

## **Cambridge & Peterborough Wheelchair Service Response to Healthwatch Cambridge Survey Sitting Comfortably August 2016**

### **Introduction and background**

This report responds to the findings and recommendations arising from the survey carried out by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire called *Sitting Comfortably: Listening to the experiences of adults and children using wheelchair services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough*.

### **About the Wheelchair Service**

Provide is commissioned by Cambridge and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Wheelchair Service.

Provide is a Community Interest Company (Social Enterprise) that delivers a broad range of health and social care services in the community, and Provide is committed to making sure that they are safe, responsive and of high quality.

The Wheelchair Service is commissioned to provide NHS funded wheelchairs to people who have a permanent disability which stops them walking.

The service is delivered by a multidisciplinary team made up of experienced Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Clinical Scientists and Technicians who undertake assessments to ensure that the users are provided with the wheelchair and postural support seating that meets their needs.

Once the wheelchair has been provided the service continues to support the service user with wheelchair maintenance through their partners Bartram's. The wheelchair service is not commissioned to provide regular reviews. However, service users can re refer themselves to the service or be re referred by any health professional should their needs change.

### **Provide Response to Healthwatch survey**

Provide would like to thank Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and its partners for undertaking this survey and we would also like to thank our customers for taking the time to participate in this survey to give us their feedback.

Provide notes that 65 people participated in this survey which represents 1% of the 6788 customers we have on our caseload. Provide acknowledges that of the 65 people completing this survey 40% rated their experience as poor or very poor and we would like to apologise to each of these customers that this was their experience. We would like to reassure them that we will consider very carefully all their feedback in this report in order to make service improvements where needed. Provide are pleased to note that 60% of our customers had a much better experience with 10% rating the service as good or very good.

For those customers that felt unhappy with how their complaint was dealt with it would be useful to understand why this was, so that the service can put this right.

## **Healthwatch Recommendation 1.**

### **The wheelchair service sets and meets clear response times**

There is a set response time for the wheelchair service which has been set by Cambridge and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group who have commissioned the Service. This response time is for all assessments and provision of chairs to be completed within 18 weeks of receipt of referral to the service.

In 2015 the service achieved this target 97% of the time and in 2016 we have achieved this 99% of the time.

### **Ensure that wheelchairs are provided to users as quickly as possible**

We acknowledge that 18 weeks is a long time to wait for a wheelchair so we try to ensure that the majority of our customers wait as short a time as possible within the resources we have. In 2015 our average waiting time was 6.4 weeks and in 2016 our average waiting time is now 4.5 weeks. This has been achieved as a result of a transformation programme we have been undertaking over the over the past 18 months.

We acknowledge that waiting times for a small proportion of our customers are still longer than we would like. This can occur where a customer has very complex needs which require the expertise of a number of professionals to be involved and particularly where trials of equipment are needed to identify the best possible postural and mobility solution to meet their needs. For some of our customers with particularly complex needs we may also need to order bespoke equipment for them which can then take some time to be specially manufactured and delivered which can lead to longer waiting times.

The service constantly monitors the service waiting times and works to try and reduce delays where possible and we always ensure that urgent cases are prioritised and seen in a shorter timescale. We report the service waiting times to our commissioners on a monthly basis.

### **Responds promptly to Service users enquires**

We understand the importance of ensuring we answer all calls promptly. As part of our transformation programme, Provide has worked to address issues with contacting the service. We now have 4 telephone lines available and incoming calls are directed to the first available administrator.

Our Administration staff are available between 9am and 5 pm Monday to Friday to answer telephone enquiries. When phone lines are busy an answerphone is available so customers can leave a message. Messages are picked up daily and every effort is made to answer enquiries the same day.

Prior to transformation the service had a large number of agency staff. There is now a stable workforce in post which has improved continuity and consistency. Our administration staff are trained to be able to answer and deal with enquiries themselves wherever possible to avoid

the need for our customer to be passed onto another member of staff or department. Should advice or support be required from a clinician they will arrange for this to happen but this can take a bit of time to arrange if the clinician is undertaking clinical commitments.

The service is also contactable via email where this meets our customer's preference. Urgent enquiries are always passed to the manager and prioritised accordingly.

### **Has clear and realistic guidelines, which are adhered to for prompt repairs and maintenance calls.**

Provide recognises that prompt repair and maintenance is essential for our customers and we regret that a small proportion of our customers have experienced difficulties achieving a prompt or responsive service. Provide works in partnership with Bartram's to deliver wheelchair repairs and maintenance. Response times are contractually agreed with Bartrams and are monitored on a monthly basis. We will ensure we share all the feedback we have received from our customers in this survey with Bartrams so that they can use this feedback to improve their service and we will monitor this through our meetings with them.

### **Healthwatch Recommendation 2.**

#### **Coordination between different parts of the service must improve.**

Provide recognises that there were areas of concern highlighted in this survey around communication and co-ordination between different parts of the system. As part of the transformation work we have been undertaking we have addressed these issues.

We have ensured that our Therapists now have a dedicated administrator to liaise with ensuring that client appointments are co-ordinated and queries are dealt with in a timely way. The administration team are also now aligned to specific geographical areas to ensure there is improved communication, co-ordination and continuity for customers contacting the service.

We acknowledge that it can be difficult for clients to differentiate between Bartrams and Provide. Our patient information is being developed and will specify which organisation provides which service. In service provision terms Bartram's and Provide are partners and work closely together so there is a flow of information between both organisations. To improve the communication and co-ordination between Bartrams and Provide there is now a link administrator at Bartram's to ensure lines of communication are clear and concise. We are monitoring our progress with this and will continue to work on improving this for our customers.

#### **Clear information about who is eligible to use the wheelchair service, how to access it and what to expect from the service.**

The service has produced a leaflet for children's wheelchair provision which is now given out by the clinicians at the first appointment. This has been distributed to schools and clinics and it is available on Provides website.



C&P Childrens Info  
Leaflet.pdf

The service is in the process of developing additional information aimed at young people and adult users and carers. We would welcome the input of wheelchair users and their carers in the development of this leaflet to ensure we provide meaningful and useful information.

### **To be confident that the system is coordinated effectively.**

As mentioned earlier in this response, Provide is very keen to ensure the service continuously improves and as such we commissioned a transformation team to review all processes procedures and systems. As a result of this we have seen significant improvements in service waiting times, and improved co-ordination and communication which has resulted in a decrease in complaints. In 2015 we received 38 complaints which is 3 per month on average and in 2016 so far we have received only 1 complaint per month on average. We of course recognise that there is still work to do and we are committed to maintaining the improvements we have made so far and will proactively monitor our service performance to identify where further improvements need to be made.

### **Healthwatch Recommendation 3.**

#### **Wheelchairs meet the individual needs**

We are aware of just how important it is for our customers that they get the right chair to meet their individual and personal needs. To achieve this we ensure we undertake comprehensive individualised assessments to identify their specific posture and mobility requirements. The therapists then work to identify the appropriate equipment to meet the identified clinical needs from the equipment available from the NHS. The service is able to supply a small range of colours, wheels and cushions and they use a number of wheelchair suppliers and postural seating companies to ensure a range of options is available to meet individual needs.

All wheelchairs are equipped with suspension which can cope with what you would expect to meet in normal terrain; however it is difficult to cater for all eventualities. The service is not commissioned to provide lights or horns so unfortunately we cannot supply these.

There are occasions where our customers' personal preferences exceed what we are able to provide them with from an NHS funded service. When this occurs we will work with them to reach a compromise that will meet their needs and support them with advice and information on where they can source their own equipment should they so wish.

#### **Users and their families/carers feel they are listened to.**

As part of the comprehensive assessment process we try to work in consultation and partnership with our customers to identify and meet their individual needs. If a customer

receives their chair and finds it does not meet their needs as expected we have a process in place for them to be able to contact the service to let us know, so that we can work with them to put this right.

We also invite our service users to give us their feedback using the Friends and Family Test survey which we publish on our website. We monitor our service compliments and complaints to identify what we do well and where we need to improve. These mechanisms enabled us to make positive changes to the service over the past 18 months.

This Healthwatch survey provides a further valuable source of feedback from our customers. We will share this feedback with all our staff to make them aware of our customers' feedback and to seek their support and ideas on how we can further improve.

The wheelchair service is keen to develop more ways to engage with our customers and we are in the process of arranging a meeting with the Speak Out Council to discuss how we can work together to support its young members.

If there are other user forums which Healthwatch and their partners feel we could get involved with we would welcome the opportunity to do so.

**There is a clear understanding between staff and wheelchair users and their families about when and how their wheelchair needs will be regularly reassessed.**

The service is not contracted by the commissioner to provide routine regular reviews. However, reviews can be initiated by the wheelchair user or their carer or via healthcare practitioners in the community as and when a review is required. This is explained to service users when the wheelchair is initially provided and is in our children's' information leaflet. It will also be included in our new adult information leaflet currently under development.