

Community Equipment Service

Summary of Questionnaire Responses

September 2013

Healthwatch Devon

c/o Community Council of Devon

3 & 4 Cranmere Court, Lustleigh Close

Matford Business Park, Exeter EX2 8PW

Contact: Greg Davies - greg@devonrcc.org.uk - 01392 248919 ext*181

Background:

The aim of a Community Equipment Service (CES) is to provide individuals, who require assistance and support in their homes to maintain their health and independence, with access to the health and social care equipment that they require. The 2001 Department of Health Guide to Integrating Community Equipment Services identified the role of community equipment as:

‘enabling adults who require assistance to perform essential activities of daily living, to maintain their health and independence and live as full a life as possible.’

The Devon CES is currently provided by PLUSS, a social enterprise owned by DCC, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council. The Devon CES covers the DCC footprint including North, East, West and South Devon, excluding the Plymouth and Torquay local authority areas.

The core type of equipment provided currently includes

- bathing and toileting equipment (e.g. shower chairs, bath seats, raised toilet seats etc)
- household equipment (e.g. perching stools, trolleys, special cutlery etc)
- transfer, raising equipment and hoists (e.g. riser/recliner chairs, overhead hoists etc)
- community nursing equipment (e.g. beds, mattresses, cushions etc)
- mobility equipment (e.g. crutches, walking sticks etc)
- some Continuing Healthcare funded equipment
- collection, recycling and reissue of equipment provided by charities
- community equipment needed by prisoners in Devon’s prisons.

Research Methodology:

A questionnaire was agreed in consultation with the commissioners.

- The questionnaire and a covering invitation to respond were sent to around 2000 members of the public from our supporters mailing list. Copies are included at the end of this report.
- An easy read version was sent to our delivery partners (Devon Senior Voice, CAB Devon, Living Options, Devon Link-up, Devon People First, Be Involved Devon and Carers Voice, and Hikmat) with a request to cascade it to their networks.
- A web version was made available on the Healthwatch Devon website.

The questionnaires were made available from 23rd August

The deadline for completion was 6th September

Following the deadline, copies of all the responses were made available to the commissioners.

This report summarises the responses and presents them in a more structured way drawing out the comments from Users / Carers, Support Organisations and Health Sector Workers separately.



Review of the Community Equipment Service

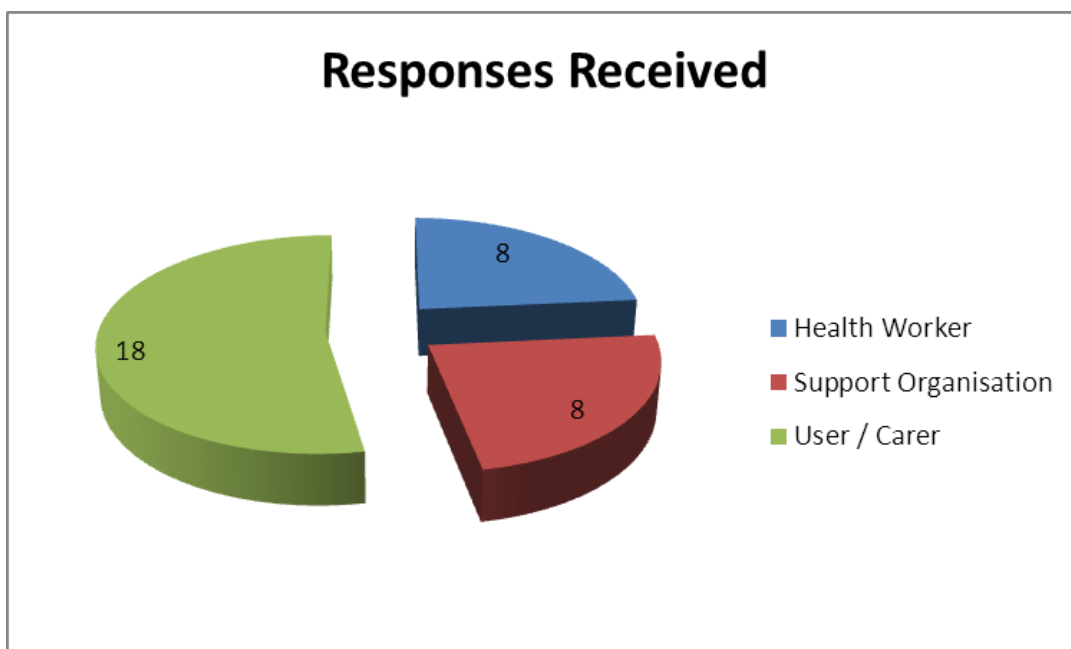
The Community Equipment Service (CES) in Devon is jointly funded by DCC and the NHS and is currently provided by PLUSS.

The aim of the CES is to support adults who require assistance to perform essential activities of daily living to maintain their health and independence and live as full a life as possible, by providing access to the health and social care equipment that they require to enable them to achieve this.

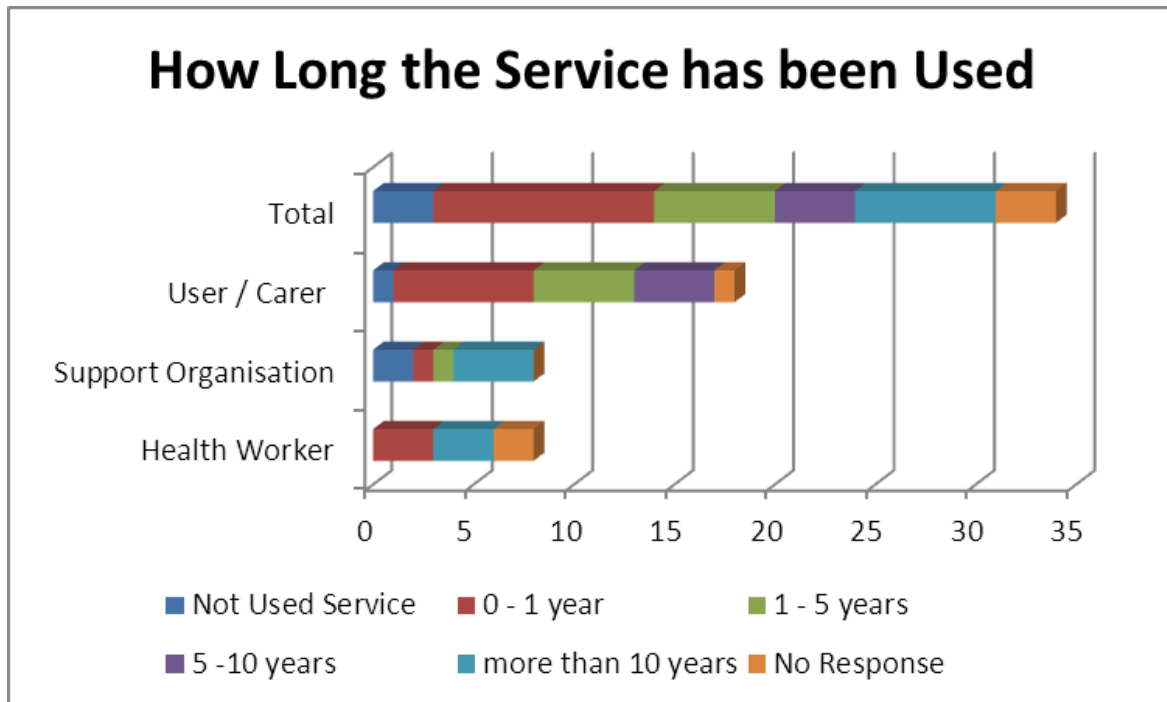
The CES will be re-commissioned in the autumn by Devon County Council: Members of the public who have recently or currently used the service were invited to give their feedback in order to help shape the future of the service.

Who Responded

Although the questionnaire was targeted at members of the public responses were also received from Health Sector Workers and Support Organisations. The following pie chart shows the number of responses received>



How Long Have You Used the Service?



This chart shows that many Users and Carers have less than 1 years' experience of the service whilst a high proportion of Support Organisations and Health Workers have more than 10 years' experience.

What is the Service Used For?

What Health Workers and Support Organisations Told Us:

- To help clients live independently at home.
- Providing assistance in making sure everything is easily accessible or aided as much as possible to prevent risk and hospital admissions.
- To make sure that discharge patients are adequately equipped should they not be able to cope as well as they were first able when leaving hospital.
- Provide end of life care for people who are being discharged enabling them to live the last few days/weeks of their lives in the place of their choice which is home.



What Users / Carers Told Us:

- As a result of the worsening Arthritic joints I began to plan on trying to get a bungalow from the council. PLUSS came along and assessed my needs to stay in the house.
- To enable my mother to return home from a nursing home following fractured femur convalescence.
- My Mother has had a couple of falls this year and the service has been a great value to her. She could not manage without her household trolley, it has given her the confidence to get around her home.

Types of Facilities Provided:



The picture above shows Beds and Mattresses as the most commonly provided items at 8 responses. Followed by Perching Stools (7 responses) going down to Compression Stocking Aid - Gel Pads etc to Wet Room with 1 response each.

What Impact has the Equipment had on Quality of Life?

Users and Carers Told Us:

- The equipment had a dramatic impact on her quality of life and independence enabling her to come home after 7 weeks in hospital
- Prevented a potentially serious accident in the bath. I now feel safer having a shower.
- All the quality in the world; couldn't live without them. Thank you very much.
- Improved independence and safety and assisted carer in process.
- Some equipment helped and some was totally useless. Eg a shower seat that would not fit in the shower.
- It would be impossible to have my husband at home without it.
- The impact has been invaluable and enabled her to stay in her own home.
- The hoists ensure safe transfers for me & limits strain on my carers. My powered wheelchair is my legs, without it I would be housebound.
- A great help so that I can prepare meals, wash up , take a shower etc without getting totally exhausted and risking a fall.
- Allowed Mummy to live back at home with us until I could no longer care for her so she moved to a care home.
- The impact on our daily life has been massive. My mother-in-law is 84 and has MS, she cannot weight bare at all and I was doing all the manual lifting of her. The service provided has been invaluable to us if we had not had the hoists then she would have been bedridden.
- Mother is able to walk unsupervised around the house & is able to visit the surgery, the hospital and the hairdresser on a regular basis. She is able to use the toilet on her own with a reduced risk of falling.
- It has made a great deal of difference to my husband. He is now able to lift himself from the toilet, pull himself up into bed with a little help from me & wash his upper body using the perching stool.

Comments from Health Workers / Support Organisations:

- Couldn't manage rehab without the equipment, so it greatly increases our patients quality of life. It means we can use the right equipment to get them home quicker.
- It has enabled patient to get home, and for the care agencies to have the appropriate equipment, to provide the care alongside the family in a safe way.



What has been Good about the Service Provided by PLUS?

Users and Carers Told Us:

- PLUS provide regular checks to ensure that the equipment is serviced and if there is a problem they come out very quickly. The more disabled my mother in law became the more the equipment changed. Staff also suggested easier ways to do things. Delivery also very quick and drivers always helpful.
- The service was very good all my problems were discussed and the suggestions of items they could let me have on loan and the fixtures they could make. This was all completed within a fortnight of the first meeting.
- Very prompt in visiting after reporting the fault with my hoist & determined to solve the problem where several visits were necessary. They ensured I had the necessary equipment during the interim. Helpful staff on telephone & visiting engineers.
- They are usually quite quick to respond. The service people are always polite and very helpful. The office staff less so at times. It is all provided free of charge and service without any problems. The hours have now been extended to 6 pm with an emergency line until 9pm
- Things come quite quickly but more notice of delivery would be useful as sometimes less than half hour. Stair rails were delivered and fitted - I would like to have known about that before hand as I would have paid for them to be matching with the existing rails.
- The OT came very promptly after the request went in and was very efficient preparing the paperwork. It was easy for my husband to drive me to Ottery St Mary to collect the items.
- Excellent communication at time of expected visit as property access was difficult. Punctuality and courtesy extended very professionally.
- On the whole, everyone has been very helpful but could not always help with our problems. Very good with delivery times & driver very helpful on all occasions.
- We are not sure if PLUS was the actual source of the equipment. It came through something the hospital set up.
- Equipment available through NHS (free of charge) Equipment delivered to and collected from front door. Quick delivery of initial equipment.
- Deliveries made on time by very obliging staff
- The initial observations and recognition of what was required.
- It was quick
- Very good service although could be a bit quicker.
- Helpful staff, provided right equipment

Comments from Health Workers / Support Organisations:

- PLUSS were helpful in setting up the new syringe driver project.
- Polite phone manner.
- Can be efficient and in this area 99% OK.
- They are always on the end of a phone to help you out
- Generally the staff are willing to help and answer queries on the phone. The equipment delivered is usually correct.
- It provides equipment that is unavailable from the retailers
- Easy to communicate and reliable
- Requests can be emailed
- Pluss has a twenty four hour response time when necessary and will always be helpful when supplying equipment
- The service by PLUSS is excellent. When delivery has been timely a good facility
- There are some staff who are very helpful and informative.

Was there Anything that Wasn't so Good?

Users and Carers Told Us:

6 Users / Carers found no fault with the service, they answered:

- No
- No cannot fault the service.
- No. They were always most helpful and prompt with their service.
- Not in our experience
- No
- Nothing

Others raised a range of concerns:

- Delay in replacing faulty equipment which could not be substituted by something else for some time. Poor communication between CES office and driver (who has a mobile phone) with carer in retrieving equipment after person died adding distress for the carer and a missed appointment with the solicitor. Requested 2 staff to dismantle bed. Heavy and in tight space. Reluctance from CES to provide staff. Situation stressful after relative died and situation not handled sensitively enough by CES to support carer. At the time the carer did not put in a complaint but it would be important that the ED take on board appropriate request and feedback from public members.



- Both myself & my husband had reclining chairs, they were unable to raise his chair to help him rise from the sitting position to standing. I have since put two cushions on his chair but that in turn meant that the arms on the chair were too low to support his arms/shoulders. I have now had to balance folded pillows on the arms, so that his shoulders are supported, this is far from ideal. Compression sock aid broke after four years use, provided a new one which broke after a few weeks use, since then they have been unable to replace the aid & my husbands legs have become very inflamed as I can no longer put on his compression socks. We have a very small bathroom & once all the bariatric aids were installed I found it very difficult to use the bathroom without having to lift equipment into/onto the bath [all of which were very heavy] so I could use the sink or help my husband when toileting him.
- Sometimes the telephone staff are not as understanding as you would wish. They can be rude and unwilling to understand the urgency, thinking the 3 days they are allowed for responding is set in stone. Unfortunately we cannot manage without any of the equipment for 3 days. They very seldom notify you if the driver does not manage to complete his round and leave it up to you to chase them for a re-scheduled collection/delivery.
- I would never complain but staff need to know that commodes in the bedroom are not stable unless wedged between pieces of furniture. Mum leant on one side of the commode and had a second fall which made her deteriorate mentally, as she is now so scared.
- I was offered a walking frame to use to go shopping until DDC installed a ramp over the concrete steps. However the DC did not install the ramp and so the frame was not necessary. Care direct failed to encourage the council to install the ramp.
- Despite being asked not to bring equipment before a certain time and then coming an hour early from Exeter to Totnes and then had to return the next day - total waste of resources.
- Time it took to deal with the case. Referred in November. Due to come in July but the death of the service user removed the need.
- As two providers were involved perhaps a better level of communication could have prevailed so as to make just the one visit.
- The shower stool is rather large for our shower but it is not easy to change it for a different one without re applying for one.
- Some equipment was too big and scary to use (hoist)
- Shower stool not fitted square so looks wonky and removal leaves holes on the wall tiles in the cubicle. Whole bathroom now needs retiling.
- Just a bit quicker. We get weeks of long gaps which need joining up a bit better.

Comments from Health Workers / Support Organisations:

- How long it takes to get the equipment put into place for those who need it at the end of their lives. For instance, between Christmas and New Year (2012-13), CES was shut and we could not get equipment in place to discharge some patients from the Hospice. The system often feels bureaucratic.
- It was frustrating to have to find 1 out of the 3 authorisers for mattress ordering. Don't always get sent what was requested and it is not at the appropriate level for pressure relieving that was requested. Also we were never told they cannot send what was ordered. Mattresses particularly would break down often and we had to wait for replacements . Equipment following the death of a patient would be left for up to a week before being collected - causing the family further distress
- Telephone calls take some time to be answered. Delays in providing equipment. After being advised that someone would return my call, no call back from CES.
- Orders sent, told not received even when by email. Feeling of not being very organised at times. Sometimes there are delays in the more distant areas. Dartmouth can sometimes be a problem but this applies more to the Retailers. The prescription service is very confusing. Two different prescription pads for Exeter and Torbay. Plus the retailer is poorly stocked.
- Delivery times/waits/when ordering hoists and slings they have never arrived together or the slings are not the correct ones ordered. Not able to arrange with a patient a time to assess/train/teach for the hoist due to late delivery incorrect equipment. Paperwork does not have the name of the person who ordered the equipment so this gets very confusing when being delivered to a hospital
- Sometimes the MAP 1's take too long to be actioned. I have been told by some service user's that some delivery drivers have been abrupt/rude and that some don't have very good English which makes communication difficult.
- Faxes sent through often get 'lost'. This unreliability makes more work for us as we then spend ages on the phone checking. It has consistently taken me 15-20 minutes on hold waiting to speak to someone, despite the message ringing in my ear that they usually answer calls within 2 minutes. Well that has never happened to me!
- Emails appear to go missing. Mattresses out of stock with a week wait for new stock. Items not delivered in the specified time frame ie 3 day request and 7 day delivery. Equipment not maintained, onus is on client to phone up to request maintenance or replacement. Conflicting information regarding delivery not attempted despite CES advising they had tried to deliver.
- Confirmation of times but understand this is not easy to improve

- The only down side is that Pluss is sometimes slow in collecting equipment which can be difficult if it is abed in a lounge or similar.
- 'B' Mobile in Exmouth does not always have the equipment required and can take 2 weeks to deliver. Exeter Disability services on Marsh Barton is a better service but if demand is very high can have difficulty. Many clients need help with installing the equipment.
- Delivery delays of a considerable length of time. Also a seeming lack of interest to collect redundant equipment.
- They do not supply the equipment on time which results in care packages to be cancelled. The families are hanging around for a whole day and unable to visit their relative in the hospice which creates stress. They do not supply the whole equipment at once and have to take the rest on another day. Left equipment out side the property and not assembling it if someone has popped out. Unable to process forms from other professionals, when you contact to ensure they have received it you are told no, then they find it which takes time. They do not remove equipment quickly after someone has died causing distress to the bereaved. You are then told they do not have certain equipment in store when you know there is some sitting in a house waiting for collection
- No scenario to give but I want to explain my frustrations with this service. I find that on so many occasions I have to ring the stores to ask why an order has not been delivered and I am told that my e mail has not been received but it miraculously turns up later that day . I spend many hours a week trying to get through on the phone chasing deliveries. There is a time delay on special orders being delivered and there is no feedback when orders are refused by clients or there is an issue with an order, communication is very poor. I do not have the confidence that I am getting one day deliveries. Frequently the equipment is incorrect or faulty but the client is made to accept it. Telephone information is incorrect. Technicians do not receive adequate information on their referrals and there is a delay of many weeks between ordering and the tech receiving the minor adaption sheet. Delivery staff do not ring clients in advance so they just turn up . Staff knowledge of equipment is very poor. Poor feedback on complaints , often none at all.

What are Your Priorities and Aspirations for the Service?

Users and Carers Told Us:

- We were told that once the equipment was put on a prescription for us the items were then ours. Now I have a perching stool & a bath board that I no longer have a use for. I think it would be very useful to be able to return items. Foldable wheelchair ramps would be a great addition to help wheelchair users get outside their homes. My husband has not been outside our house since March, which does not help his depression at all.
- Prompt service, telephone cover from 8am-9pm or later for emergencies. Replacement faulty equipment should not need to be assessed by O.T. only if needs have changed. Knowledge of products and procedures.
- Promptness of visit by O.T. following hospital discharge. Hope and anticipated recovery experienced by client are positive emotions, pity to have them dashed owing to poor communications and delay.
- A service with good communication between all parties involved to improve the service as very valued by many. Less waiting time for 'specials' equipment to assist the individual.
- A follow up phone call after equipment delivered to make sure that it is ok and should any amendments be made.
- To try and assist where possible so she can maintain the independent living and not go into a nursing home until absolutely necessary. Perhaps occasional follow ups?
- Just need joining up properly. You've got the web these days so there is no need to wait.
- I would support continued provision by PLUSS rather than a local authority. Supply of an addressed envelope would be useful for posting back completed questionnaires.
- More efficient booking and delivery procedures for equipment.
- That the service is quicker to be put in place.
- Quite frankly I am tired of being told to look after myself when more and more I am being made to live in my home becoming an 'old peoples home' . What I really need is bodily help to allow me to come and go as I want, not just to be within a very close range of the house at all times. I find carers are difficult and expensive. I dread more equipment being supplied.
- I will need advice on grab rails in the house and hand rail in the garden as our site is very steep in places. Also it is so difficult to walk and carry that a



trolley of some sort to support myself and carry food or drinks would be excellent.

- Possibly a chair lift on the stairs.
- I hope that this service continues as the equipment is invaluable. I am sure that many carers and patients would not manage without it
- The service was perfectly adequate and professionally provided. Could not ask for anything more. Hopefully will not need it again too quickly
- Continue to provide equipment for those who need it
- Keeping up the same standard

Comments from Health Workers / Support Organisations:

- Joined up care. Rapid access to equipment to help people stay at home to die.
- Satellite stores big enough to have critical mattress for end of life and high risk patients being discharge rapidly from hospital. For patients being discharged to have the hospital order and get into place the equipment needed.
- Rapid access to equipment required to help improve people's quality of life.
- Quicker responses for patients to help keep them in their own homes. More technician services to help achieve quicker discharges.
- Speedy and timely deliveries A more simple system of paperwork to use. I get very confused when having to order different items via different paperwork.
- To process orders in a timely way. To have drivers who are polite and have a good level of spoken English. To not be defensive when there are queries/complaints
- More reliable and easier to get hold of.
- Easy access to the service when needed and supportive advice on how to use it (including advice on which items may be most relevant when choice exists).
- Quick and prompt efficient service
- Items maintained by schedule to be arranged by CES who should be responsible. Requests to be entered correctly with requested delivery time frame. Drivers to be more helpful and follow-up where promised.
- The service has to be prompt and efficient wherever in Devon and be able to provide what is required urgently if necessary.
- The problem with the small equipment (eg commodes, Mowbray frames, walking frames, shower stools, raisers, etc.) They are ordered on prescription from a local supplier and then when no longer required by the client are told to throw them on the rubbish tip. To disband the idea of

writing prescriptions and throwing the equipment away. The reason given was that it was more expensive to clean and sterilise the equipment. This is not credible to the public.

- Prompt delivery. Collection of redundant equipment
- Professional smart response when on the phone and know how to find the order forms. For equipment to be delivered when stated, on time, in full and assembled. For all equipment to be collected within 24/48 hours of someone dying, this will help stress levels for the bereaved and enable them to cope better with the next step of arranging a funeral.
- What I require is a service which is efficient, trustworthy and consistent.
- Having used Pluss for many years I feel the service has deteriorated over that time.

Tel: 0800 520 0640
Email: info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk
Web: www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk

23 August 2013

Dear Service Users and Carers

The Community Equipment Service (CES) will be re-commissioned in the autumn by Devon County Council (DCC): They have asked Healthwatch to invite members of the public who have recently or currently used the service to give their feedback in order to help shape the future of the service.

Please take a few minutes of your time to fill in the short questionnaire on our website <http://www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk/community-equipment-service-survey/> , based upon your experience of the CES and what you would like to see continue or change in the future or alternatively complete the questionnaire below and either email or post to us:

Please note that the closing date for this consultation is Friday 6th September 2013.

What is the Community Equipment Service:

The CES in Devon is jointly funded by DCC and the NHS and is currently provided by PLUS.

The aim of the CES is to support adults who require assistance to perform essential activities of daily living to maintain their health and independence and live as full a life as possible, by providing access to the health and social care equipment that they require to enable them to achieve this.



Working with the Community Council of Devon



What type of equipment does the CES provide:

- bathing and toileting equipment (e.g. shower chairs, bath seats, raised toilet seats etc.)
- household equipment (e.g. perching stools, trolleys, special cutlery etc.)
- transfer, raising equipment and hoists (e.g. riser/recliner chairs, overhead hoists etc.)
- community nursing equipment (e.g. beds, mattresses, cushions etc.)
- mobility equipment (e.g. crutches, walking sticks etc.)
- some Continuing Healthcare funded equipment

Kind regards

Dawn

Dawn Eckhart
Healthwatch Devon Project Manager



Working with the Community Council of Devon



The Questionnaire:

Name:

Contact details (either email or phone number):

(The above questions can be left blank if you wish)

Question 1:

Tell us about what you have used the service for?

For Example: what were the health issues you (or your 'cared for' person) faced, what equipment did you need to enable independent living...



Question 2:

How long have you used the service for?

Question 3:

What impact has the equipment had on your (or your ‘cared for’ persons) quality of life and independence?



Question 4:

What has been good about the service provided by PLUS?

For Example: understanding your situation and providing the right equipment, quick and efficient delivery and collection, helpful staff, responding to your changing needs.....

Question 5:

Was there anything that wasn't so good about the service?

For Example: understanding your situation and providing the best equipment, punctuality of delivery and collection, staff helpfulness, responding to your changing needs.....



Question 6:

What are your priorities and aspirations for the service to provide in the future?

For Example: current equipment valued, other equipment or assistance that could be provided, more efficient equipment booking and delivery procedures.....

If you need additional space please add another sheet of paper.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RESPOND TO THIS SURVEY
YOUR VOICE COUNTS!**

Please return your completed questionnaire by Fri 6th Sept 2013.

Please fill in, save and return your completed questionnaire to:

info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk

or if you prefer to tell us about your experiences and opinion over the phone, call us on 0800 520 0640 (Freephone from a landline)

Or return the completed questionnaire by post to:

**FREEPOST RTEK-TZZT-RXAL,
Healthwatch Devon,
Unit 4 Cranmere Court,
Lustleigh Close,
Matford Business Park,
EXETER
Devon EX2 8PW**

We will keep you informed of how you have helped influence the future of this service via our email bulletins and newsletter - make sure you are signed up! Visit: www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk



Working with the Community Council of Devon

