way of considering how the views and needs of Iwade's patients and population can be taken into account during the process. The patient representative will be involved in assessing how well the bidders address key aspects of the service requirement, including access to services, delivery of the service and engaging with patients.

**Q11. When will the new provider take over?**

The new provider will take over when a contract has been agreed with them following the tender process. We would expect the new contract to commence no later than 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013 such that it dovetails with the end of the temporary contract held with Fleet Healthcare.

**Q12. Will patients be informed who the new provider is?**

We will inform patients of who the new contractor is once this is known and a contract has been agreed with the provider concerned.

**Q13. Will patients notice any difference in the service once the new contract has been awarded?**

The contract will require the new provider to deliver an accessible good quality service that is responsive to the needs of patients. A number of improvements to the service have either already been planned or are planned during the following weeks and we would expect these to be maintained and developed further. NHS Kent and Medway is committed to ensuring that Iwade residents have confidence and trust in local GP services for themselves and their family and for these services to be of a high quality.

**Q14. What improvements have been made by the PCT and Fleet Healthcare since the listening exercises held in the summer?**

- The recruitment of more receptionists to boost the team answering incoming telephone calls.
- Employing a permanent Medical Secretary.
- Undertaking a clinical audit to improve patient access to treatment for conditions such as diabetes, chronic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and hypertension.
- Improving staff morale with support, education and training.
- The telephone system has been upgraded. The full functionality of this improved system which will allow the practice to better manage calls and will become available by the 10th December following enabling works and testing.
- The establishment of a Patient Participation Group.

**Q15. What other improvements will be made in the coming weeks and months?**

- NHS Kent and Medway and Fleet Healthcare will ensure extra GP appointments are made available. This will improve access and will allow patients to make same day, 24/48 hours and advanced booking.
- An upgrade will be made to the clinical computer system which will help to improve care given to the patients with long-term conditions. This upgrade should be completed in December 2012.
- The development of a practice web-site and other practice information, which will be completed in December.
- In the New Year, the practice hopes to hold regular informative group talks for patients- covering items such as diabetes management, identifying and supporting carers, dementia and Alzheimer's, and others as identified by the practice and patients.

An upgrade to the premises has been approved by the PCT and this will be carried out by April 2013. This work will include:

- Refurbishment of the nurse treatment rooms.
- Refurbishment of the first floor clinical rooms (the three clinical rooms on the ground floor were refurbished in February/March 2012).
- Redecoration of the remaining areas of the health centre.

These works commenced on the 20<sup>th</sup> October and should be completed shortly.