

Incontinence Amongst Women of Child-bearing Age:

Merton CCG Update for the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

1. Purpose of this paper

This paper provides an update to the London Borough of Merton (LBM) Healthier Communities and Older People (HCOP) Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the approach taken by NHS Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in response to the recommendations contained in the report *Tackling Incontinence Amongst Women of Child-bearing Age* produced by the LBM *Incontinence amongst women of child bearing age* task group.

2. Background

The *Tackling Incontinence Amongst Women of Child-bearing Age* report primarily addressed the issue of urinary incontinence in women between the ages of 16 and 44.

The report particularly focused on

- “The prevention agenda – identifying problems at an early stage and addressing them before they become worse”.
- “How to raise awareness of incontinence and tackle the stigma that prevents people seeking help”

NHS Merton CCG provided a response to the relevant recommendations in the report to the HCOP Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting in November 2014. This paper provides an update to that response.

3. Merton CCG Operating Plan Delivery Areas

Merton CCG has identified within its Operating Plan six priority delivery areas and the breadth of the issues related to continence mean that it touches several of these delivery areas. In order to provide focus the work to address the recommendations of this report will primarily be carried out within the *Early Detection and Management* delivery area, but will also link to the *Children’s and Maternity* and *Older and Vulnerable Adults* delivery areas as necessary.

4. Procurement of new Community Services contract

Merton CCG is currently re-procuring community services for its population, with a new contract to be delivered from April 2016 when the current contract ceases.

The procurement has provided an opportunity for the CCG to define new standards and requirements for services where relevant, and the new *Health Needs* requirement for the continence service requires that the service must provide holistic assessment and management, treatment and/or care of incontinence, that addresses the reason for the incontinence issues where possible or supports the management of long term needs with the overall aim of maximising self-care and independence

5. Recommendations of the Report

The report made 13 recommendations, of which ten were identified for implementation by Merton CCG. The Merton CCG approach to the implementation of these ten recommendations, many of which are also dependent upon contribution from current service providers, other local commissioners and LBM Public Health, is shown in section 6.

6. Actions to Date

The Merton CCG approach to implementation of these ten recommendations is shown below (in the order in which they are presented in the *Tackling Incontinence Amongst Women of Child-bearing Age* report).

Recommendation	MCCG Action
That women are warned incontinence may be a problem following childbirth and that pelvic floor exercises are important to help prevent it.	As a member of the local Maternity Networks, Merton CCG is working with other local commissioners and with providers across SWL to draw up a standard model specification for maternity services across SWL for 2016/17. The relevant issues are identified for inclusion in this specification. Merton CCG will monitor this through the <i>Children's and Maternity</i> delivery group. The continence requirements in the new contract for community services currently being procured include the ability of women to self-refer into the service, and the requirement that patients whose continence does not improve with conservative management be discharged to their GP for onward referral to specialist services.
That women should be given realistic information about the efficacy of pelvic floor exercises and advised what other options may be available in extremis.	
That women are advised they should not hesitate to contact either their GP or the continence service if they experience any problems with incontinence at any time in the future.	
NHS Trusts should place greater emphasis on early detection and prevention of continence issues. We suggest perhaps establishing local/regional clinical champions?	Merton CCG will liaise with local service providers to identify the requirements to improve early detection and prevention.
Incontinence issues should be prioritised as part of the Falls Prevention Strategy.	LBM Public Health team is leading the Merton Falls Prevention Strategy being delivered through a multi-agency implementation plan. Merton CCG, as one of the organisations collaborating with LBM PH, will work to ensure that incontinence issues are prioritised within this strategy.
Merton Clinical Commissioning Group should develop a clear pathway for unified continence services across the borough.	A number of continence pathways have been identified as part of a programme of work taking place within the CCG to implement a Clinical Decision Support system identifying local Best Practice pathways and embedding these into GP Clinical systems.
That MCCG and local acute NHS Trusts look into what role pharmaceutical companies may be able to take in hosting events to raise awareness on incontinence issues.	
That commissioners and the continence service seek to involve patient participation groups in raising awareness of continence issues.	The recommendations of the report will inform the development of the ongoing work plan of the MCCG <i>Early Detection and Management</i> delivery group, following the identification of the new community services provider (who will deliver a core component of the continence pathway).
That an information leaflet is produced to advertise continence services.	Merton CCG will liaise with local service providers to identify appropriate public information requirements, and will work with Public Health colleagues to establish appropriate methods for communication to the public.
That e-information leaflets and posters advertising continence services should be distributed in discreet locations such as Lavatory cubicles in local public buildings where women can access them privately.	

7. Next Steps for Merton CCG

Merton CCG is currently taking forward the following actions:

- Community Services re-procurement process is currently being progressed and will be completed in October 2015, with newly contracted services to be delivered from April 2016 onwards.
- The continence pathways will be incorporated into the first phase of the pilot of the Clinical Decision Support tool in October 2015.
- The CCG will continue to work as part of the SWL Maternity Network drawing up a standard model specification for maternity services across SWL for 2016/17. The development of this standardised service specification is a priority of the SWL maternity Network for 15/16.

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