



The public's experience:

Medequip services in North Yorkshire

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Report published November 2023

Introduction

Who are Medequip?

Medequip is the largest provider of integrated community equipment in the UK¹. The service is provided on behalf of the NHS and North Yorkshire Council.

Equipment includes all the aids and equipment people may need when returning home from hospital or to maintain and improve their independence at home such as walking frames, beds, and hoists.

Medequip currently manages 40+ contracts across England and Wales, including North Yorkshire. It has a strong tradition of partnership working and customer care and is building on these qualities to focus on working together with the community to deliver its vision of 'keeping people independent for longer'.

What did we do?

Healthwatch North Yorkshire were commissioned by Medequip to help get feedback from people who have accessed and used their services.

We created a survey to explore all aspects of the service, from the information given to people about the equipment to how it is delivered and installed in their homes, serviced, and repaired. The survey was produced in a range of formats to ensure it was accessible for all. There was an online version of the survey as well as a standard print, large print, and Easy Read version. There was also the option for people to complete the survey by phone.

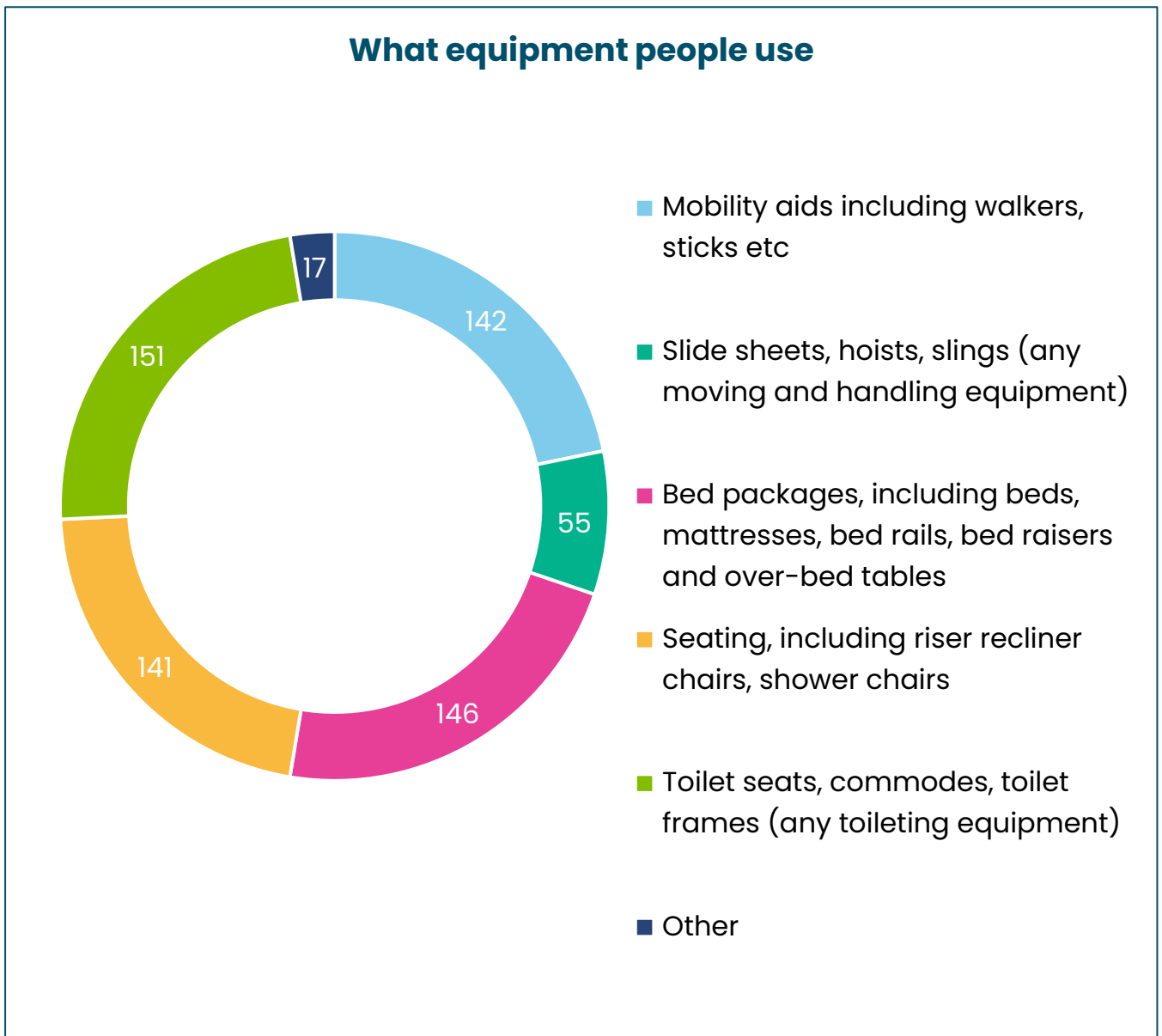
Medequip shared the survey via text with a sample of people who use their services. This sample included 4,500 people that have used Medequip in the last three months (via repairs/service, new equipment delivery, collections etc.)

The survey was also shared through a promotional campaign (via social media, newsletter articles, leaflets etc.) as well as via regional voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations who helped to promote the survey (both online and via hard copies).

¹ [Medequip - Integrated Community Equipment Services \(medequip-uk.com\)](http://medequip-uk.com)

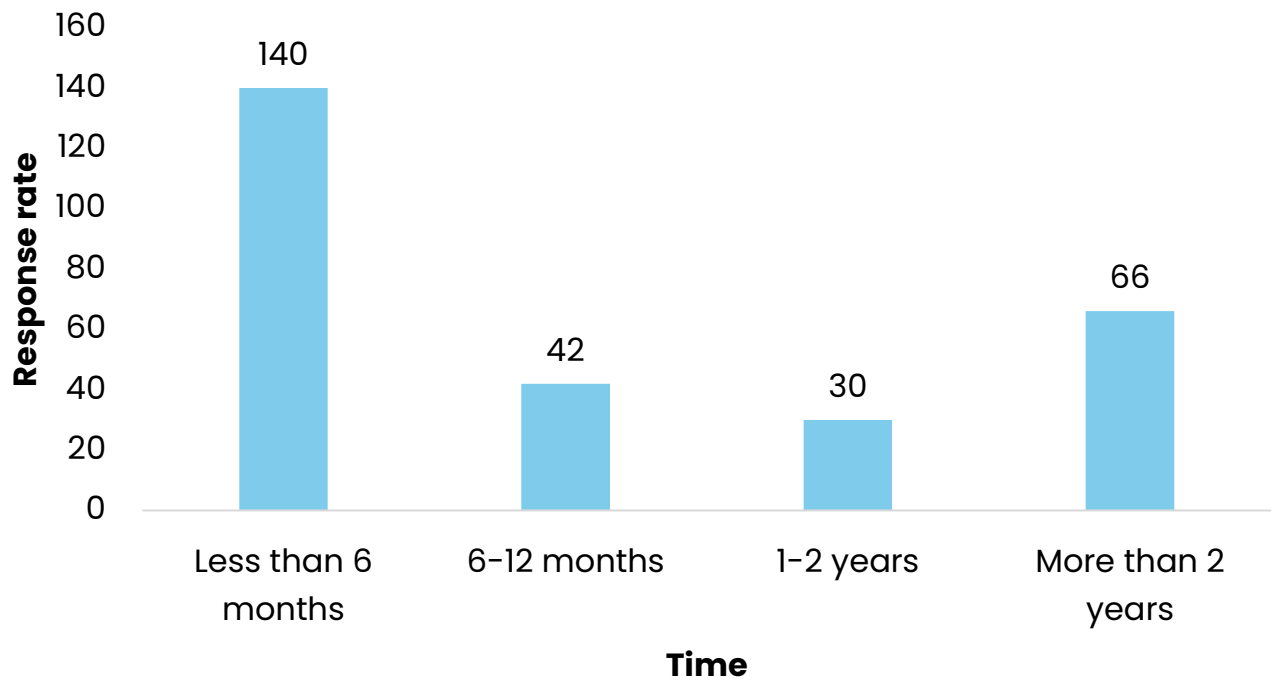
Who did we hear from?

We received 283 responses to our survey. **Just over half said they use the equipment (56%); the remaining respondents (people who took part in our survey) were either unpaid carers, family members or friends (41%) or paid carers (3%)** of the people who use the equipment. In terms of what equipment people use there was a range of responses, as shown below. The 'Other' responses included grab rails (such as stair rails and bath rails), stoma equipment, hearing equipment (MegaLoop), trolleys and adjustable steps.

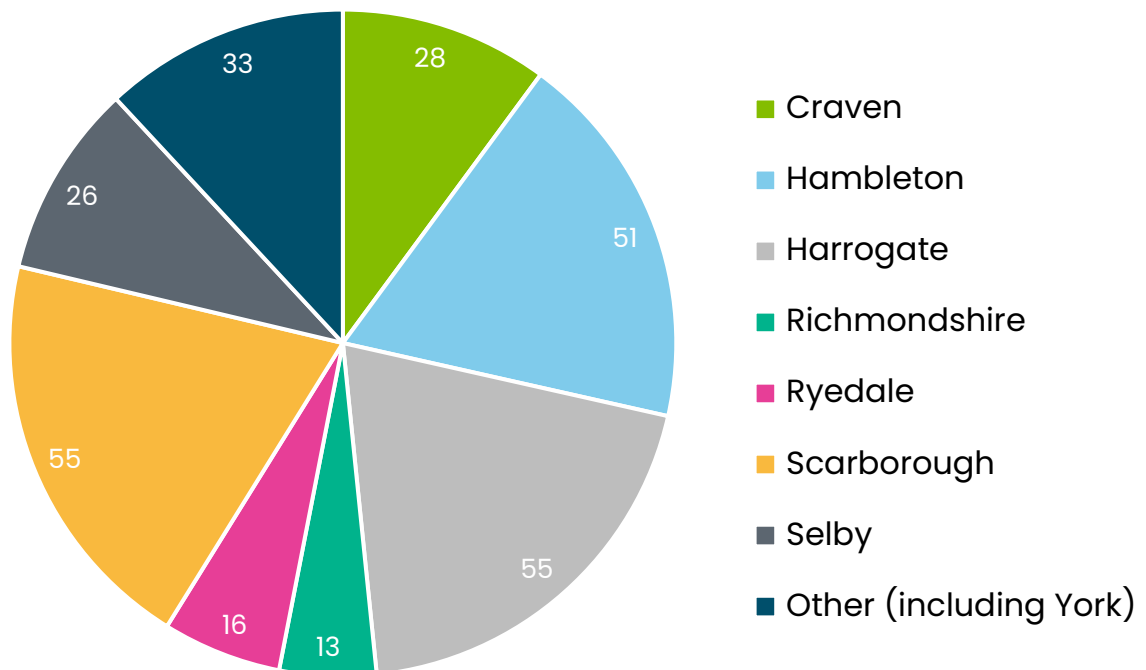


Please note wheelchairs are not provided by Medequip.

How long people have had equipment



Where respondents live in North Yorkshire



Age

Most respondents were aged between 50–79 (35% between 50–64; 33% between 65–79), and a smaller proportion were aged 80+ (20%) or between 25 to 49 (11%) or 18–24 (<1%).

Gender

In terms of gender, 63% said they identify as a woman, 34% as a man and the remaining 3% of respondents said they were either non-binary (1 person), intersex (1 person) or would prefer not to say (6 people).

Ethnicity

94% of respondents were White British, 1% Asian and 5% would prefer not to say.

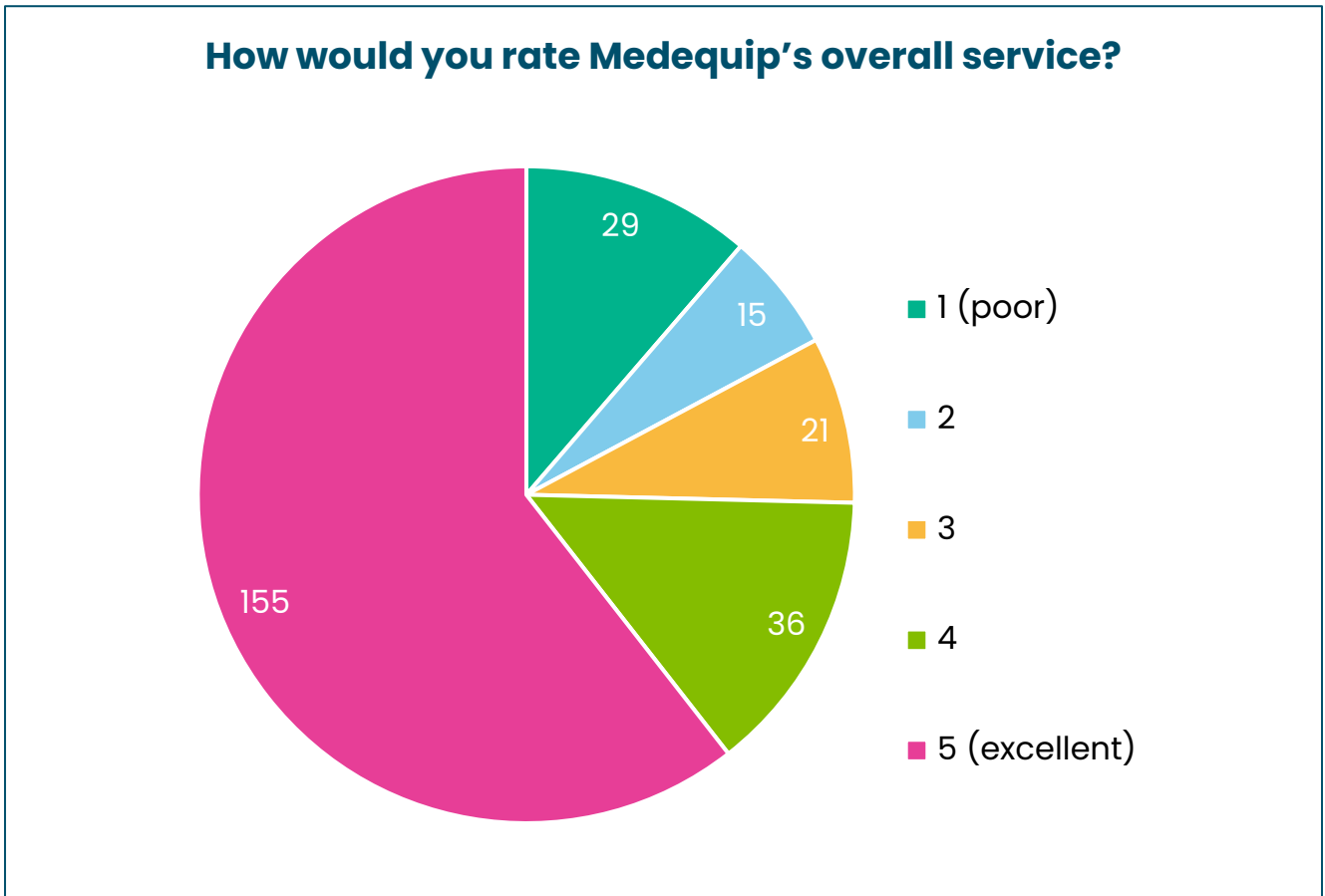
Disability

71% said they consider themselves to have a disability, 27% said they did not consider themselves to have a disability and 2% would prefer not to say.



Overall rating of Medequip

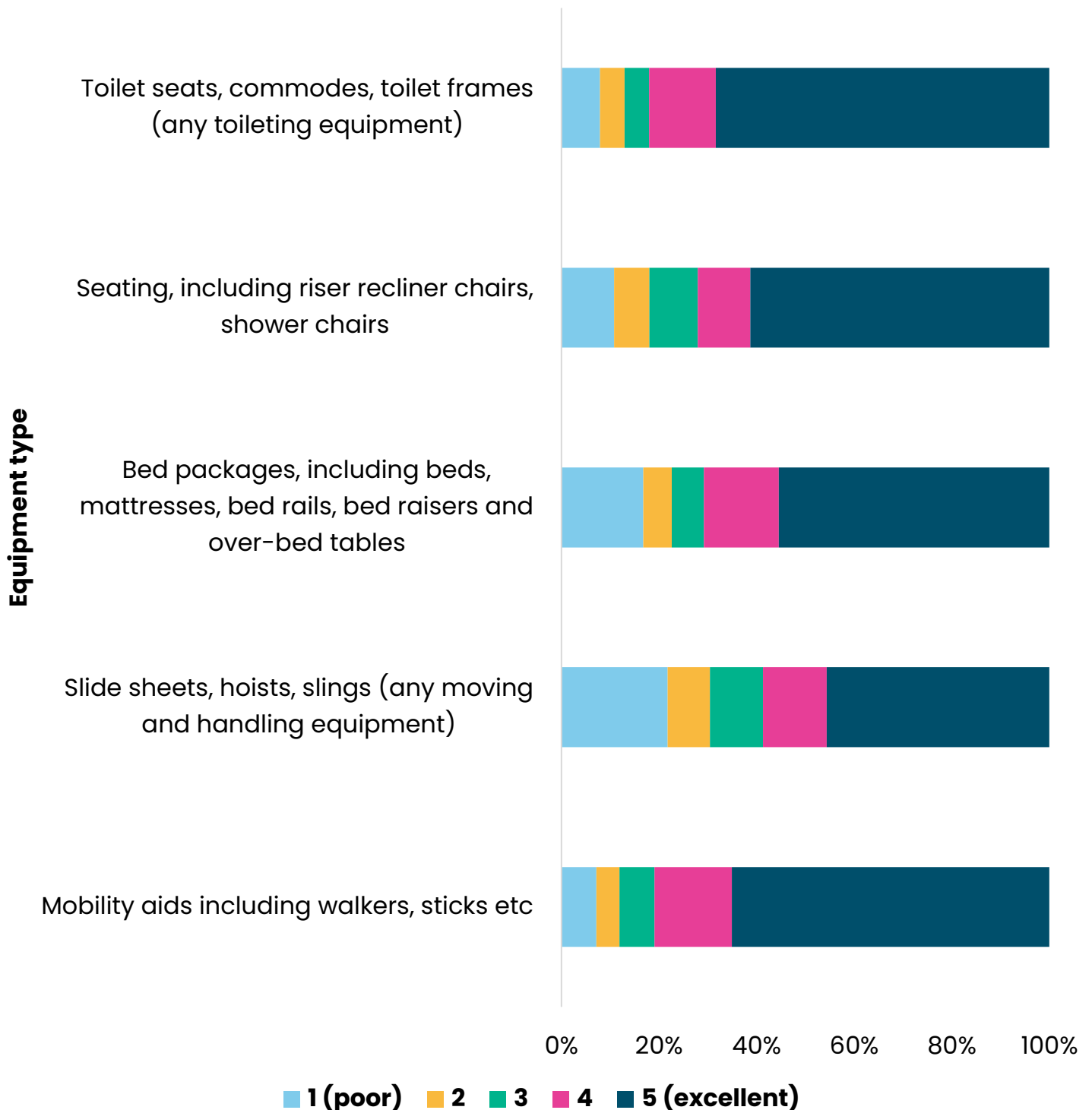
We asked respondents how they would rate Medequip's overall service from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). As shown in the graph on the next page, a large proportion (75%) gave a rating of either 4 or 5, with a smaller proportion (17%) giving a rating of 1 or 2.



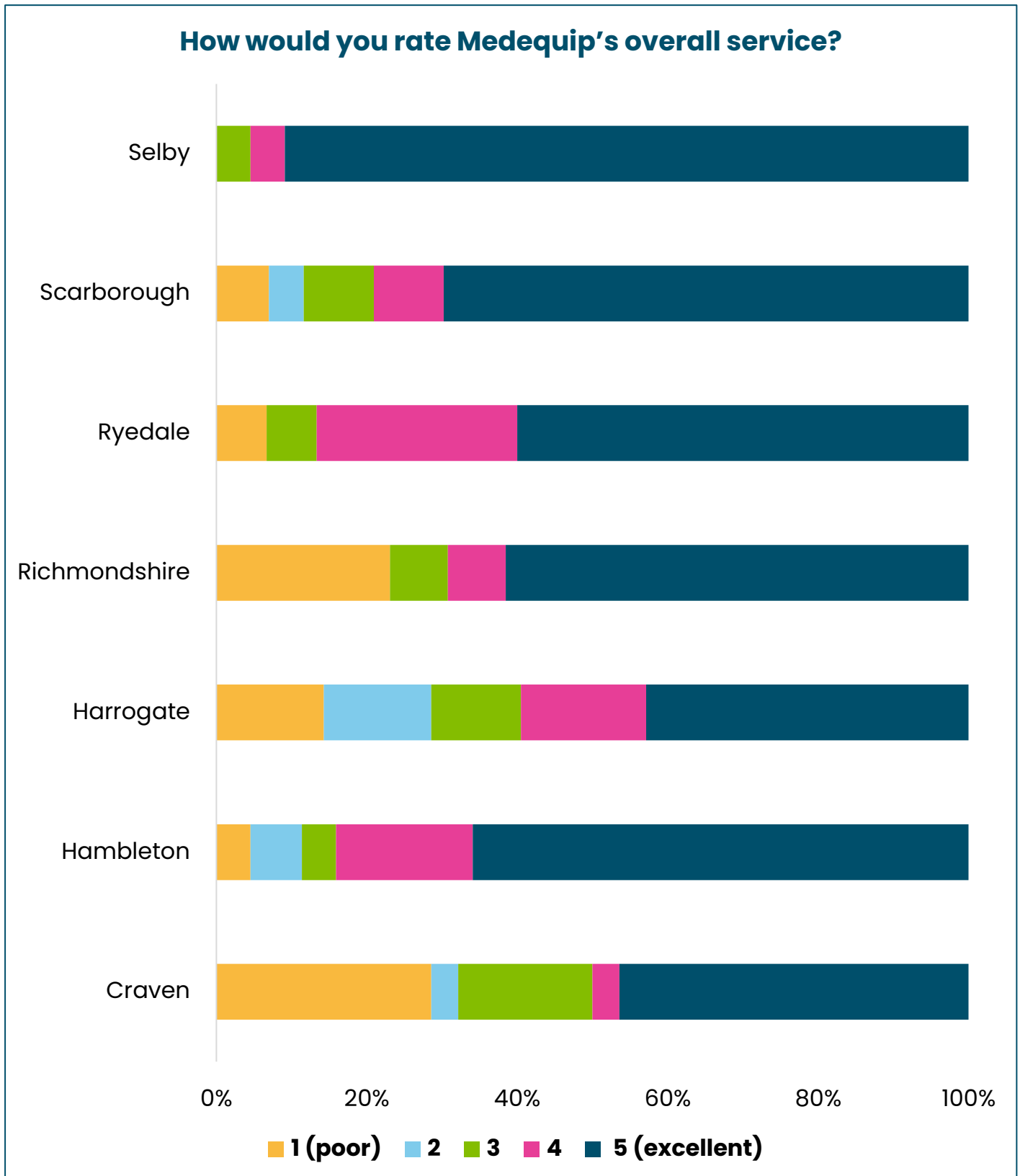
MEDE* *EQUIP

In terms of whether there was any variation in ratings based on the type of equipment people use, as the graph below indicates, the lowest ratings were for moving and handling equipment and bed packages, with mobility aids and toileting equipment getting the highest ratings.

How would you rate Medequip's overall service?



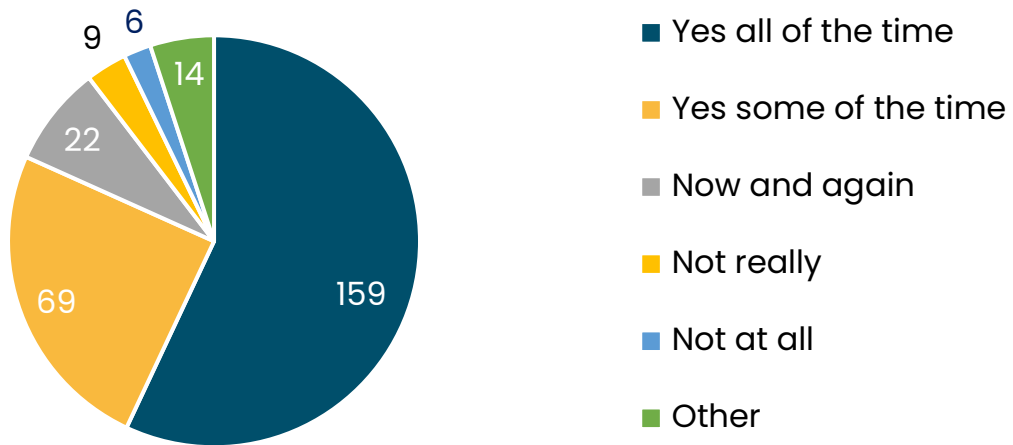
In relation to location, the highest ratings were given by those who live in Selby, with the lowest given by those from Craven, Richmondshire and Harrogate.



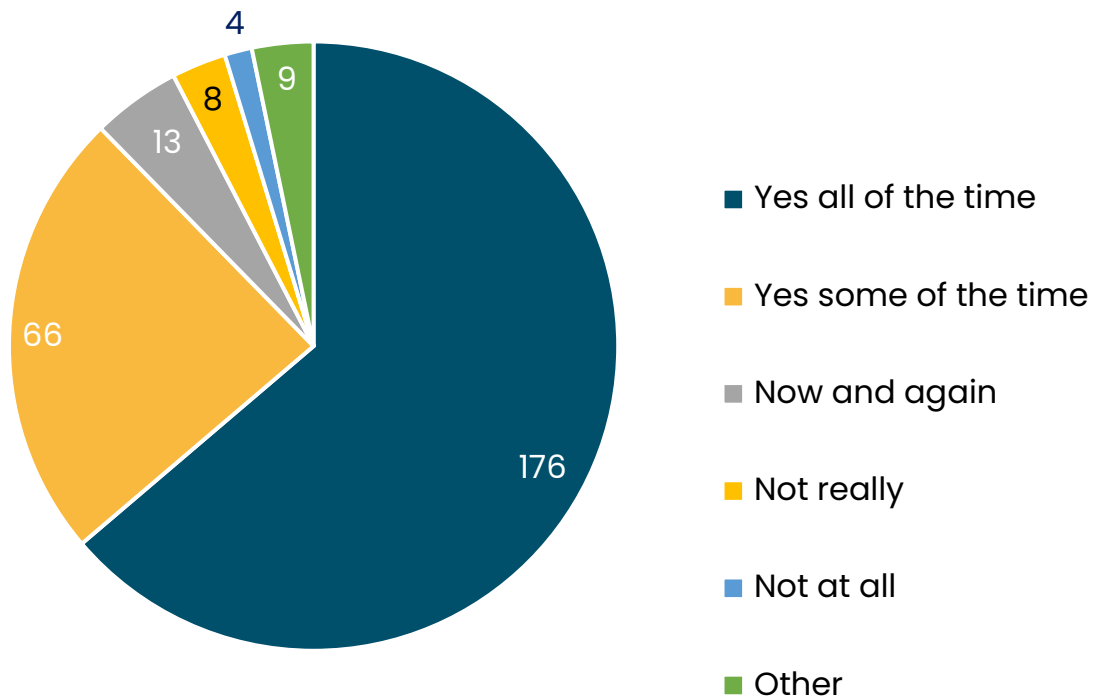
Safety and independence

The majority of people said the equipment helps them to be more independent and feel safer either all of the time or some of the time, as shown below.

Does the equipment help you to be more independent?



Does the equipment make you feel safer?



Many people said their equipment helps to provide them with privacy, independence and dignity. This was particularly raised for equipment that helps people get in and out of the bath, sit in the shower or use the toilet independently. Some expressed how essential their equipment is and how difficult life would be without it; one respondent said without the use of their equipment their quality of life and ability to function independently at a reasonable level would be very low.

“My father is now bed bound but the equipment provided allows him to enjoy a better quality of life so he can be safely transferred to sit in his armchair to experience a different environment.”

“The equipment allows him to still be toileted and showered in a more normal way in his fit for purpose wet room. This helps preserve some level of personal dignity as opposed to that lack of dignity for being toileted and bathed on his bed.

He is a proud man, and his dignity means a great deal to him.”

“The equipment gives me a lot of independence and also privacy and dignity.”

“I have an adjustable bed and being able to raise and lower it enables me to get in and out to use a commode without calling on someone to help.

This gives me a lot of independence, privacy and dignity that able people don't always understand how important this is to a disabled person.”

“My high-rise toilet seat allows me to get up unaided from the toilet saving me the embarrassment of having to ask my husband for help.”

“I would find it very difficult to get out of bed without the use of my bed rails. I would be reliant on someone helping me. I feel I have a great deal of independence gained by such a simple modification.”

A number of people expressed how they or their family member would not be able to live at home without the equipment. Others said it helps to prevent falls which makes them feel safer and more confident when going about their daily tasks.

“The stick gives me confidence when walking. The stool in the shower makes it easier to wash myself as I have two free hands rather than having to hold onto the pole.”

“My wife would have to go into residential care if equipment was not available.”

“Using a walker helps me to keep my balance and stops me falling and hurting myself.”

“It gives my husband confidence to move from his bed to a chair or help to walk a short distance without them he could not move around anymore.”

Family members of those who use the equipment also benefit; one person said the equipment means her husband can be more mobile and independent which in turn allows her to have some respite from being a carer.

“My wife needs a lot of help but the aids you provide gives her some degree of self-sufficiency which is good for both of us.”

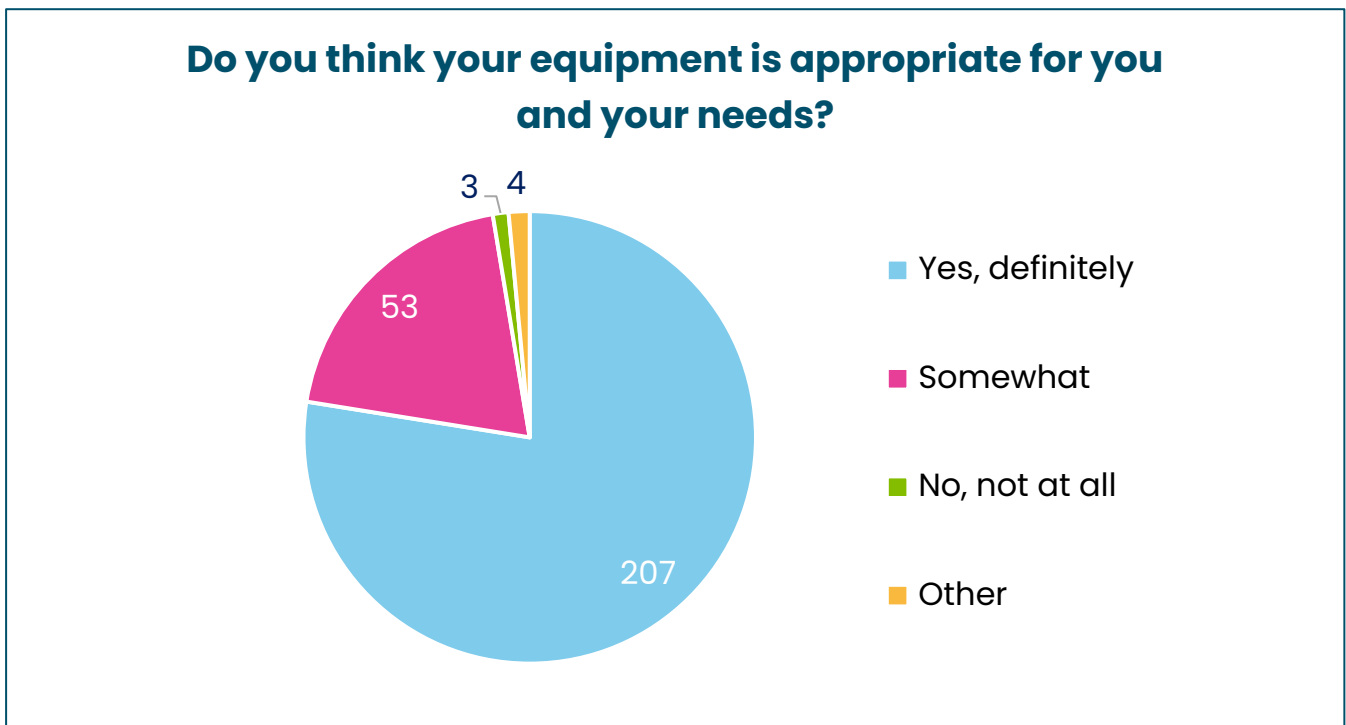
“The bed rail makes it much easier to get in and out of bed. I was having to wake my husband in the middle of the night to get me out.”

“It makes life easier for me as her carer.”



Suitability of equipment

78% of respondents said their equipment is appropriate for their needs as it was chosen or recommended by an occupational therapist, physiotherapist or nurse after an assessment.



One person praised how the aids their family member uses are adjustable which means the equipment is suitable for all the different stages of their illness. Another respondent said when their family member used less advanced equipment, it led to them having a fall and being hospitalised, whereas now they have the right equipment their transfer and handling needs are safely met.

“The equipment makes him feel safer and more reassured when he needs moving.”

“It meets his transfer and safe handling needs in the most effective way possible even if not 100% perfect. It feels safer for him than when we used less sophisticated equipment to try and transfer him. This led to him having a major fall resulting in a broken femur and significant hospital stay.”

While many praised the equipment, some respondents suggested ways in which their equipment could be better suited to their needs. One person said the shower bench did not fit their bath which led to them falling over.

Others suggested a light on the handset that controls beds would be useful and footrests on walkers would mean a person could be pushed along while sitting down which would be helpful. One person said their equipment is quite old and there are now better, updated versions that they would rather have. Issues surrounding non-adjustable tray tables were also raised.

“The shower bench doesn’t fit my bath and I have fallen in the shower and been unable to get up and it scraped and bruised my back. It has been deemed unsuitable.”

“Easy to use but a light on the handset for the bed would be very useful.”

“The walker helps my wife get out a lot more. It would be nice if it had foot rests so she could be pushed when she is sitting down as she tires easily.”

“The tray tables are abysmal. We had to buy our own because it’s unsuitable for someone who is bedbound and needs an easily adjustable table to move up and down throughout the day as he changes position.”

The importance of being asked if the equipment is suitable was also raised. One person said their equipment was chosen by a physiotherapist but they have never been asked about whether the equipment continues to meet their needs or not.

“Most of my equipment has been ordered from Medequip by physios. I have never been asked about any of it. I just receive the item as requested. The equipment is then serviced by Medequip engineers, but the question is never asked about whether it continues to meet my needs. I don’t know if there are any alternatives.”

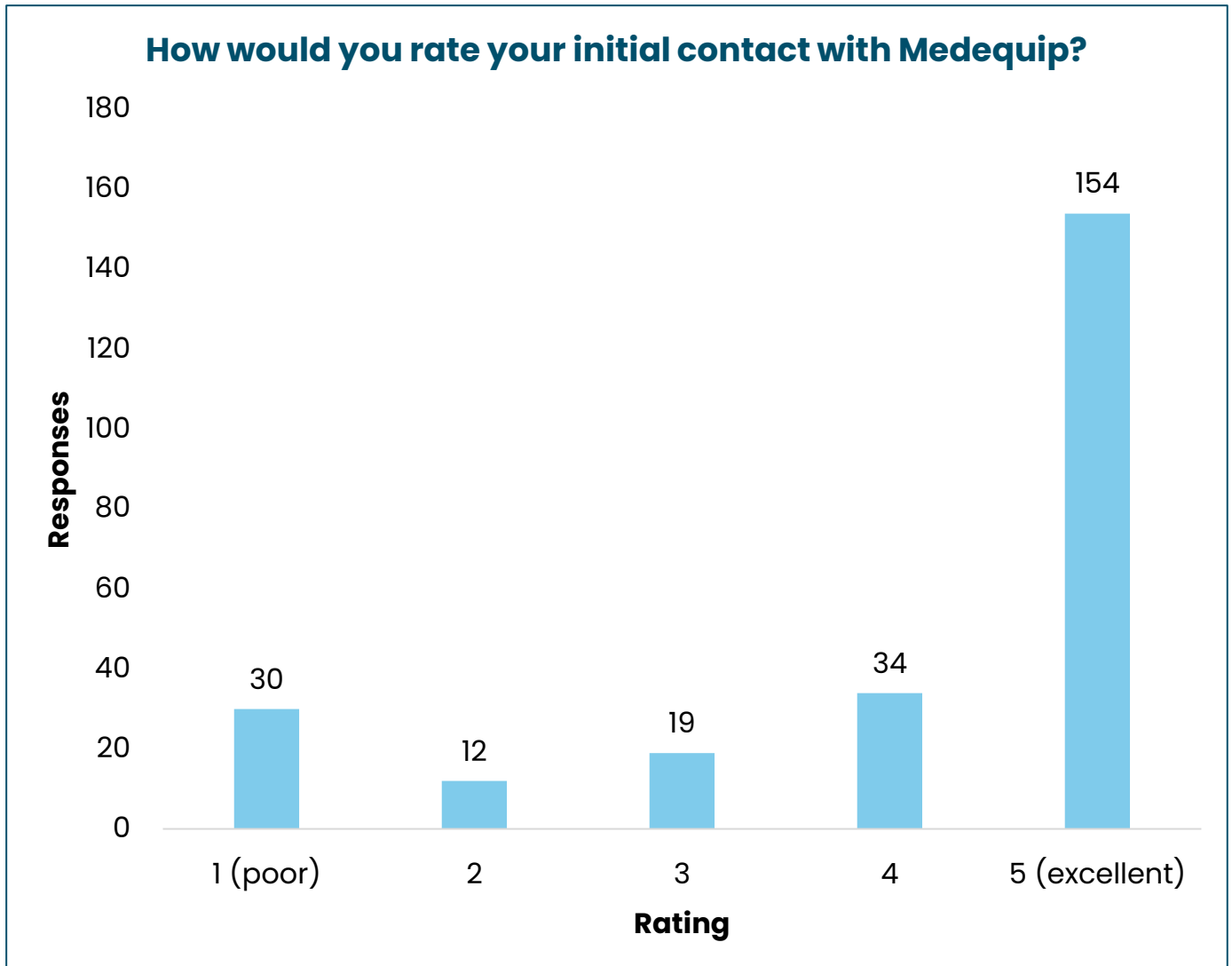
Others said they have specifically asked for a particular type of equipment but this was not the item they received.

“I have previously asked for certain equipment but what has been delivered doesn’t necessarily meet my requirements. I once needed a shower chair, gave details of my old chair, but what was delivered was totally unacceptable.”

Communication with Medequip

Initial contact

When asked how they would rate their initial contact with Medequip, 76% of respondents gave a rating of 4 or 5. Many said the staff they spoke to were polite, understanding and professional.



“They have been very helpful & got the equipment I needed to me.”

“Initially, staff were helpful and discussed which product was best for my needs.”

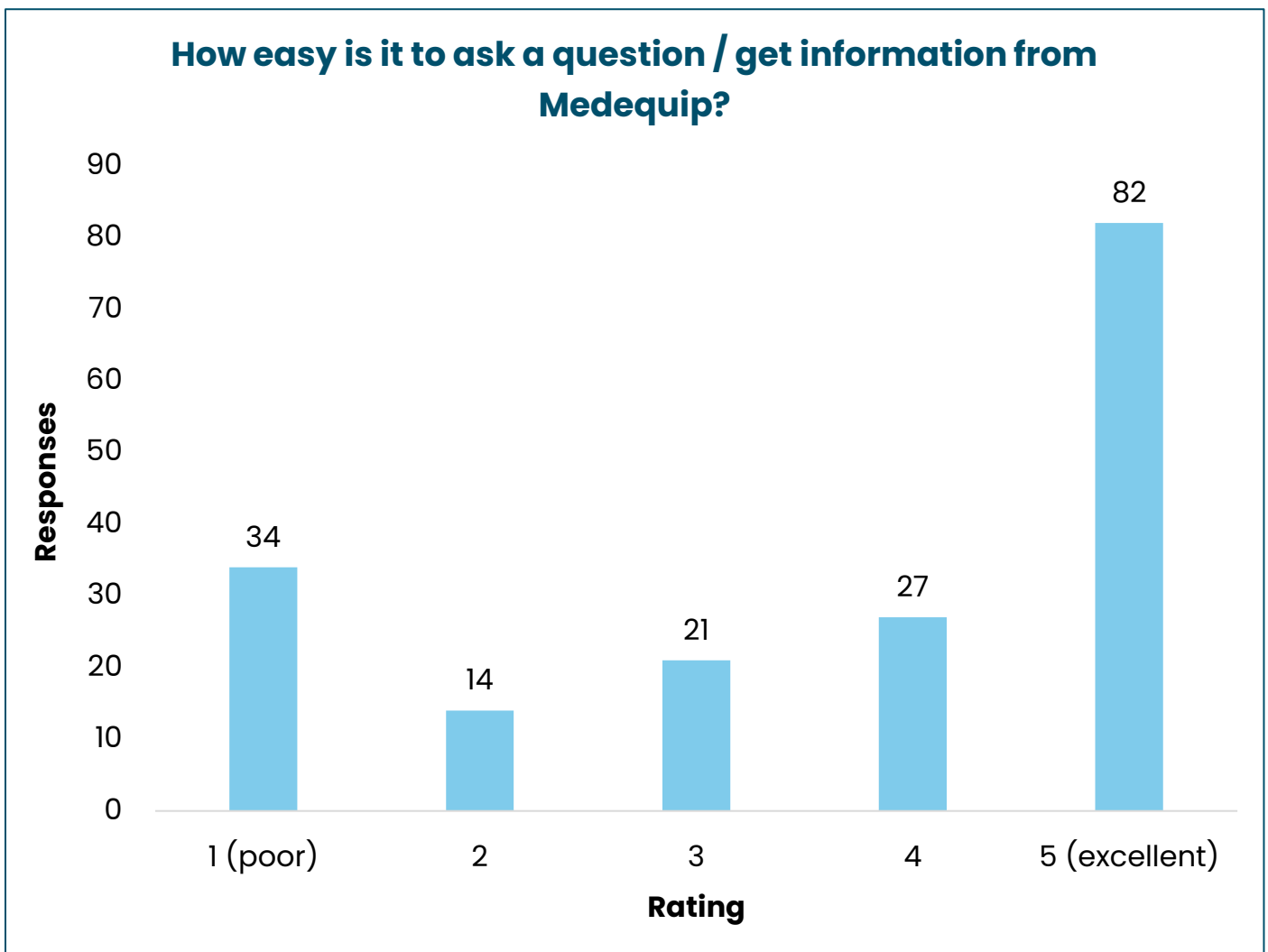
“From start to finish you have made the process easy for me to get the help I needed.”

“Initial contact was efficient and timely.”

“Medequip has been consistently good in its communication, easy to reach 24/7 and quick to get an engineer out as soon as can be arranged whenever needed. All staff are friendly, courteous and go the extra mile.”

Asking questions and getting information

There was a distinct split in responses to this question, while many praised how easy it is to ask a question or get information, there were some respondents who have had a very negative experience.



Many said staff are friendly and knowledgeable when you ring up to ask questions. One person said you can always telephone for advice or to ask a question and if the customer service staff don't know the answer they will check and come back to you or get the appropriate department or staff member to call you back.

"It is very easy. You ring the number and someone kindly helps with your questions."

"Medequip are always helpful, friendly and responsive as quickly as possible. There is never a sense of being a pain, asking silly questions or being ignored or dismissed."

Although a smaller number of respondents gave a lower rating, it is important to highlight some of the issues raised when people have tried to ask questions or get information. Some said it can be hard to get through on the phone and it is often difficult to find the right person to speak to, resulting in them being continually passed around different staff members with no one taking responsibility. Other respondents said they have complained about the service both via the phone and email but have never got a response back and would like complaints to be dealt with in a more effective and efficient manner.

"33 calls in one day just to get a bed delivered."

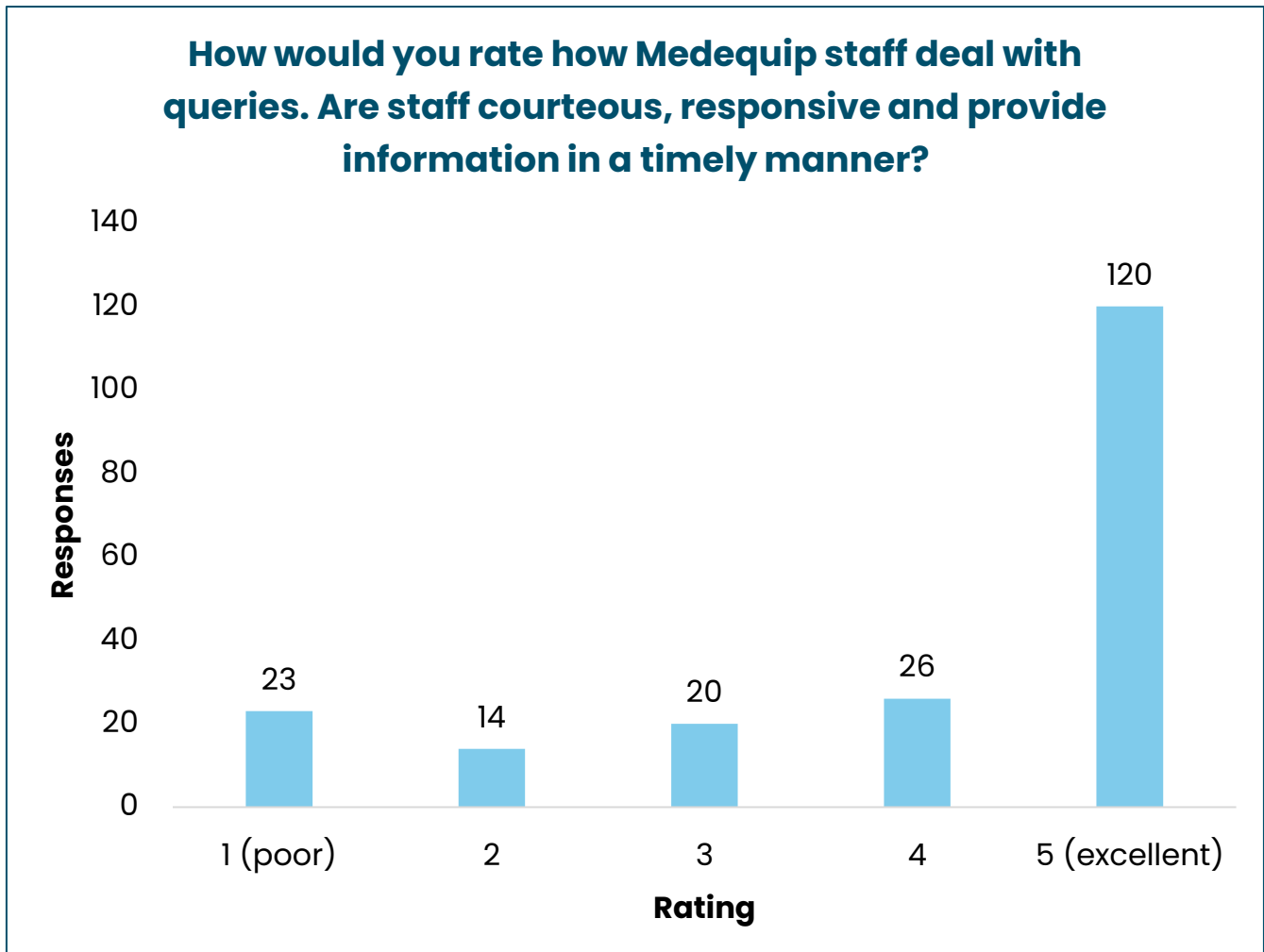
"I was given a 24/7 telephone number that was actually office hours Monday to Friday. I was passed around from person to person with no-one knowing the answer or taking responsibility. Sometimes, I was being told they needed to speak to the occupational therapist, sometimes saying it had to be me."

"The hold message giving number in the queue is useful when on phone. It's not always easy to get through and what level of service you get from the phonenumber depending on the time you ring. Staff on the phonenumber can't always provide information I need. Don't trust that they will ring back."

"It's really difficult to find the right person to speak to. Just kept getting moved from pillar to post. No one seemed to know what they were doing."

How Medequip staff deal with queries

A large proportion (72%) gave either a rating of 4 or 5.



There was a recognition that most staff deal with queries in a polite, efficient and helpful manner.

“Whenever I have had reason to contact Medequip they have always been polite and courteous and helpful.”

“Always help if have query relating to order.”

“Answer the phone politely, efficient in answering the query.”

However, while staff can be friendly and helpful, many said this is not always the case and can be very dependent upon the staff member you happen to speak to as well as what time you ring, with people saying the service is often worse overnight and at the weekend.

Some of the main issues with how staff deal with queries was centred around staff being rude, uncompassionate and not always empathetic to people's needs. One person said for a company that provides a service for disabled people, their staff often have little understanding or empathy for the strains of being a carer.

Others said they don't always feel respected by the telephone responders and find they are sometimes defensive and quick to assume the customer is angry with them.

“The people at Medequip can be either very helpful or downright rude.”

“Some of the call staff are friendly but it is a minority. I have been told that ‘this service isn't here to fit around you’ – always feels like an uphill battle.”

“It varies depending on who I spoke to. The person I spoke to at 9pm at night when I first had the problem with the remote and couldn't drop the bed, was grumpy and said he couldn't help as he was too far away in York. I'm in Settle. He kept asking me why I hadn't phoned earlier and I had to keep saying 'because there wasn't a problem earlier!'”

“Sometimes it makes you feel like what is the point in ringing up, sometimes you think I might try again. I have been hung up on, on one occasion, which is more deflating.

“I dread having to ring them up – preparing myself to be let down by the service.”

“I get the impression that staff on the phone are bored. I would query the staff turnover. Try to avoid calling on a night or over a weekend. The staff aren't rude, but you never know what level of service you are going to get.

I wonder about the level of training they get on dealing with vulnerable and disabled customers. We will ring them ourselves, not always carers/support.”

Equipment delivery and installation

Delivery

In terms of delivery, a large proportion of respondents (74%) gave the delivery service a rating of 4 or 5. These respondents praised the accurate, speedy and efficient delivery service. They also praised the friendly and helpful delivery staff. One respondent referred to the whole delivery process as faultless.

“It didn't take long to arrange and dates were made very clear, with the option of morning or afternoon delivery.”

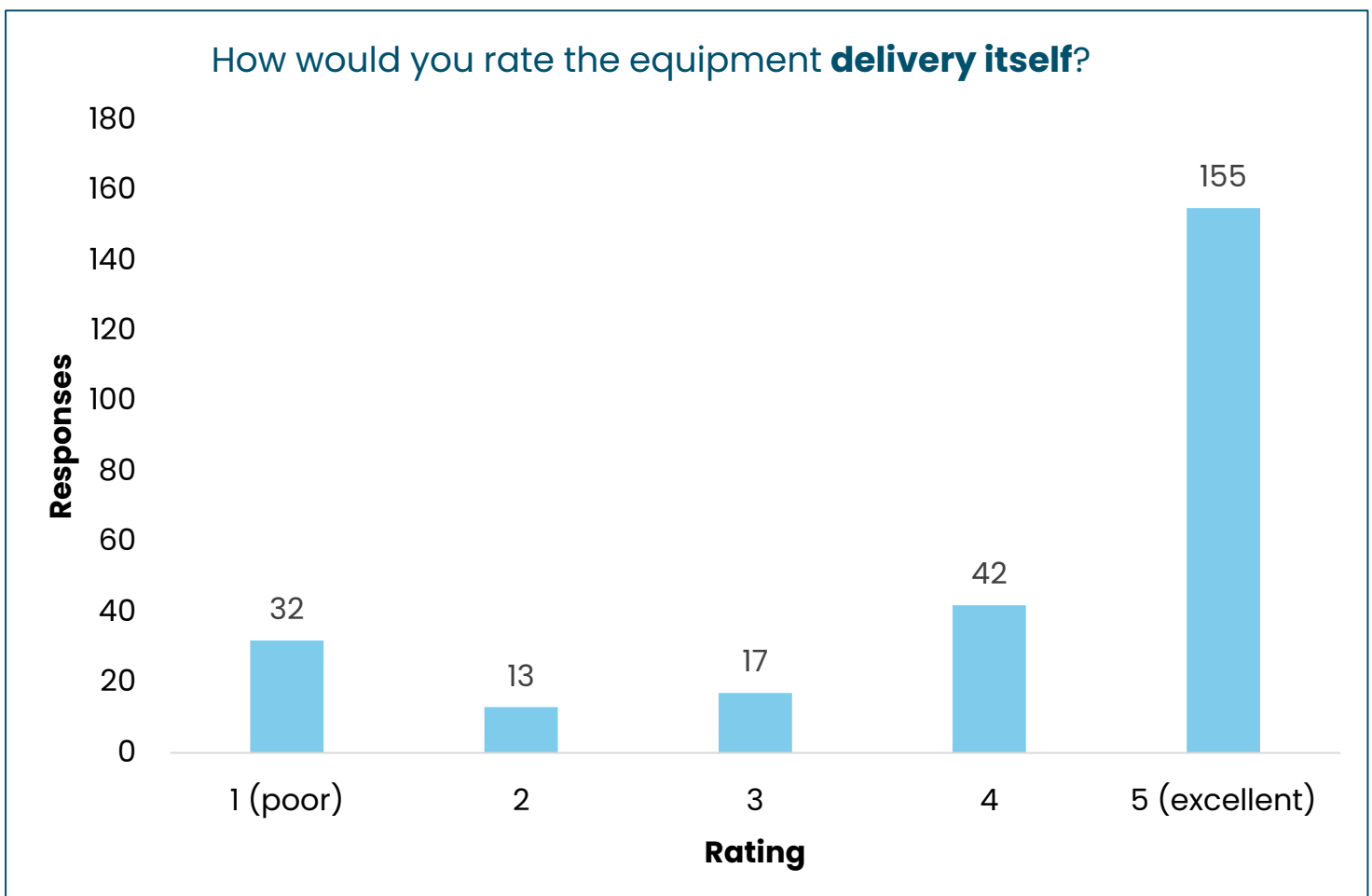
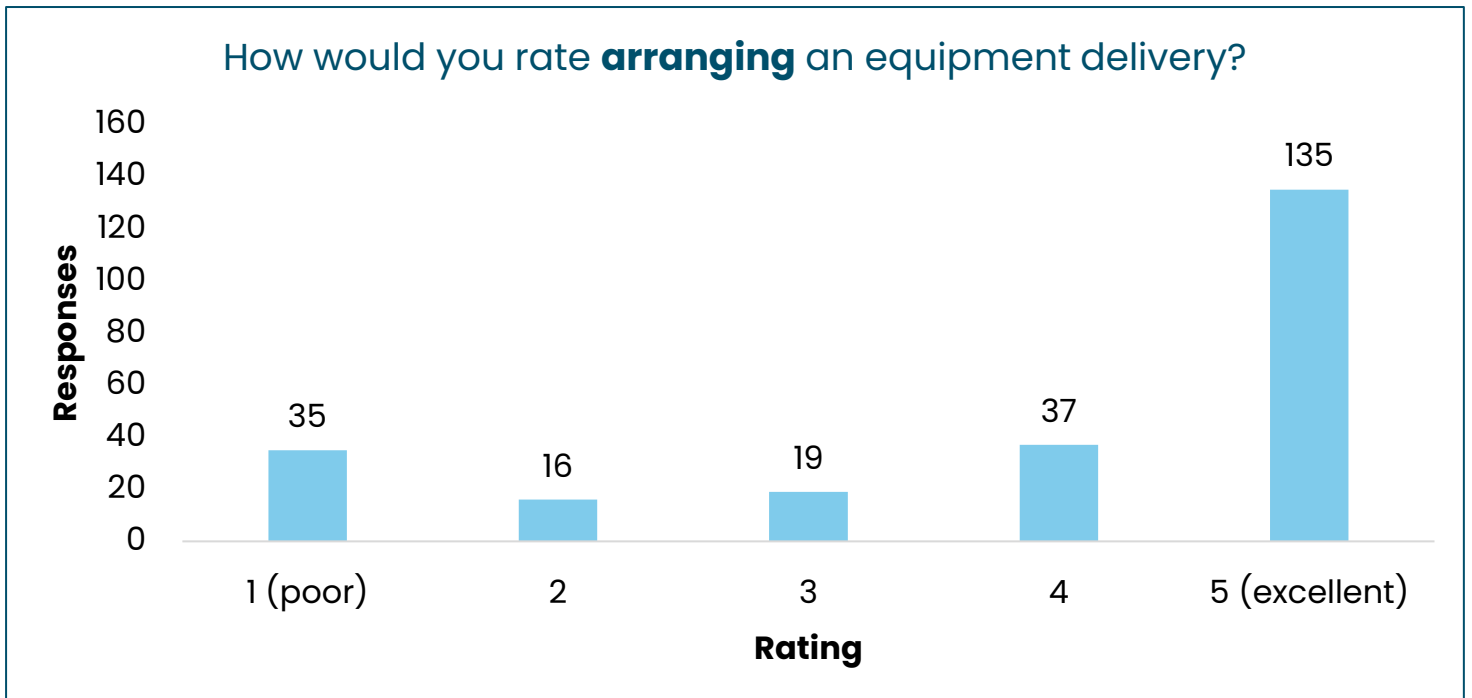
“It has always been easy to arrange giving good flexibility, a speedy response depending on equipment availability and time slots that are pretty much accurate under the circumstances i.e. inevitable traffic delays beyond the control of staff etc. can sometimes knock those out.”

“Arranged to deliver at a time suitable for my family so equipment ready for when I came home from hospital.”

“Medequip delivered what we needed when we needed it.”

“Delivery staff are always friendly & courteous and ensure minimal disruption.”





However, despite these positive experiences, a smaller number of respondents (19%) only gave a rating of 1 or 2. Although less people gave a lower rating, there was one common issue raised by these respondents; deliveries not arriving when they said they would or deliveries being cancelled altogether.

Some respondents said they have waited in all day only for the delivery to not arrive with no contact or explanation as to why. One person said it took 33 phone calls to sort out getting their equipment delivered. Others shared experiences of their deliveries being cancelled at the last minute.

“Don't trust them.”

“The Harrogate team were useless; tell them one thing – wait all day for no one to turn up – appointment dates changed when ringing up to query why staff haven't arrived.

It made me feel like not even trusting the company nowadays. I never know what level of service to expect. I just want Medequip to go. I feel like they don't care – what is the point of having a provider that doesn't care about the client when we rely on them – equipment is our legs and meant to enable us to be independent.”

“Medequip arrange appointments without taking into consideration the, availability, mobility or physical and mental disabilities or impairments.”

“Medequip are not flexible, insisting you stay at home all day – ignoring the fact that you may have a radiotherapy every day of the week for five weeks and cannot possibly be at home. They refuse to apply common sense. They do not turn up to deliver, despite having dictated the delivery date and time. They do not apologise for service failures. Medequip do not meet the levels of service stated in their own charter of standards. And do not treat service users with respect.”

One person said instead of being given a large time window for when the delivery might arrive it would be better if you could get a text early in the morning or the evening before the delivery indicating an accurate time slot that the delivery will take place as it can be difficult when people have other commitments such as work and appointments. However, even when people do receive a text telling them where the delivery driver is, this is not always accurate. Some said the drivers are friendly when they do arrive, it is them arriving on time that is the key issue.

“Waiting around for hours for delivery and not being texted until last minute or sudden changes or not turning up at all during the allocated hours is extremely frustrating. It’s very difficult to arrange a specific date for delivery when working and surely it’s possible to advise a smaller time slot the previous evening when driver knows the intended route? People cannot spend hours and hours hanging around when they have work commitments etc. The drivers are usually helpful and pleasant to be fair.”

One person said their discharge from hospital was delayed due to issues with their equipment not being delivered.

“The staff I’ve spoken to are sick of the text system used to tell clients when, where etc. as they’re always wrong and people ring to see what’s happening.”

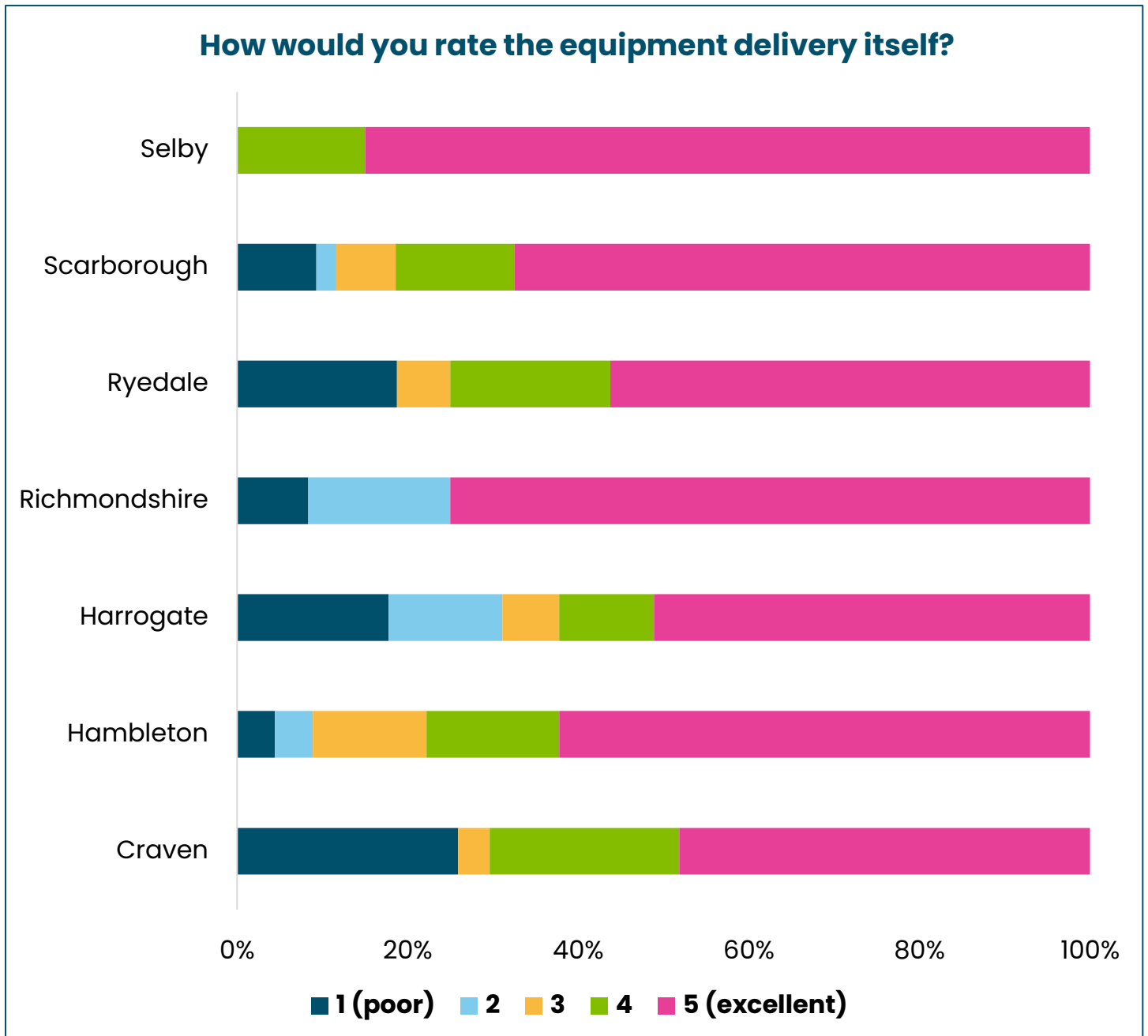
“You get texts long after the office has closed saying they’re still on their way when [it’s] no such thing!”

“Occasionally they don’t arrive at time stated, but they are always polite.”

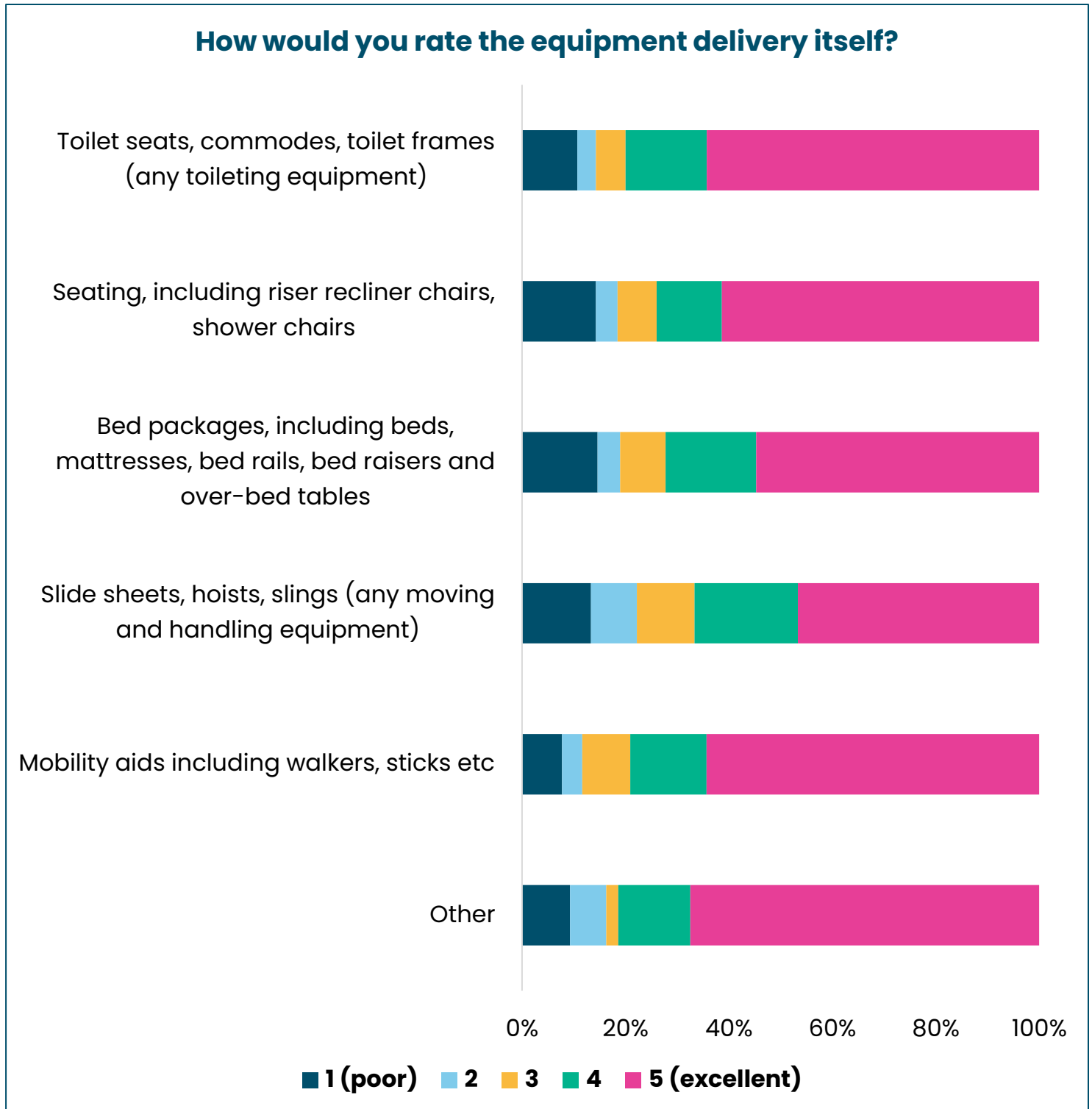
“I was in hospital waiting to be discharged and there were endless issues around getting the bed delivered.”

“There were four attempts and communication, timing and a lack of adequate technicians required for the job due to location (which they had been told about in advance). This meant I was delayed in discharge by four days. The hospital staff were so busy they gave me the job to keep chasing Medequip which put pressure on me.”

There was a slight variation in ratings for delivery based on where respondents live, with the best ratings given by those from Selby, and the lowest ratings by those from Craven, Harrogate and Ryedale.



Ratings for delivery were slightly lower for moving and handling equipment, but this was only by a small margin, as shown on the next page.



Installation

For those who have equipment where installation is required, the majority said the service was good. Respondents often praised the delivery person for being helpful, quick and thorough, installing the equipment with minimum disruption. It seems to be once the delivery driver arrives with the equipment, the installation tends to be good, it is the delivery driver arriving that is often the issue.

“My last delivery was a bath cushion and the two delivery guys brought it in and set it up and took the old one away. I was very happy with the service.”

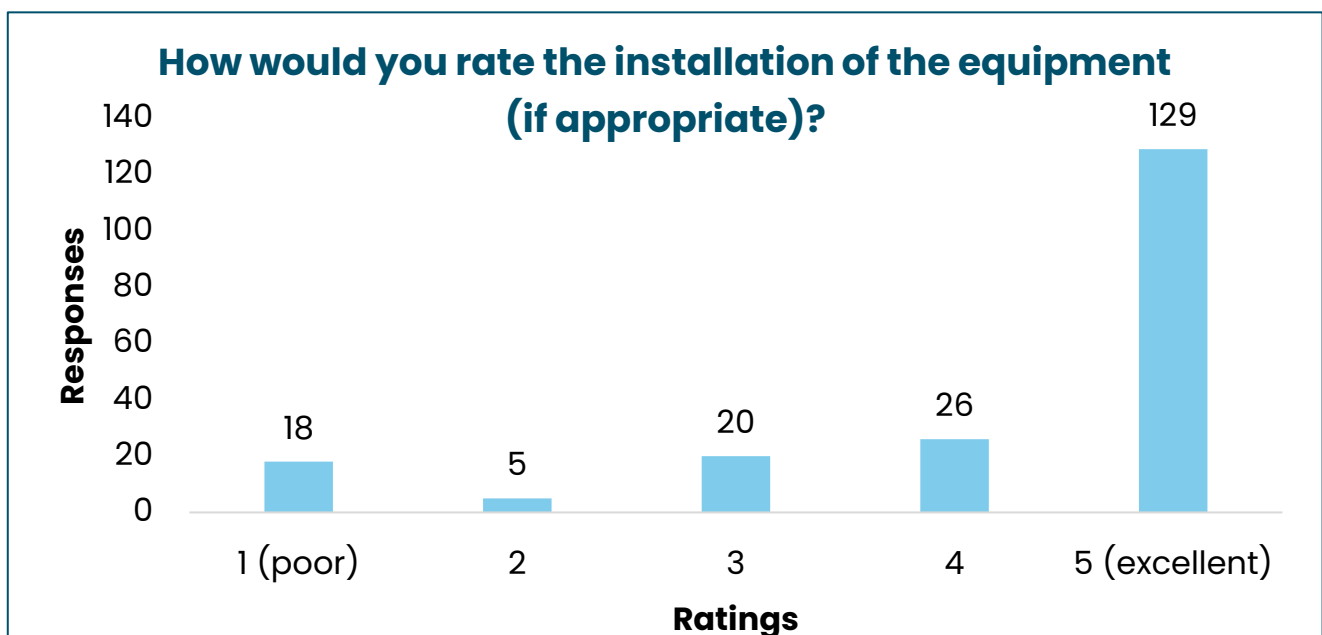
“The technician was very thorough in making sure the equipment was fitted correctly and that I was ok with its operation.”

“Would give a higher score if I could. Each person delivering equipment was wonderful, professional, and compassionate at a very emotionally charged time.”

“Skilled technician assembled the equipment and gave comprehensive instructions.”

“Hospital bed delivered and installed with care with minimal disruption.”

“Installation engineers and staff always friendly & courteous and efficient ensuring minimal disruption etc. Take time to explain how equipment is used & how to avoid miss use that can cause faults etc.”



For those respondents who gave lower ratings the key issue raised was the experience and attitude of the engineer or technician installing the equipment. One person said the technician refused to carry the bed upstairs or put it together. Another respondent said their specialist chair was left with them to put together; the leaflet didn't give any assembly instructions so in the end they had to find YouTube videos to help.

"It depends on the experience of the engineer; some good, some not."

"They brought a specialist chair and then refused to carry it upstairs saying it was too heavy."

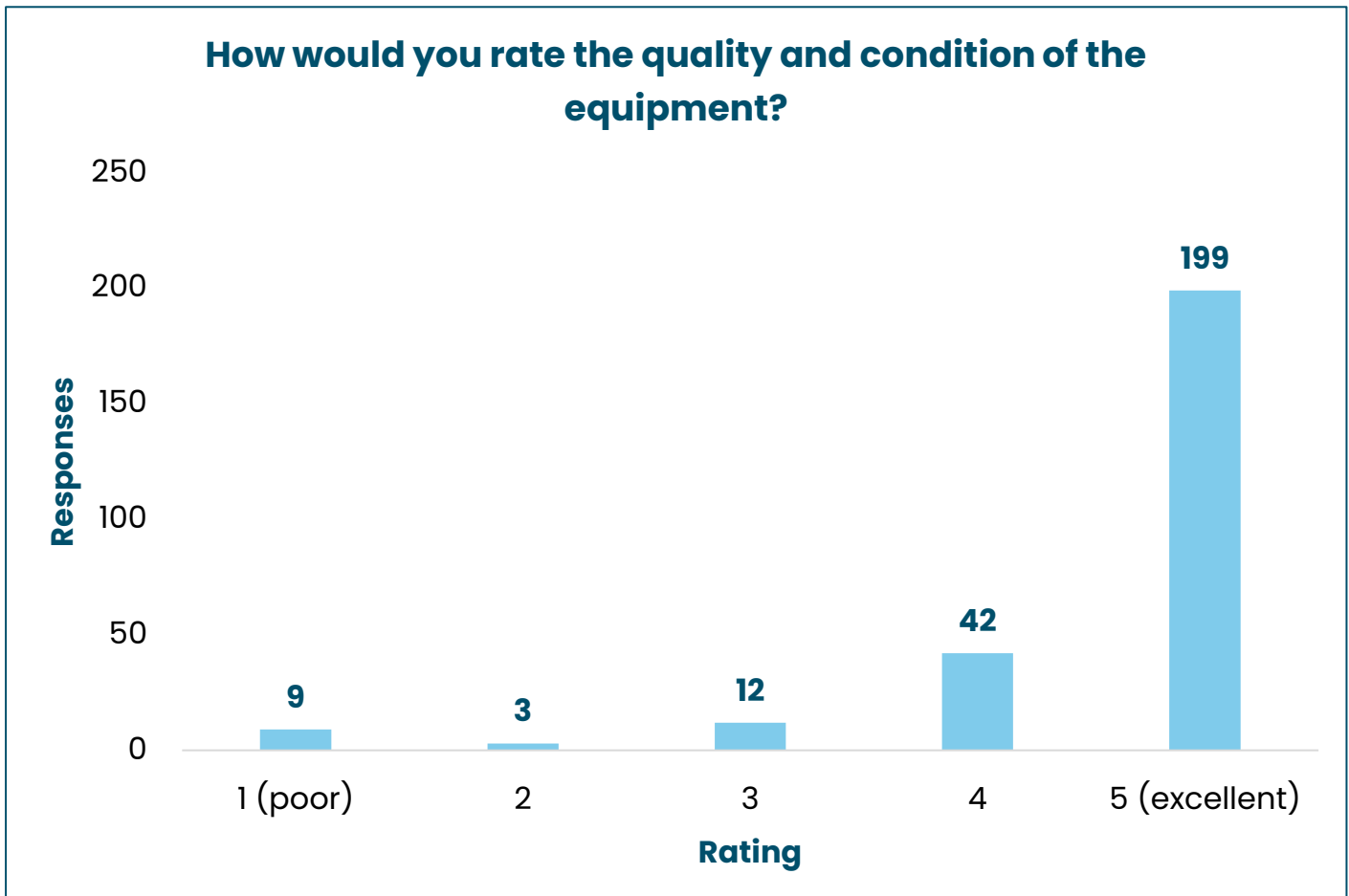
"They should have known this and sent two people. Instead, they sent one who just dumped it on us and left us to carry it upstairs and put it together ourselves. This is a specialist chair for someone with Parkinson's. It's supposed to be put together by a professional, so it is a perfect fit to hold him in place. We did the best we could on our own."

"The installation was carried out by a male team member of Medequip. He drove an unmarked white van. He did not wear a name badge or a lanyard. He did not introduce himself or give his name. He bashed the equipment against a wall causing damage and did not say a word."



Quality and condition of equipment

When asked about the quality and condition of the equipment, 91% of respondents gave a rating of 4 or 5. Many said the equipment was clean, sturdy and brand new (or just like new). One person was pleased with how modern looking their equipment is meaning it doesn't look out of place in their bedroom.



“Everything I have received so far has been new, so I have no complaints.”

“Slings are well made and designed – threads will fray but this is standard wear and tear. Slings, shower chairs and profile beds (ordered by occupational therapist) are all good quality.”

“This appeared to be brand new equipment and of excellent quality.”

“All equipment was clean and in a good state of repair. Most of the equipment received was still in packaging.”

While the majority praised the quality and condition, a small number of respondents said the equipment was not as clean as they would have liked, meaning they had to clean it before use. Equipment being delivered with missing parts meaning it could not be effectively used was another issue raised.

“Most equipment I have used has arrived in a filthy state – the bath adaptation had boot prints on it. The loo seat was unhygienic, the original bed lift was filthy and stank of cigarettes.”

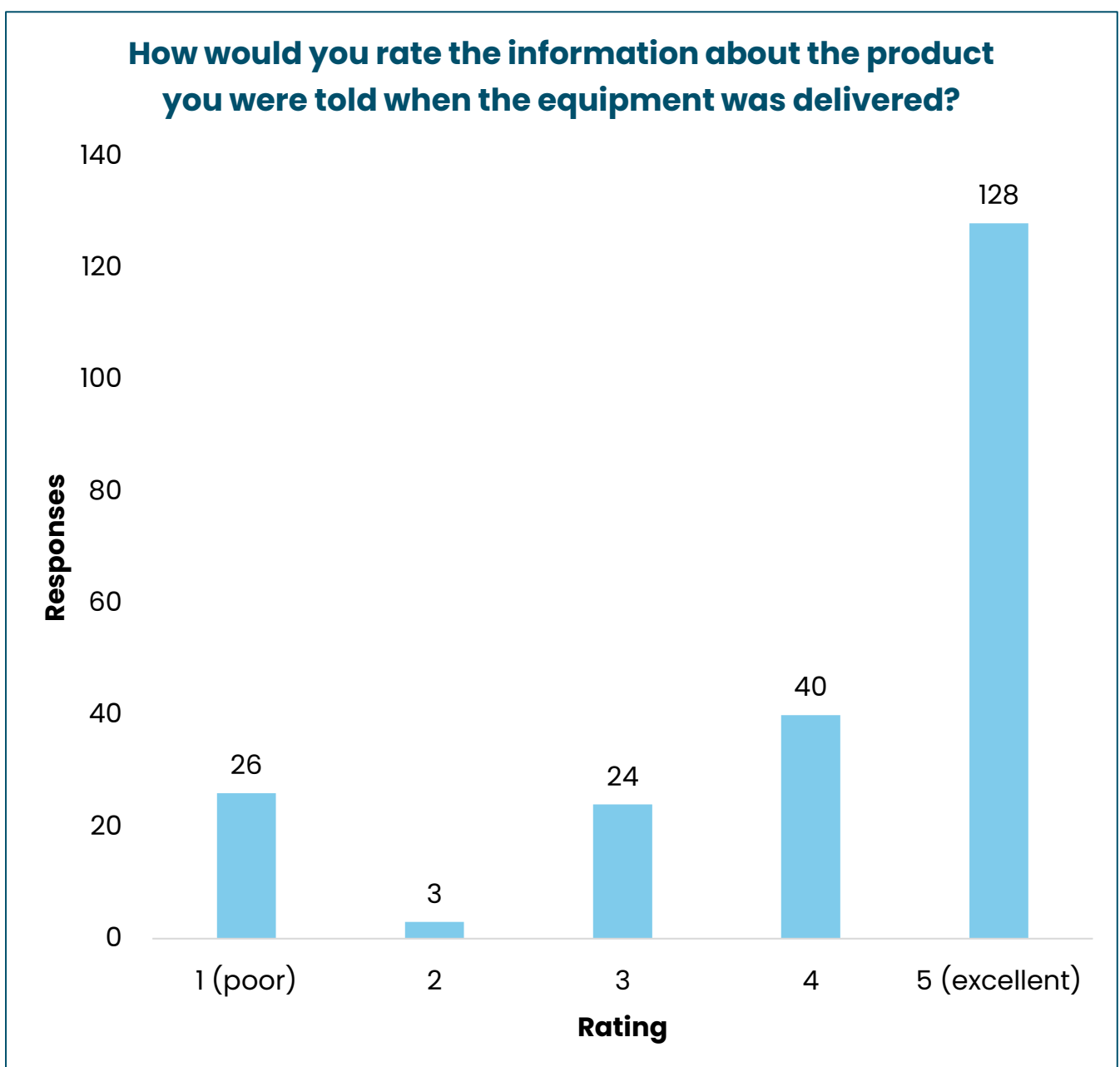
“Equipment was delivered without a charging lead and a remote control. 3 attempts for delivery of these parts have failed, on your side, due to stock availability. Very, very poor service.”

“Some missing parts and parts that didn’t work, but overall, the quality of everything was good.”



Information provided about equipment

Most respondents said the person installing the equipment gave good verbal instructions about how to use the equipment. While many shared positive experiences, there was a smaller number of respondents who said the equipment was just delivered, with no explanation about how to use it. It was acknowledged that explanation and instructions are not needed for all types of equipment as some equipment is self-explanatory (walking sticks, seating etc.).



“Driver’s always explain things if I have questions.”

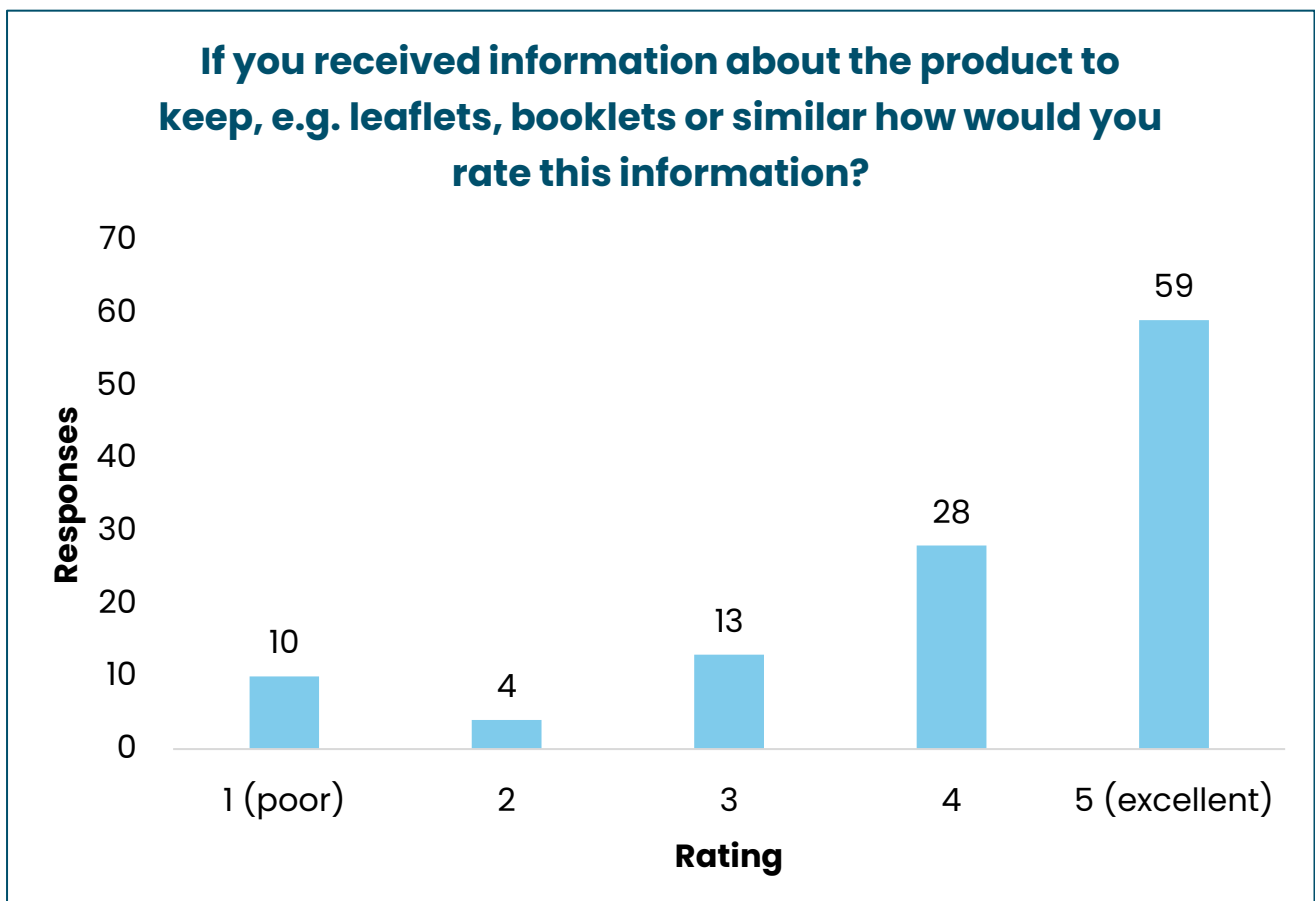
“Staff always take time to explain how equipment is used & how to avoid miss use that can cause faults etc. Help familiarise you and answer questions etc.”

“Everything explained and left instruction book as a backup.”

“Most of the equipment was just dumped. I’d have given a ‘1’ except that the people who fitted the ceiling hoist were absolutely brilliant. ‘5’ for the ceiling hoist, ‘zero’ (or ‘1’ if I must) for everything else.”

“The guy delivering the product knew no more about it than I did.”

In terms of information about the product to keep, again, the majority gave the information a rating of either 4 or 5 (76%). Respondents said it is useful to have written information that you can refer to if needed. They also said the diagrams are helpful, especially when trying to explain where the problem is if equipment isn’t working. A smaller number of respondents said the information they received was too complex or was hard to understand.



Please note, not all equipment comes with an information booklet/leaflet so those who did not receive information selected 'non applicable' from the options and these responses have been removed from the chart above.

"Diagrams are helpful. They are useful for when speaking to maintenance about what the problem is."

"The information is attached to the bed so I can refer to it any time."

"Some of the information [is] too complex for me to understand and I don't really think I need this amount of information."

"It's available to read but it's not clear. I was seriously ill at the time it arrived and so I wasn't able to be much use and my partner is dyslexic."



Maintenance and repairs

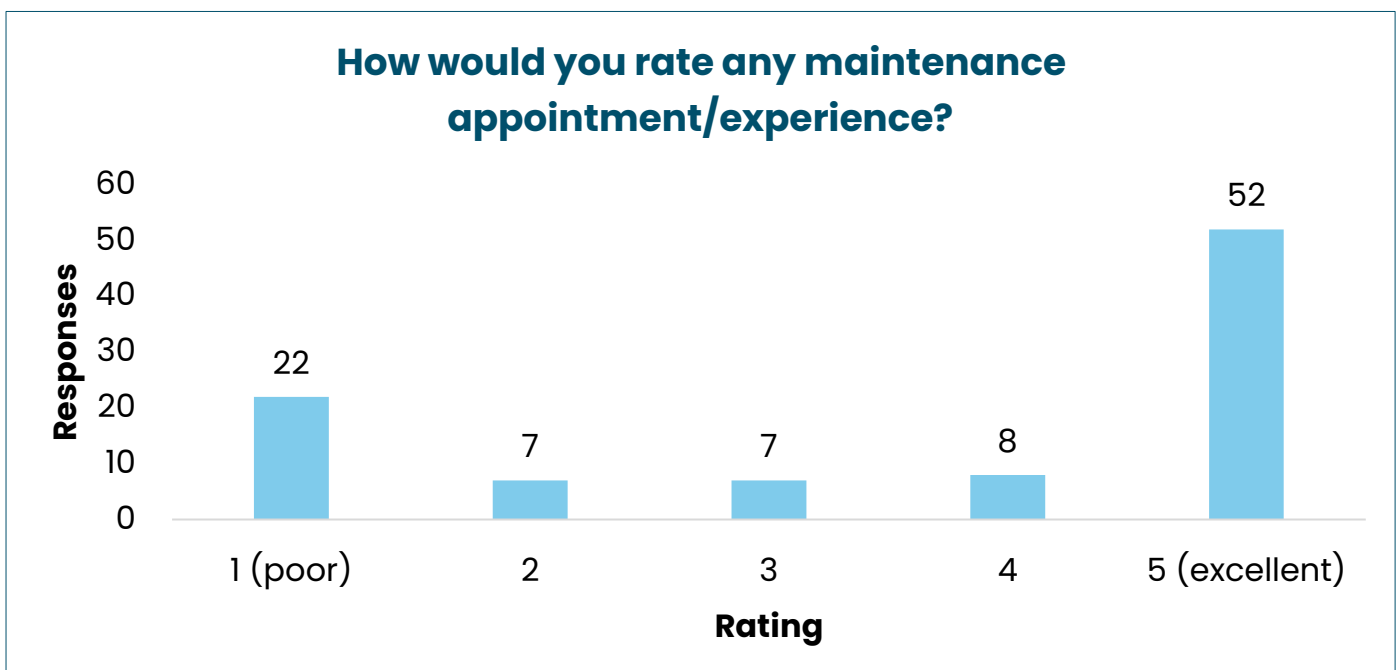
Maintenance

Of those who have had a maintenance appointment there was a mix of responses. Some praised Medequip, saying they phone when it's time for a maintenance check, give options of times and dates to suit individual needs and the maintenance people are friendly, professional and answer any questions.

“Medequip always arrange the 6 monthly check of our equipment and this is carried out very professionally.”

“I was given a time for the maintenance man to come and he came on time and told me what was wrong with the item and that I would receive a new one which I did.”

“They always do a thorough job, explain their findings and flag any concerns.”



Please note, not all equipment requires maintenance so if respondents had not had a maintenance appointment/experience they selected 'Not applicable' from the options and these responses have been removed from the chart above.

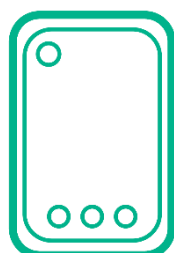
Those who gave lower ratings expressed similar issues to those raised with the delivery of equipment, where they have been given a date and time slot for a maintenance appointment, and nobody turns up. Some said a text message to explain why the maintenance person could not come on the specified day or time would be helpful and would avoid people having to wait in all day unnecessarily. One person said they don't feel like Medequip fully understand the urgent needs of a disabled person as they're often slow when it comes to arranging any servicing.

“It took three times for an engineer to turn up for routine maintenance. They ran out of time to come to me, but there was no phone call to state this.”

“They ring saying equipment needs to be serviced but can't tell me which piece of equipment so I don't know. Then say we'll just have it all ready, but I can't as it's vital emergency equipment so is at school with him. We arranged for half term but when the engineer came, he forgot to put labels on anything so the care company couldn't use it. When I tried to get it resolved there was no recognition that it was their fault. I was told I needed to book another appointment, and someone would get back to me. I'm still waiting after three months.”

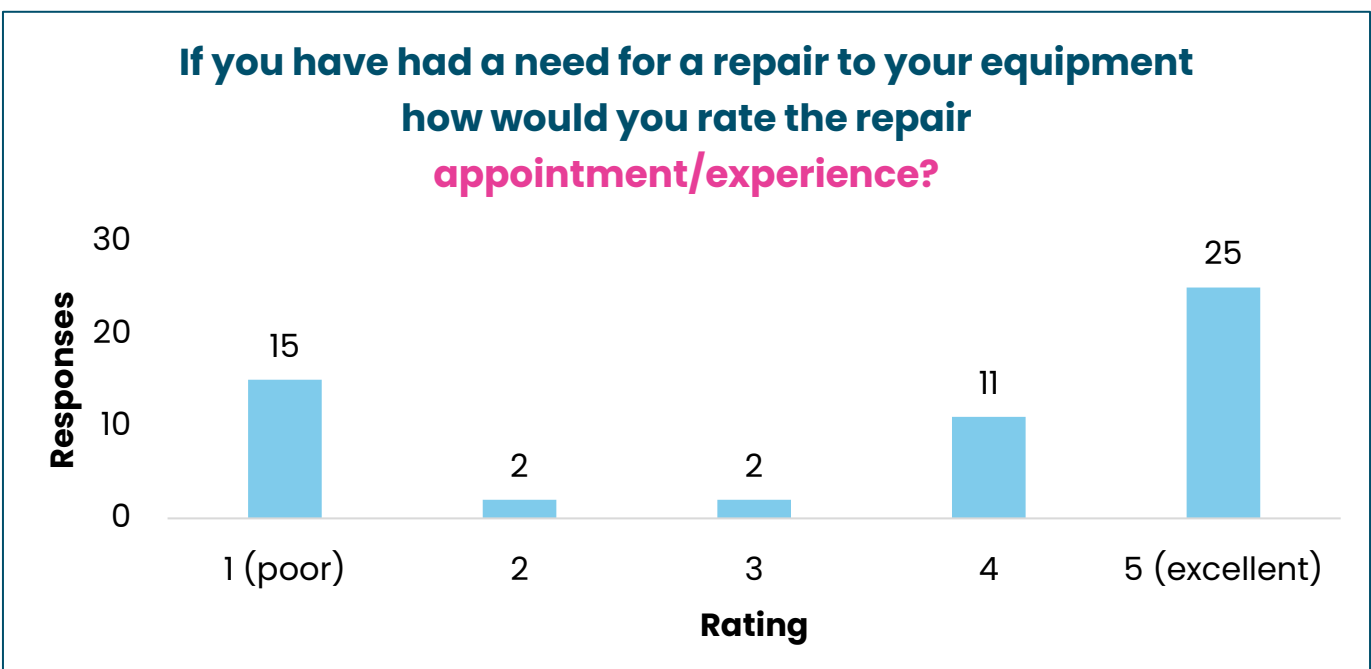
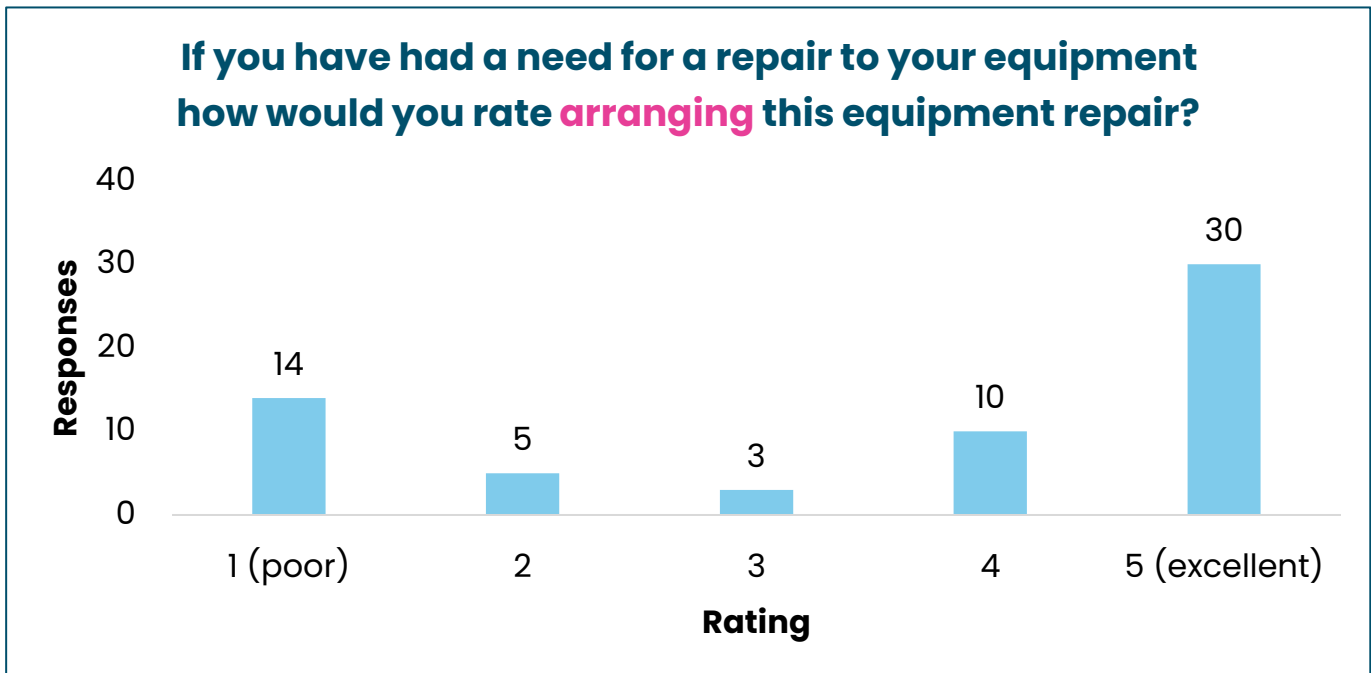
“It is sometimes difficult to get hold of Medequip, then when you do, you explain what you need nothing seems to happen.”

“I ring again and find that the message hasn't been passed on. We're waiting for equipment checks (now out of date). Three appointments have been made and no one has turned up or rung to cancel or apologise. I have better things to do than to wait in for three days for no one to appear. When I ring to ask what's happening I am told the technician ran out of time or something but no one thinks to ring us to let us know not to wait in.”



Repairs

In terms of getting equipment repaired, respondents were asked to rate how they found arranging the repair appointment as well as how they would rate the repair appointment/experience.



Please note, if respondents had not needed a repair to their equipment they selected 'Not applicable' from the options and these responses have been removed from the charts above.

A large proportion of those who had needed a repair said it was easy to arrange and the repairs were carried out efficiently.

“When the hospital bed malfunctioned, the engineer arrived that morning.”

“It is very easy to arrange a repair. I phoned them and made an appointment for maintenance to come out.”

“Customer services understood what happened and the need to sort it.”

“A replacement chair mattress arrived the day after I reported it.”

However, not everyone had a positive experience. Some said there can be long waiting times for repairs and issues were raised around the repair engineers not arriving when they said they would. Despite these challenges, some who reported these issues did acknowledge that once the repair engineer arrives, they tend to provide a good service, it is them arriving late or not at all that is the key issue.

“I shouldn't be chasing them when they are supposed to provide a service.”

“I would rather not have them anywhere near the equipment unless it's necessary.”

“At one point was told that I had to try to use another bed over the weekend when mine broke on a Friday because they couldn't come out until Monday.”

When I get a new sofa, I must buy a sofa bed, so I have somewhere to sleep if my bed breaks on a Friday. The time frame for an engineer visit is too long (9am - 5pm). I have phoned to chase up the engineer and been told that they aren't coming, and they have forgotten to tell me.

“When the engineer is in the house, I would rate a '4' because they explain what they are doing and work well but the turnover for engineers is high which is concerning. Why? They need to employ more engineers to cover such a big area.”

“It took a long time to get the repair but the guy who did it was very good.”

Returning equipment

When asked if there is anything else they would like to share about the service some people mentioned their experiences of returning equipment or getting equipment that is no longer needed collected. Some said Medequip have been efficient.

“They were very efficient over the phone at arranging collection of the equipment no longer needed.”

However, others expressed the difficulties they have faced due to miscommunication. One person said they had issues trying to return an item due to both the Durham and North Yorkshire departments saying they were not responsible for the equipment. Another said collections for deceased patients' needs to be quicker as it can be distressing for families when their loved one has passed away and the equipment is still in the house.



“There doesn't seem to be much communication or organisation.”

“On collection day I had to take my son to the doctor as he'd got an infection in his wound. I rang customer services to ask if she could tell me a time and she said it wasn't on the system. 5 minutes later I got a text telling me what time it would be collected – the same time as our appointment. I rang back and was told to leave the commode outside, and it was collected while I was out. I got a text about an hour later, when I was home saying the driver was coming in 10 minutes even though it had been collected.”

About three weeks after collection someone rang and left a message to say they wanted to arrange collection of a bed and zimmer frame. We didn't have either of those things."

"They wouldn't collect the crutches."

"I was issued with crutches at Darlington Memorial and given a phone number to ring when I no longer needed them. When I rang, I was told that Durham wouldn't collect them as I lived in North Yorkshire. I phoned the North Yorkshire department, but they wouldn't collect them as they were issued in Durham. I thought they were all part of the same group. I returned them myself to the hospital."

"Collections for deceased patients' needs to be quicker."

"Sometimes families find it distressing having items such as beds in their living room when a loved one has passed away. There should be a more urgent response, such as a next day collection for these situations to save distress of families."

Return Recycle Reuse

Help your local NHS services help others
Return NHS equipment



Recommendations and action plan

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the service that Medequip provides, praising the polite and professional staff and the quality and condition of their equipment. Many said the equipment helps to improve their quality of life and independence, and helps them to feel safer. However, while many shared their positive experiences of the service, some areas for improvement were also identified, particularly around communication and delivery timescales.

From the feedback and insight gathered, we have identified six areas where the services Medequip provide can be improved to meet the needs of the people they serve across North Yorkshire. The table below includes the recommendations from Healthwatch North Yorkshire and a summary of the actions from Medequip. If you would like to read the full action plan from Medequip that provides more detail on what specific actions they plan to take by when, [click here](#).

| | Recommendations from Healthwatch North Yorkshire | Actions from Medequip |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Suitability of equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the equipment provided by Medequip meets the needs of the individual. • Specific feedback we received from respondents included: | Clinical professionals (occupational therapists, nurses etc.) use their clinician judgement to prescribe equipment to patients. To support this Medequip hold regular Equipment Review Groups (ERG's) where Clinicians assess |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shower benches do not always fit on baths (which led to one person falling over). • A light on the handset/remote that controls beds would be useful. • Footrests on walkers would mean a person could be pushed along while sitting down. • Some equipment is quite old and there are now better, updated versions that people would rather have. • Issues surrounding non-adjustable tray tables were also raised. | <p>equipment and decide if it needs to be added to the standard catalogue so that it can be ordered for patients. Where standard equipment is not deemed as sufficient for a patient, the Clinician will go through the Specials ordering process.</p> <p>In addition to the above and based on the survey feedback, we have designed and have started distributing a new leaflet which is given to patients when they receive a piece of equipment. This leaflet provides information on how to contact Medequip along with information on how to self-fund equipment if needed.</p> |
| <p>2. Communication with Medequip</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People using Medequip equipment should be regularly asked if the equipment continues to be suitable for them and meets their needs, and the equipment should be changed/updated if it does not. • Medequip staff who deliver customer service support via the phone should ensure they provide consistent, empathetic, and helpful advice and support to their customers that meets their needs. | <p>We are very pleased with the fantastic feedback received on the high level of service provided. However, there were a few customers who felt that we could improve our Customer Service experience for them.</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in the Medequip complaints service should be undertaken to ensure it is effective and efficient in dealing with issues people raise in a timely and professional manner. | <p>We have taken this on board and our plan is to identify and work with a third party organisation (a charity or support group linking to our customer base) to design and implement an enhanced training programme for our Customer Services (call centre) team.</p> |
| 3. Equipment delivery, installation, maintenance and repairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment provided by Medequip (including installation, maintenance & repair) should be delivered in a timeframe that meets the needs of the customer. | <p>Once again Medequip are over the moon with the fantastic verbatim comments from those who have used our service. We also realise that there are opportunities to drive further improvements to ensure that each time our service is consistent.</p> <p>We are reviewing our technician training programme along with introducing audit support for technicians in the field.</p> <p>We will also be working to improve the accuracy of the text messages sent out.</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery drivers should provide regular and accurate communication (phone or text messages) to inform customers of their expected time of arrival, or if a delivery has been cancelled. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medequip should ensure the quality of delivery, maintenance & repair appointments is consistent across all regions of North Yorkshire. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery drivers should have the knowledge and skills to inform customers about the | |

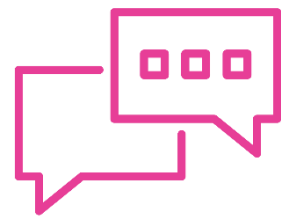
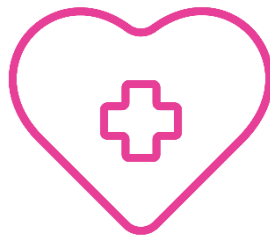
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| | <p>equipment they are delivering and/or installing.</p> | |
| <p>4. Quality and condition of equipment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery drivers should ensure that they always adequately fit and/or assemble the equipment that they deliver, and that it is not left to the customer to do. • Medequip should ensure that all equipment is thoroughly cleaned before being delivered and ensure no parts are missing from equipment. | <p>With over 5000 activities a month we work hard to ensure that all equipment is returned, cleaned and ready to be sent out to the next person who needs it. We are reviewing our post cleaning audit process to ensure that we have robust measures in place to capture anything that does not meet our high quality standards.</p> |
| <p>5. Information provided about equipment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery drivers who are delivering and installing equipment should always provide a verbal explanation of how to use the equipment. • Medequip should regularly review any information that is given to customers to keep about equipment (leaflets, booklets etc), ensuring it is accessible and clear to | <p>As mentioned under the suitability of equipment, we have now designed a new leaflet with key information on there about how to contact Medequip and also how to self-fund equipment if this is needed.</p> |

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| | <p>understand by those people using the equipment.</p> | |
| <p>6. Returning equipment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medequip should provide helpful and easy to understand information to customers if they wish or need to return their equipment. • Equipment needing to be returned should be collected in a timely and efficient manner, particularly after someone has deceased. | <p>We have had some great feedback on service, so thank you! There are opportunities to be more responsive, especially when a family has suffered a bereavement. We are currently reviewing our service provision with the Commissioner in order to identify ways in which we can improve our responsiveness going forwards.</p> <p>We are also working on our marketing strategy to improve knowledge of equipment recycling opportunities in North Yorkshire. We provide equipment collection bins at the 22 Yorwaste sites across North Yorkshire along with the main service of contacting us directly to arrange a collection from your home.</p> |

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who collaborated with us on this project, with a particular thank you to Medequip. Thank you to all the organisations who shared our survey, promoted the project or helped us gather feedback.

Most importantly, thank you to the people who shared their feedback with us via our survey, your voices will help inform and shape the Medequip service across North Yorkshire.





Committed to quality

We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit so that we can be certain of this.

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healthwatch

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