

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service Summary of discussions held via Focus Groups

March 2021



Surrey Heartlands
Clinical Commissioning Group

As part of the engagement programme for the re-procurement of the Surrey Non-Emergency Transport Service, Focus Groups/interviews were held during March 2021, with CCG members and members from:

- Spelthorne Older People's Forum
- Surrey Choices – Nexus Speaking Up Group
- Sunnybank Trust – users with learning difficulties/deafness
- Surrey Coalition of Disabled People – wheelchair users
- Visually impaired user/Surrey Vision Action Group
- Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF)

37 members/users participated in these discussions in total.

The aim of these sessions was to outline the feedback already received from the Round Table sessions and use these themes to focus on potential solutions for the future service.

Areas highlighted for consideration were:



Timeliness



Information about the service



Customer service



Vehicle access



Wheelchair security



Eligibility criteria



Vehicle type and range



Service scope



Timeliness

Each session highlighted timeliness as the key element for improvement/consideration in the new service model/specification. Reducing waiting times, time on the vehicle and being kept informed via text/on-site staff was also suggested.



Wheelchair security

Members of the focus group session reflected on the method and practice for securing their wheelchairs whilst in transit and fed back that they do not always feel confident that the chair is secure and safe. It is acknowledged that PTS team members receive training in how to secure wheelchairs/scooters and other mobility equipment safely and appropriately but that the method may appear insecure or unusual to the patient. This position may be improved upon via enhanced staff training to encourage better communication with the patient to explain the necessary process and give confidence to the patient that the chair/equipment is safe and secure. Further, training to increase and recognition and awareness of the range of mobility equipment, in particular powered wheelchairs was recommended.



Information about the service

Many participants reported the lack of awareness of the service and this is an area where engagement/promotion could be improved upon. Many users expressed the desire to keep the telephone and online booking ability but enhance this with email and SMS booking access. An information video about the service, staff and vehicles that users can access before they travel, was also suggested.



Eligibility criteria

There was mixed feedback regarding the eligibility criteria. Some users felt the questions and process was fine, others felt it needed improvement. There was requests to allow collection/drop off from work and/or home and to allow for multiple bookings if conditions will not change.



Vehicle type and range

Many users suggested increasing the range of vehicles, including the use of Community transport and taxis. Whilst acknowledgement was given that the CCG could not operate a 'limousine' style service, a more diverse range of vehicles were suggested, even with 'Uber' style app booking/ready/tracking facility.



Customer service

Staff training could include awareness of support required for each patient cohort i.e. visual/hearing/speech impairments/cultural/autistic/anxiety. There were two reports of excellent customer service by crews, but this needs to be more consistent. It was suggested that crews could use other means of communicating with patients who struggle to make themselves understood, i.e. using pen and paper, particularly for those hard of hearing. Google translation was also suggested.



Service scope

Consideration was suggested to include all renal patients, the Surrey Downs area, the new mental health hospital and the relocation of Epsom hospital.



Vehicle access

Many users reported having difficulty entering the vehicle, due to high steps. A ramp was suggested to make access easier.