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Distribution:
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Dear Colleague

Orthodontic Service Procurement (North East and Yorkshire)

Further to our previous correspondence in July 2018 regarding the procurement of Specialist orthodontic Services, we are writing to update you on the current position, and to share with you our plans to re-engage with key stakeholders and the market to seek feedback over the next eight weeks to inform next steps. The background and our proposal is set out in the letter below which we will be sending to a wide range of stakeholders (Healthwatch organisations, Local MPs, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Local Dental Committees and Networks, general dental and orthodontic providers). We trust that this approach is acceptable to you.

Background

Clinical provision of orthodontic services is largely commissioned under Personal Dental Services (PDS) agreements which are time limited. In order to maintain continuity of services for patients, NHS England is required under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 to re-procure these contracts.

You may recall that extensive engagement was undertaken to inform our commissioning intentions and the service specification prior to commencement of the formal procurement process. This included patient questionnaires, market engagement events, publication of the Orthodontic Needs Assessment and commissioning intentions with letters to all key stakeholder inviting comments/feedback.

In re-procuring orthodontic services, the aim is to address the current inequity of access for patients; ensure delivery of high quality and accessible services for patients based on a consistent service specification and quality/performance standards; increase access for patients in line with the Orthodontic Health Needs Assessment (overall increase in capacity commissioned); and ensure value for money services.

Due to the number of contracts to be re-commissioned a phased approach to the procurement process was undertaken.

Update on current position

Phase 1 of the procurement process has been successfully completed, with new contracts now in place addressing inequity of provision across North Cumbria, Durham and Darlington, which has increased the overall commissioned capacity for patients in line with the Orthodontic Needs Assessment.

The remaining phases of the procurement were paused late October 2019, initially because of legal challenge and more latterly due to the need to focus on the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. The phases were at final evaluation or notification of recommended bidder phase prior to the pause. Details of the geographical areas covered by the remaining phases is set out in Appendix 1.

In light of the pause and Covid-19, we are reviewing our options on whether to conclude the current procurement process or abandon and re-commence a new procurement.

In the interim we have extended current contracts until late Spring/Summer 2021 to ensure continuity of care for patients (see Appendix 1 for further details).

Engagement to inform next steps

NHS England is writing to all key stakeholders and the market to provide the opportunity to feedback on the options available to inform a decision on next steps.

We are also proposing to communicate with patients to provide reassurance that they will not be disadvantaged either as a result of the procurement process or due to the impact of Covid-19. See attached copies of the patient information leaflets that have been shared with orthodontic providers, General Dental Practitioners, the NHS England Customer Contact Centre and local Healthwatch organisations.

Options available

1. *Conclude the current procurement process* which will be the quickest route to ensuring patients get more equitable access to orthodontic services across the region with increased capacity to reduce waiting times and provide longer term stability for patients and providers.

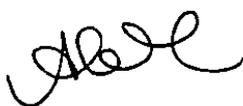
2. *Abandon the current process and re-run a new procurement process to ensure compliance with Public Contract Regulations 2015.* Running a new process would take a minimum of 18/24 months and would further delay the realisation of the patients benefits the new contracts would deliver, compounding the current long waits and inequality in access across the region and uncertainty for existing providers and patients.

How to feed in your views to inform next steps

Should you wish to provide feedback on the options outlined, please send this via e-mail to ENGLAND.DentalCNE@nhs.net **no later than 4 January 2021**

Please note that as this is still a live procurement, we are unable to enter into formal correspondence or discussions regarding this matter; we will therefore not be responding to individual comments/queries. However, please be assured that all information received will be collated to inform the decision on next steps, and feedback will be given to all stakeholders in due course.

Yours sincerely



Alex Morton
Regional Director of Primary Care and Public Health Commissioning

Enclosures: Patient information leaflets

Appendix 1 – Geographical areas of remaining procurement phases

Phase 2 (current contracts end date – end June 2021)

- Northumberland
- Newcastle East
- Newcastle West
- North Tyneside
- Gateshead
- South Tyneside
- Bradford Airedale
- Bradford City
- Bradford District North
- Bradford District South
- Rotherham
- Sheffield North
- Sheffield East
- Sheffield South

Phase 3 (current contract end dates – end September 2021)

- Sunderland North
- Sunderland South
- Hartlepool
- Stockton on Tees
- Middlesbrough
- Redcar and Cleveland
- East Riding (East)
- East Riding (West)
- Hull
- Wakefield East
- Wakefield West
- North Lincolnshire
- North East Lincolnshire
- Craven

Phase 4 (current contract end dates – end October 2021)

- Leeds North
- Leeds Central
- Leeds South
- Doncaster North
- Doncaster South
- Bassetlaw
- Barnsley

NB: It may be necessary to further extend contracts dependent upon the decision taken on next steps.