



Intermediate Minor Oral Surgery East Midlands Stakeholder Briefing

1 Introduction

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide an update to Health and Wellbeing Boards, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and key stakeholders on the East Midlands Intermediate Minor Oral Surgery (IMOS) services procurement process and next steps.

2 Background Information

From 1 April 2023, the five East Midlands ICBs are now responsible for commissioning NHS Dental Services e.g. primary, community and secondary care to meet the local population needs.

Intermediate Minor Oral Surgery (IMOS) is a referral service for over 16 years and is provided within a community setting. The service provides specialist treatment e.g. complex dental extractions by a clinician with enhanced skills and experience that is either on the oral surgery specialist list or accredited in line with national guidance. Treatment may be provided under local anaesthetic and the clinician may use quality behavioural management techniques or provide treatment under conscious sedation where appropriate for minor oral surgery procedures. Once the one-off treatment has been completed, the patient is then returned to the referring General Dental Practitioner.

The IMOS contracts are commissioned using a Personal Dental Services (PDS) Agreement, the earliest of which commenced in 2008/09 and are due to expire. The existing contractual agreements have no Units of Dental Activity (UDA) contracted activity nor financial value, financial payments are made in arrears based on claims submitted for cost per case for either assessment, assessment and treatment or assessment, treatment and sedation.

There are 36 IMOS providers across the East Midlands area, which cover Northamptonshire, Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Due to historic contracting arrangements, the service arrangements are on different contracting terms and payments rates. Within the existing contracting arrangements treatment may be provided under conscious sedation in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, however, there is limited access in Lincolnshire/Northamptonshire and no access in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. In 2019/20, the service accepted approximately 37,000 referrals and treated 33,000 patients.

A Midlands IMOS service specification has been developed in line with the NHS England Oral Surgery Commissioning Guide to standardised the service model, payments and reduce inequalities in access/treatment under conscious sedation, where appropriate. Approval was obtained to enable new Personal Dental Services Agreement with a contracting term of 10 years (7 years with the option to extend for a further 3 years).

An East Midlands Minor Oral Surgery Needs Assessment was refreshed to support with developing commissioning intentions to meet population need. Engagement and consultation processes were undertaken to seek feedback from patients and public, dental profession and key stakeholders. The consultation proposal sought views on 10 proposed locations across the East Midlands. The feedback was considered, and the proposed locations were revised from 10 to 17.

3 Procurement Process and Outcome

The IMOS procurement process was published on 25 August 2022 following market engagement webinar and due to the large scale of the procurement exercise being undertaken, bidders would be notified of the outcome in May 2023. This is to enable sufficient time for bids to be evaluated. The new contracts to commence on 1 December 2023 following a 6-month mobilisation period. All bids were assessed to determine they were compliant e.g. all sections have been completed to enable them to pass through to the evaluation phase. As part of the evaluation, bids were required to pass mandatory questions and meet a quality threshold of 60% and the bidder with the highest score for each individual lot who met this criteria would be identified as the preferred bidder. A project group of Subject Matter Experts evaluated the bids.

Bidders have been advised there has been a slight delay regarding outcome notification. There has been a 3-month delay to notifying bidders of the outcome of the procurement exercise to enable internal governance processes to be undertaken.

We can confirm that there was sufficient interest shown across all 17 Lots (new contracts), however, upon evaluating submissions the general quality was poor with a surprisingly high level of bids which failed at various gateway stages of the process. The commissioners have therefore taken the decision to abandon the procurement in its entirety and not to award any contracts in respect of any of the 17 lots on the basis that to commission any of these IMOS services on a piecemeal basis, and to continue with this procurement, would result in an unworkable and unmanageable mixed economy of old and new service models, which would negatively affect equity of access for patients and increase budget pressures.

Bidders have been notified of the outcome the procurement process on 30 August 2023 and assurance has been given that the strategic need to recommission IMOS services across the East Midlands has not diminished or changed.

4 Next Steps

Due to the outcome of the procurement exercise, it has been agreed to extend existing IMOS services across the East Midlands for an initial period of 1 year and then up to 2 years in 6-month intervals, if required, to maintain patient access to the specialist tier 2 IMOS service. This will enable the commissioners to use lessons learned from this process to engage in pre-procurement market engagement activities to support potential providers, in order to support and educate on the tendering process in a way that the commissioners hope will significantly increase the quality of bids received. The commissioner is planning to launch a second procurement exercise within the next 12 months.

We will continue to update Health and Wellbeing Boards, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and key stakeholders on our recommissioning plans.