

Experiences report: Non-emergency patient transport

Purpose

1. This report informs the Board about what people have told us about non-emergency patient transport, the findings of the consultation carried out by the CCG and the plans for the future of the service.

Background

2. Non-emergency patient transport is generally used to take people to hospital for appointments and treatment. Historically people have experienced frequent and significant delays being collected and taken home. People report many instances of missing appointments due to transport not arriving.
3. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the service is delivered by the East of England Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (EEAST). A range of community transport is also available, delivered by Dial a Ride schemes and small local community groups. All of these use volunteer drivers. The Combined Authority coordinates these schemes.
4. In 2019 NHS England carried out a consultation on a new framework for non-emergency patient transport. Our Healthwatch responded and encouraged interested groups, such as community transport schemes, to also respond.
5. The consultation report¹ acknowledged the poor experiences that people had using the services and set out a new framework to help improve consistency.

¹ [B0682-fnal-report-of-the-non-emergency-patient-transport-review.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

6. Last year Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG carried out an engagement exercise to inform the procurement of a new service; the contract for the existing service ending in 2022. The report of the findings of the exercise were published in January 2022². See below for a summary of the themes. These are consistent with the national report.
7. The current contract with EEAST has been extended to allow a fuller process to be undertaken. Our Information and Research Manger will be a member of the steering group.
8. Feedback we receive about non-emergency patient transport is passed onto the CCG, as the commissioners. We have raised concerns about the lack of investment in community transport with both the CCG and the local authorities, including the Combined Authority. System support and better coordination between these schemes has the potential to significantly improve people's experiences and reduce missed appointments.

Action required by the Board

9. The Board is asked to:
 - Note the report.

Author

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² [Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services \(NEPTS\) engagement report | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group \(cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk\)](#)

Findings of CCG engagement exercise

10. The CCG report sets out these concerns raised by people:

Reliability of the service

Respondents reported having bookings cancelled at the last minute. Several individuals also said the service had arrived significantly later than booked, which at times resulted in appointments being missed or scheduled discharges being delayed. A number of respondents had requested a specific type of vehicle – for example, one that could facilitate a wheelchair – and did not receive this type of vehicle in the end.

Difficulty contacting or speaking to the service

Several respondents said it is hard to speak to the service, and that the service does not consistently offer satisfying responses when they are reached. Some patients felt the service was not ready to take responsibility, or that there was a lack of a sense of urgency. Some people also indicated that it was not always easy to explain special requirements.

Lack of awareness about the service

Some respondents indicated that they had not been aware of the service prior to receiving the survey, even though they felt they or someone they care for should be eligible to benefit from NEPTS.

Stringency of the eligibility requirements to use NEPTS

Some respondents said they felt the service was too restrictive in terms of eligibility criteria.