

Sussex Patient Transport Service

The South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) has agreed to take over the contract for the Sussex Patient Transport Service. In order to minimise disruption to patients who use the service, the transfer will be phased over the next few months, with SCAS taking complete responsibility from April 2017.

Patients do not need to do anything. They should continue to book their transport in their normal way and should not notice any difference in the service. However, over the next few months, SCAS will gradually take over more and more of the service.

SCAS has 40 years' experience, and currently provides the PTS service across the whole of the South Central region, including Hampshire and the Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). It was recently named preferred bidder to take over the patient transport service for Surrey, Hampshire and Hounslow from April 2017. It is rated good by the CQC, who specifically highlighted the care that SCAS staff provide to patients using the Patient Transport Service, rating it as outstanding.

As you know, since 1st April 2016 the Sussex PTS has been managed by Coperforma, which took over the contract following a competitive procurement and tendering process. The start of the new contract saw unacceptable levels of performance, both in making bookings and with the transport itself. The service has improved, although the improvements are not consistent across the whole of Sussex and some patients continue to experience problems.

Recently, however, there have been a number of issues between Coperforma and some of its subcontractors, which have raised concerns about the sustainability of the service. In September, the CCGs stepped in to pay staff of Dockland Medical Services, a subcontractor of Coperforma, after the company stopped providing the patient transport service for Sussex patients.

The CCGs will now work with SCAS on a detailed plan for transfer. There is a great deal of work to be done, but we believe that the managed transfer is best for patients and for staff. They have been through a period of uncertainty which we will now be able to resolve.

Geraldine Hoban

Accountable Officer
Horsham and Mid Sussex CCG