

Agenda Item No.**BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL****HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE****10 MARCH 2014****Review of The Renal Patient Transport Service in Bassetlaw****Introduction**

The Health and Public Services Sub Committee has been reviewing Non- Emergency Patient Services in Bassetlaw. As Bassetlaw has a dedicated Renal Patient Transport Service (RPTS) which is nearing the end of its contract in 2014, it was decided to carry out a separate review to focus on this service.

**Renal Services**

RPTS is a dedicated transport service for patients who need to have kidney dialysis three times a week at the Renal Unit. This service is available to all patients who elect to come to the Bassetlaw Renal Unit. This includes patients who elect to come to Worksop rather than travel elsewhere from outside of the District.

Kidney Dialysis is the artificial replacement for lost kidney function, which removes the waste and unwanted fluid from the blood. This treatment is life saving for patients and must be given three times a week for three – five hours. The treatment leaves patients extremely tired and fatigued. It also means patients are away from their homes for a considerable part of the day.

In 2009 a purpose built satellite Renal Unit was opened at Bassetlaw Hospital. This addition to the Hospital meant that local people could access dialysis within the District and not have to travel to Doncaster or Sheffield for treatment. The Unit is run independently by Fresenius Medical Care on behalf of the Department of Health. The Unit currently provides treatment for 40 patients but has capacity for 120 patients in the 20 station facility.

Patients have to be stable to be able to attend the Satellite Unit at Bassetlaw as there are no medics on the Unit only nursing staff. Patients who have more complex problems go to Doncaster Royal Infirmary for their treatment. They would then be transported by Premier Care Direct which serves the Doncaster Renal Unit.

Not all patients choose to the use the RPTS some prefer to arrange transportation themselves. Currently 30 patients from the Bassetlaw Renal Unit are using the Patient Transport Service.

## **Commissioning the Service**

The current Renal Patient Transport Service (RPTS) is provided by ERS Medical, a subsidiary of SRCL a market leader in waste management, which has expanded into patient transport services. They took over the contract when they acquired First 4 Care the previous provider in 2012.

The current RPTS Service contract was agreed as a result of a procurement process which was carried out by the former Yorkshire & Humber Renal Network which covered South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw. Three providers were chosen for the area.

1. First 4 Care – Bassetlaw Satellite Renal Unit
2. Premier Care Direct – Doncaster Renal Unit and the Dearne Valley Satellite Renal Unit at (Montagu Hospital)
3. City Taxis in partnership with Event Medical – Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley Units.

The contract was passed to Bassetlaw PCT by Rotherham Primary Care Trust. However since the demise of Primary Care Trusts, Bassetlaw NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) has taken over the management of the contract and the future procurement of the Renal Patient Transport Service in Bassetlaw.

The current contract is due to end in June 2014. Members heard that BCCG are intending to ask ERS Medical to extend the contract. The exact time frame is unknown but it will not extend further than March 2017. This would allow time for BCCG to work with other CCGs in South Yorkshire to procure a Renal Patient Transport Contract for the whole of South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw.

## **Key Findings**

### **A Dedicated Service**

The review heard from health professionals how important it was to have a dedicated Renal Patient Transport Service rather than one incorporated into the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service. Patients build a rapport with the drivers and are monitored from the moment they are collected from their homes. This close working helps the nursing staff to ensure that any changes in the patients' condition are noted and where necessary the appropriate treatment is given. Renal patients' condition can vary from day to day.

The nursing staff share patient feedback with ERS Medical. Patients can provide feedback in several ways. There is an anonymous feedback form which can be posted free of charge in the Renal Unit. Patients can contact PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service), talk to the nursing staff or contact ERS Medical direct by telephone.

Patients often become depressed and anxious this is exacerbated if patients have to wait a long time after dialysis to go home and this can make them not want to attend the Unit.

## Doncaster Renal Unit

The review heard what a difference a dedicated service in Doncaster had made to patients' lives. Previously patients had become distressed waiting for transport; there was not enough seating for patients in the waiting area. Nurses had to arrange for cushions to be brought in for them to rest on. Patients would have to wait if another patient on their route had not completed treatment.

Through the tender process Doncaster Royal Infirmary was able to commission a tailored service for the Doncaster Renal Unit. Premier Care Direct (PCD) provides the service which was built up purely for this contract. They are a local company situated in Bentley, so they are close by if there is a need to change collection times. Now PCD is often waiting for the patient when they have completed their treatment, so they can go home without waiting. The Key Performance Indicators are evidence of the high quality of the service with all indicators exceeding their targets.

The review heard how the service at Bassetlaw is much improved since ERS Medical has taken over the contract and is on a par with Premier Care Direct (PCD).

The review found that one reason why both services were able to provide a good service was that they are locally based which allows them to be more flexible.

## **Performance**

ERS Medical performs well apart from one indicator which measures the time spent on the vehicle by patients (no more than 30 minutes). The target for this indicator is 90%. ERS is currently hitting around 78%. This could be for a number of reasons:

- Distance to be travelled
- Where other passengers live
- Patient not ready
- Congestion on the roads
- Errors in data collection

The RPTS serves patients coming into Bassetlaw Renal Unit. This means that they are not all based in Bassetlaw but travel further afield. Currently the furthest distance a patient lives from the Unit is 15 miles away and they are on the vehicle on average 35 minutes. Patients can choose where they are treated and may not always choose the nearest Unit. They may also request to be collected with other patients who are not necessarily en route. In these cases the journeys may not be possible within the 30 minute window. The Commissioners agreed that in these cases the providers could make a case for these journeys to be excluded in the performance data.

ERS Medical currently does not receive highways information about road works and closures. It was suggested that signing up for daily updates might ensure drivers avoid congested areas.

## **Improvements**

The Doncaster and Bassetlaw Kidney Association provided some feedback from patients about the current service. The service was praised by patients, the drivers were polite and on time.

The review found there were a couple of areas that could be improved. Patients reported that they found it difficult to access some of the vehicles because they were low.

The staff of the Renal Unit reported that the number provided for Out of Hours access did not work and that they were unable to contact the service after 6 pm. This meant if a patient had to be admitted into hospital the staff could not cancel the transport.

One of the key differences between PCD and ERS Medical was the amount of data that could be provided to the Hospital and commissioners. This was because ERS Medical does not have a 'real time' computer system. Currently data is inputted manually into the performance system. This meant there was a margin for errors and that greater detail was not available. ERS Medical said they were currently looking to update the current system.

### **Benefits of commissioning with other CCGs**

Members heard that there were benefits in commissioning a Renal Patient Transport service for the whole of South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw. These included efficiency savings from the retender process; it would attract a wider interest and a greater level of interest from a range of prospective contractors. Members were concerned that Bassetlaw could lose its locally based dedicated service, if a larger organisation won the contract and implemented a one size fits all service.

The Commissioners explained that they want Bassetlaw to have the best service. Unlike other contracts Bassetlaw would have an equal lot in its own right and it would not be based on a share of the population. So it could shape the service to match the needs of Bassetlaw. The BCCG emphasised that the tender process would be looking to enhance the dedicated service we currently have and that based on knowledge gathered it would include tighter specification.

The re-tendering process will involve patients and the Hospital. Patients will be able to meet prospective contractors and ask questions which will inform the process.

### **Conclusion**

The review found that ERS Medical is providing a good service to Renal Patients attending the Bassetlaw Renal Unit. There is a good close working relationship with staff on the Renal Unit.

The review highlighted service improvements that would improve the RPTS. These included; improving access to out of hours service, improved comfort of the vehicles, upgrading the performance software and sharing more detailed information to inform future improvements.

The re-tendering process will be delayed so that a joint tender process can take place with neighbouring CCGs for South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw contract in 2017.

**Key Recommendations**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Delivery Timescales</b>	<b>Overview Response</b>
HP13/14 4.1	ERS Medical to improve access to the out-of-hours service for the Renal Unit.	April 2014	Not applicable – external recommendation
HP13/14 4.2	Review the specifications of the contract prior to re-tendering	March 2017	Not applicable – external recommendation
HP13/14 4.3	That ERS Medical ensures that all of its vehicles are easily accessible and comfortable.	January 2015	Not applicable – external recommendation
HP13/14 4.4	Transport Providers should not be penalised for journeys that are longer than 30 minutes due to patient choice. ERS Medical should meet with Commissioners to discuss the exclusion of these journeys from the Key Performance Information provided.	April 2014	Not applicable – external recommendation
HP13/14 4.5	That ERS Medical updates the Performance Reporting system to a 'Real Time' system and that better data is provided to the Hospital and Commissioners.	January 2015	Not applicable – external recommendation

Date of Review:	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2014
Date considered by HPS:	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
Date endorsed by OSC:	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2014