PR07706/14/DPJ

11 June 2014

**NHS Kernow plans to redesign out-of-hours services**

NHS Kernow’s Governing Body has agreed to completely redesign out-of-hours services to provide the local community with a seamless 24-hour health service.

The out-of-hours contract with Serco ends on 31 May 2015 and, at its meeting yesterday, the Governing Body considered two options to either go to open procurement now to secure a new provider to take over the service permanently in June 2015 or to put in place a 12-month interim arrangement to enable the development of a completely new operating model to start in June 2016.

The Board agreed that a 12 month timeframe would not give NHS Kernow the opportunity to create future-proof services which will improve health and well-being; people’s experience of care and reduce costs of care.

Dr Iain Chorlton, the GP lead for out-of-hours, said: “Now is just not the right time to commit ourselves to a contract which will tie us in for the next five years. Cornwall was recently successful securing its bid for the Prime Minister’s Challenge Fund. This gives us the opportunity to work together with general practice to explore different models for out-of-hours services.

“This is also a time of great change for health services in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Thanks to our Pioneer status and the Living Well Project, we have an opportunity to re-design locality-based services to benefit both the population and the NHS. We want to provide a clear and uniform pathway for all our patients, wherever they live in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, who need to use health services 24/7.

“We fully intend to take the time to consult with the community and health workers to ensure we get the new service right. We do not want to rush it – we want to ensure that out-of-hours services are fit-for-purpose for many years to come. The interim service will be a stepping stone towards full integration – we will be learning lessons, what works and what does not work, and good practice will be taken forward into the permanent contract.”

NHS Kernow is now in negotiation with current providers of health services in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to identify how best to run an interim service.

Serco is also supporting the move towards a new solution and is working closely with NHS Kernow to ensure a good handover. Dr Chorlton added: “Serco is performing well and the knowledge their staff have is important in helping us design the new service. The current service is staffed by many local GPs who will continue to provide the care whoever is awarded the contract.”

The process for procuring a permanent solution to out-of-hours will involve significant engagement with the public, patients and health providers.

**Media enquiries to: media officer at NHS Kernow on 01726 627689**

**Please note, out of hours media enquiries should be directed to our main switchboard at Bodmin: 01208 251300. Ask for the duty press officer.**