**Provision of GP Out of Hours Services to NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Background**

NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (“EBCCG”) covers the localities of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Bracknell, Ascot and Slough, resulting in a Clinical Commissioning footprint of 452,000 patients across 47 GP Practices.

EBCCG are planning to contract with East Berkshire Primary Care Out of Hours Services Ltd (EBOOH) for the provision of GP Out of Hours (OOH) services for the patients registered and non-registered to the East Berkshire geographical area (Bracknell, Ascot, Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead) under a Single Tender Waiver (STW). This service will function as a key element of the existing Thames Valley Integrated Urgent Care service and support the development of 111 First in Frimley, following its launch in November 2020. 111 and primary care are two of the four key points of access to same day care for patients across the Frimley Integrated Care System, which the Out of Hours service is fully integrated within.

The publication of the integrated urgent care services specification in 2017, the *Next Steps on the NHS 5 year Forward View and the NHS Long Term Plan* set out the requirement for Commissioners to contract for an Integrated Urgent Care service (IUC) to include 111 Services, a clinical assessment service (CAS) and also GP face to face provision both during normal primary care hours 8-6.30pm Monday to Friday and during the GP Out of hours period 6.30pm – 8am weekdays and during the weekend. The main IUC contract and CAS has been provided by South Central Ambulance Service since 2017. The normal GP in-hours element is provided from the local GP Practices. The remaining element of GP Out of Hours services has been commissioned from EBOOH for the above localities and North Hampshire Urgent Care for the Sandhurst Medical Practice.

As part of this integrated service there has been ongoing service development across Commissioners and Providers delivering the IUC service as a whole. East Berkshire OOH has delivered the existing OOH service since April 2006, with the current contract due to expire 31st March 2021. To mitigate the risk of disruption to services and ensure greater alignment with the Thames Valley Integrated Urgent Care Service (“TV IUC”) the CCG is intending to award a further contract to the current provider.

**The Vision**

It is the joint vision of both EB CCG and the TV IUC to provide an evidence based urgent primary care service across the patient pathway which optimises health and wellbeing and reduces the impact of ill health during the out of hours period, avoiding where possible the need for acute care, whilst ensuring a safe, clinically effective and affordable service for patients.

To achieve this vision EB CCG is working collaboratively with the Thames Valley Clinical Commissioning Groups (Berkshire West, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire CCGs) to ensure integrated service delivery between the TV IUC service and GP Out of Hours services delivering the national expectations for an integrated service delivery model. The contract will be aligned with the TV IUC contract end date to allow the CCG to review their long term Urgent Care strategy as a whole and will therefore be awarded from 1st April 2021 to 4th September 2024 at a value of £15,948,453.

**The Proposed Contract**

This approach enables integration of local services to release significant benefits to patients and is also expected to improve the use of public funding and therefore deliver best value. Interoperability of clinical systems with the IUC contract is an essential component to delivering GP OOHs services allowing for booked appointments. It is important to Commissioners that the strong interface between remote clinical assessment and local face to face services is maintained.

This approach will ensure capacity and resilience over the coming winter period in relation to Provider resilience and workforce requirements to mitigate risk.

In addition to the 111 First requirements this allows the Providers to flex their resources to ensure clinical resource is used in an optimum way. The Commissioners want to ensure long term sustainable GP OOHs and wish to mitigate workforce risks and in particular avoid destabilising the GP workforce at this current time. This will enable Commissioners and established Providers to respond to any demand surges and operate in a rapidly changing environment with considerable uncertainty over the next 12-18 months. The Commissioners have a clear view that there would be significant risks in recreating this flexibility with a new provider without well-established local commitments and pathways.

As such, a negotiated procedure without a call for competition will be followed and is believed to be justified under section 32(2) (b) (ii) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 - ‘competition is absent for technical reasons’ where no reasonable alternative or substitute exists.

**Scope of Service**

The scope of the services to be provided by East Berkshire Out of Hours (EBOOH) includes:

* A triage service to ensure that patients referred to the service from 111 are dealt with in the most appropriate and effective way including self-care
* Provision of virtual (telephone and online) treatment where clinically appropriate
* Provision of face to face consultations with GPs across a range of setting which enable reasonable access by users
* Onward referral for care as required
* GP Home Visits where required
* Support for End of life care
* Rapid access to same day care for children
* Minor injury care that would be provided ordinarily within general practice, such as management of sprains

**Exclusions**

The contract with East Berkshire Out of Hours (EBOOH) excludes the following elements:

* Emergency care via the 999 ambulance service
* Vaccinations, routine contraception, phlebotomy, dressings etc.
* Patients already in acute hospital care (unless included elsewhere in this specification).
* Women requiring intrapartum care.
* Patients requiring treatment for injury at the scene of road traffic or other accident.

**Conclusion**

For the reasons set out above East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group believe East Berkshire Out Of Hours to be the only Provider capable of providing this service in the timescales required and intends to proceed with a direct award.

However, prior to proceeding with the award EBCCG would be willing to hear from other potentially capable providers who believe they would be able to meet the above requirements and expressions of interest should be sent in writing by 5pm on the 18th of February 2021 to mstanbrook@nhs.net and cc’ing matthew.staples@nhs.net.