

TENDERING FOR GENITO URINARY AND SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES IN WIRRAL

Executive Summary

Wirral Primary Care Trust has invited tenders for the provision of Genito Urinary Medicine and Sexual Health Services (GUMSH). This service is currently provided by Wirral Hospital Trust based in Arrowe Park Hospital. Latest guidance highlights the need to provide such services in a range of highly accessible venues to increase access to groups most likely to engage in high risk sexual behaviour. Rates for sexually transmitted infections are higher in areas of deprivation and young people are high users of GUMSH services. Therefore, the tender process aims to secure high quality service provider/s who will meet the needs of a range of age groups, but particularly under 25's, at a choice of venues and times.

1 Background

- 1.1 Wirral Primary Care Trust aim to provide modern, highly accessible Genito Urinary Medicine and Sexual Health Services (GUMSH) for the population of Wirral and specifically, for those people most likely to be at risk from poor sexual health. GUMSH in Wirral are primarily provided at present, by Wirral Hospital Trust, in a dedicated space within the main block of Arrowe Park Hospital.
- 1.2 A Sexual Health and HIV Modernisation Team is in place in Wirral and is the partnership vehicle for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Wirral Sexual Health and HIV Action Plan. The overarching goal of this plan is to reduce transmission, and increase diagnosis of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV and provide appropriate services. This is to be achieved through the fulfilment of the following aims:
 - Improve the sexual health of young people
 - Reduce stigma and normalise access to sexual health services
 - Reduce unintended pregnancy
 - Ensure appropriate levels of service provision according to need
 - Provide fast and effective interventions and treatment across all services
 - Appropriate and effective referral across agencies throughout the borough

- Ensure access to services for vulnerable and underserved groups
 - Ensure services can meet the needs of people living with / affected by HIV/AIDS
 - Broaden the skills base across multiple agencies
 - Establish an effective communication strategy
 - Improve the evidence base for commissioning and establish an effective joint commissioning framework for sexual health
- 1.3 In order to achieve the above aims, the Sexual Health and HIV Modernisation team identified the need for GUMSH to be provided in a wide range of community settings to increase access and equity of service. This would need to include areas of high deprivation (where sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates are highest and in areas and venues that are specifically appropriate and accessible to young people. This development requires changing the existing provision from a single site clinic, primarily provided between 9am and 5pm to multi site provision taking account of expressed customer views for evening and weekend sessions.
- 1.4 For the last few years, the Sexual Health and HIV Modernisation team has been working towards the agreed aim of transferring provision of GUM services from a hospital to community provider. A report from a MedFASH peer review visit of Wirral GUM services carried out in Autumn 2006, stated that the current lack of a decision on whether GUM services would remain at Arrowe Park was leading to delays in driving forward required service improvements.
- 1.5 A specification for GUM sexual health services in Wirral has been produced by the Sexual Health and HIV Modernisation team and meets national guidance for the provision of such a service. Current GUM services in Wirral do not meet the specification, particularly in terms of targeted access for areas of high deprivation and high risk population groups such as young people and those aged 20-24 years.

2 Tendering for GUM sexual health services

- 2.1 Wirral PCT has commenced an open tender process for the re provision of GUM sexual health services. This process is designed to ensure that a provider or consortium of providers will be engaged to fully meet the sexual health service requirements of the Wirral population.
- 2.2 The tender process is being completed in two phases:
- Open invitation for expressions of interest and completion of pre tender documentation
 - Closed invitation to tender to organisations approved in the expressions of interest stage

- 2.3 The tender process will be completed by September 3rd and it is anticipated that the contract will commence from April 2008.

3 Public involvement

- 3.1 To inform the preparation of the GUM sexual health specification, a survey of sexual health service users was carried out for one full week at Wirral Brook; Birkenhead, GUM at Arrowe Park and PCT Family Planning Clinics. The survey asked for views on preferred days, venues, transport and locations for GUM sexual health service provision. It also asked questions about staff, privacy and confidentiality and booking versus drop in appointments.
- 3.2 356 service users responded to the survey from which the following points were noted:
- 30% of respondents would prefer to access GUM sexual health services at the Brook Advisory Centre, followed by 27% who preferred Arrowe Park Hospital and then 16% who preferred to access their GP practice for GUM sexual health services
 - Among 125 young people surveyed at Wirral Brook the priorities were for open access sessions (53%). A range of opening times was indicated, including piloting weekend and evening opening. 73% of users arrived on foot or by public transport
 - Among 120 respondents at GUM Arrowe Park most had travelled by car (67%), with bus the next most common form of transport. 33% indicated that they had taken 'time-off' to attend the clinic and about a quarter (23%) would ideally prefer early evening sessions.
 - 35% respondents at Family Planning clinics said that early evening clinics were their preference.
- 3.3 The specification for the provision of GUM sexual health services has taken account of the user survey and lists criteria that tenderers will have to demonstrate when submitting their tenders. This includes setting out how they will meet user requirements for early evening clinics, open access and a variety of settings rather than one single facility. The specification also highlights issues of potential inequity that need to be addressed.

4 Tender assessment

- 4.1 A panel is being brought together oversee the assessment of the winning tender. The panel will consist of PCT officers (including a Non Executive Director), non PCT representative from the Sexual Health and HIV Modernisation Team (who does not represent any of the tendering organisations) and a GUM Consultant from a neighbouring district.
- 4.2 The panel will carry out an initial assessment of the tender documents followed by site visits and interviews and a final assessment. They will make recommendations to the relevant PCT committee prior to board approval.

5. Financial considerations

The purpose of the tender process is to secure services that meet current national guidance and local service needs. Wirral PCT does not aim to make financial savings as a result of this process. However, there are three levels of GUMSH provision which range from basic advice and contraception provision to specialist test and treat services. At present, a single tariff payment is attracted for each first appointment or follow up, regardless of the service offered. At least 70% of the service provided is expected to fall into the less specialist levels 1 and 2 services. Therefore, the PCT aims to secure a lower cost at levels 1 and 2 so that funds can be reinvested to achieve increased service provision to meet current anticipated unmet needs.

6 Local Member Support Implications

The GUMSH service covers the whole of the Wirral, but will have an additional focus on areas of deprivation where levels of STI are highest.

7 Background Papers

Tender Document for the Provision of a GUM Sexual Health Service.

8 Recommendations

That Committee notes this report.

Marie Armitage & Jane Harvey
Joint Director of Public Health

Sue Drew
Deputy Director of Public health
0151 651 3948

Date 25th May 2007.