

Community Services Procurement – What it Means

NHS community services provide a wide range of care, from supporting patients to manage long-term conditions, to treating those who are seriously ill with complex conditions.

Most community healthcare takes place in people's homes or in community clinics or health centres. Teams of nurses and therapists coordinate care, working with professions including GPs and social care. Additionally community health provides preventative and health improvement services, often with partners from local government and the third sector.

It is recognised that a new approach is needed to bring positive benefits in terms of improving people's health, wellbeing and experience of care, particularly in wrapping services around people's needs and shifting the focus to keeping people well and happy at home with reduced demand for hospital and other health and care services.

Community services are delivered by a number of providers and are sometimes fragmented as a result. To make a difference we need to bring providers together. The aim is to grow and improve, not reduce, community services commissioned by the organisations across County Durham and Darlington.

CCGs are required by law to procure contracts when they expire and this is something that we do regularly. We have issued a **Prior Information Notice** which informs the potential providers about our intention to procure community services over the next few months and to seek expressions of interest from prospective providers. You can read the [PIN here](#).

It's a very exciting time for us and will see closer working between GPs, the local authority, voluntary and private sector providers and statutory organisations to successfully deliver high quality services across health and social care. All changes are subject to stringent NHS regulations and we will be involving our Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Health and Wellbeing Boards every step of the way.

They are highly valued services. Patients will experience high quality community services throughout the procurement process and afterwards when we start to embed these improvements across County Durham and Darlington. We expect that the procurement process will be finished by April 2018 and the new model will be in place by October 2018

The key objectives of a procurement exercise will be to:

- Meet patients' needs and improve the quality and efficiency of services;
- Support the transformation of services;
- Deliver the services in an integrated way;
- Provide best value for money in doing so

The organisations involved are:

- NHS Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group (DDES CCG)
- NHS North Durham CCG (NDCCG)
- NHS Darlington CCG (DCCG)

We will continue to provide updates as we work through this process.