

Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What changes will be made at the practice?

The new Service Specification will align the APMS contracts to General Medical Service (GMS) specification which will give an expectation for all locations to be delivering services to meet the reasonable needs of the local population Monday to Friday 8:00am to 6:30pm.

This was a national decision directed by NHS England as part of ensuring equity of services for patients and is therefore not a decision that was made by the provider. We consulted on this as part of the APMS consultation.

We expect all locations will also be signed up to the delivery/participation in Locally Commissioned Services and a range of National Direct Enhanced Services (DESS- for example Extended Access).

2. How will the budget be affected?

The budget was set by Wigan Borough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) under national NHS England guidance. These APMS contracts will be paid at a lower level than now. This is to align them to be consistent with GMS and Personal Medical Services (PMS) practices. However, we now have the option to sign up to all/any Enhanced Services.

3. Will practices now have another Care Quality Commission (CQC) visit?

All practices will need to be registered under the new provider. This is likely to trigger another CQC visit.

4. How can the new provider, SSP Health Primary Care Ltd manage so many sites? Will patient care be compromised?

SSP Health is a well-established GP-led organisation with robust systems and processes. Our clinical care has been recognised nationally with several awards. These include recognition for our clinical leadership and innovative solutions to improve access.

Each SSP Health practice consistently achieves maximum Quality and Outcomes Framework (QoF) points with extremely low exception reporting rates. Those practices inspected by CQC have been rated as overall GOOD plus OUTSTANDING at some sites.

The systems for robust integrated governance were evaluated as part of the procurement. We will continue to review our infrastructure to maintain high standards to ensure that patient care is optimised.

5. Will the practices be required to change their clinical systems?

Clinical systems will eventually be migrated to EMIS Web. This will be planned and implemented in agreement with CCG.

6. Is it a concern that SSP will have so many of the contracts in the area, thus limiting patient choice?

There are 62 Practices across Wigan Borough and across all 7 Service Delivery Footprints there remains a selection of practices which provide choice to patients.

7. How has this reduction in choice been assessed?

We followed a procurement process set by NHS England and this was the outcome of that fair and transparent process.

However, the choice made by a patient is most commonly aligned to the practice staff and GP rather than provider/organisation that hold the contract. Support will be provided to staff and patients alike to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of care.

8. Were patients' views taken into account in the decision to award all the contracts to SSP?

Yes, patient views were taken in to account during all APMS the project phases. Patient Participation Group (PPG) members were part of the stakeholder engagement event in October 2016; we visited PPGs at all sites on a number of occasions; we had patient representatives on the panel with GPs, Practice Managers and CCG staff when assessing the options available to us; we held a full public consultation with approximately 700 responses; and, patients were involved in the procurement process. On top of this, we have patient representatives on the Primary Care Commissioning Committee who made the final decision and approved the outcome of the procurement.

9. Will they merge any of the contracts?

APMS contracts cannot be merged with any other type of contract.

The APMS contracts that were re-procured are:

Contract 1: Ashton + Golborne

Contract 2: Lower Ince + Platt Bridge
Contract 3: Atherton + Tyldesley
Contract 4: Marsh Green
Contract 5: Leigh and Higher Folds
Contract 6: Leigh Sports Village

This is a merger of the two Leigh Sports Village contracts that are currently run as one GP practice.

10. Can practice staff communicate with patients?

The CCG, working with all providers, is producing appropriate documentation and updates that will be able to be shared with patients to maintain a single message across all sites. We are also meeting with the PPGs.

11. How many GP appointments will be available for patients?

The NHS England estimated rate is 75 appointments per 1000 registered patients per week, which is an expectation described in the contract. The CCG will work with SSP and local PPGs to ensure that the contract and needs of the local population are being met.

The APMS Service Specification will set clear expectations and requirements of the contract which will be monitored in the same way contracts are monitored with other provider organisations (for example the local hospital Trust). The consultation carried out in the procurement process identified the need for the continued provision of GP Services in the current locations and this will be maintained.