

North Central London CCG: AT Medics transfer of holdings to Operose Health Ltd Briefing for Haringey Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel - 24 June 2021

Introduction

AT Medics Ltd (ATML) holds 34 Alternative Provider of Medical Services (APMS) contracts and a small number of NHS Standard Contracts across London.

In North Central London (NCL) ATML holds eight APMS contracts, with only one contract in Haringey at St Ann's Road Surgery.

Change of control decision

Change of control of ATML has transferred from the directors of ATML to Operose Health Ltd – a company that holds a number of GP contracts and other health service contracts across London and in other parts of the country.

All GP practices work under contract to the NHS and whether owned by GPs or other organisations can bid for contracts across the country. However they must be able to meet strict standards and regulations that apply to all NHS providers.

AT Medics had to ask permission of the NHS (the CCGs that commission the relevant services) for the change in control. This is allowed under the terms of the GP contract. In this case, the transfer was approved as there was no legal or contractual basis for the CCG to reject the transfer of control and it will not alter the service that is required under the contract.

In December 2020, each CCG considered the change in control request from AT Medics. The NCL CCG Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC) meeting on 17 December 2020 considered the request. No concerns were raised during the due diligence process, undertaken independently by a solicitor collectively on behalf of the 13 London CCGs. NCL CCG PCCC therefore gave consent to the proposed change in control.

As a commissioner of health services, CCGs' role is to ensure the provision of high quality, safe services for local people. In addition, all health service providers are regulated and inspected by the Care Quality Commission to ensure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety.

As part of a due diligence process undertaken prior to considering the change in control we sought assurance that our patients and their care would not be affected. AT Medics Ltd advised us that they will continue to run the GP practices as they do now and patients will continue to see the same doctors and nurses. Although over time there may be some natural changes in staff as people choose to move to new jobs. Care remains free at the point of delivery.

Our commissioning practices in relation to AT Medics have followed the same rules and guidance as we apply to all our GP contracts and any decisions taken were informed by legal and national guidance. In this case, there was no legal or contractual basis for the CCG to reject the transfer of control of AT Medics Ltd., and doing so would have posed a risk to continuity of high quality of care for local residents.

Patient involvement is not required for changes in partnerships or changes of control, such as with AT Medics, unless there is a change in service provision. Where there is a significant change in service provision e.g. practice re-location or closure of a branch surgery, or where a contract is being re-procured as a result of a contractor retirement, there will always be patient involvement.