

Gateway ref: 14661

SHA Chief Executives

11 August 2010

Dear Colleague

Home Oxygen Programme Update

**From the Chief
Scientific Officer**

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Hon FRCP OBE

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I wrote to SHA Commercial Support Unit (CSU) Managers in September copied to yourselves and to SHA Medical Directors. This was followed up with a letter from Peter Coates in December on the re-procurement of the Home Oxygen Services in England, and the intention to transfer management of the contracts from DH to the NHS. My purpose in writing to you now is to provide a further progress update, and to seek your cooperation in ensuring that the re-procurement continues to plan and timescale.

On 7 July 2010, we issued an invitation to tender to pre-qualified bidders. They now have until 3rd September to respond. The tenders will be evaluated jointly by DH and the NHS, and in November successful bidders will be appointed to the National Framework. Following the award of the National Framework each region (through its nominated lead PCT) will then conduct mini-competitions, taking approximately twelve weeks, to select its new regional HOS supplier. New contracts will commence following a transition period determined by each region, but should be in the order of six to nine months. Call-off and transition dates have been agreed with HOS regional leads as attached (this excludes South West, that will call off in 2014).

The current intention is that DH will provide support to all regions to ensure that the re-procurement at regional level is managed effectively up to, and immediately beyond, the award of the National Framework contract. The support from DH will include assistance in the development of detailed regional call-off and transition project plans, development of guidance documents and templates, and the facilitation of regional workshops covering call-off, transition and communications.

In addition, DH and NHS colleagues will continue to meet on a regular basis to ensure lessons learned during the re-procurement can be disseminated to those regions

operating towards the end of the timetable. In the light of the publication of the White Paper and various consultation documents, I have also asked colleagues to review arrangements to ensure that the HOS programme continues to align with any new structural changes over the next few years and I will write to you again once this work has been undertaken.

Whilst significant progress has been made, we are now entering a key stage and it is therefore critical that all regions calling of in 2011, regardless of their position at call-off, make progress in setting appropriate governance arrangements (including the identification of a lead PCT commissioner) and ensuring that appropriate resources are deployed to manage the re-procurement process.

Given the significant Ministerial interest in the re-procurement and importance of providing continuity of service to patients as we move to new HOS contracts, I would ask you to liaise with your region's Lead PCT Chief Executive in order to provide yourself with assurance that your region is fully prepared to discharge its responsibility through the call-off and transition phases.

I have copied this letter to PCT Chief Executives, CSU Leads, HOS Regional Leads and SHA Respiratory Leads. For further information, please email HomeOxygenService@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Hill', with a large, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then loops back under the name.

PROFESSOR SUE HILL PhD DSc CBiol FSB Hon FRCP OBE
Chief Scientific Officer, Department of Health