

Wheelchair User Partnership Board Notes

8th January 2025

1) Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Present:
 - Independent Members from Cambridgeshire x 2
 - Independent Member from Peterborough x 2
 - VCSE sector representative x 1
 - Peterborough City Council Commissioning x 1
 - Integrated Care Board x 1
 - AJM Healthcare x 2
 - Speakers x 0
- Apologies were received

2) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2024 were approved, and the Action Log was updated.

3) Feedback from Independent Members

Wheelchair inside; was not aware that the current regulations mean that a wheelchair is for use indoors rather than outdoors. This means that if a person can mobilise around their home (crawling, shuffling, holding on to furniture etc) then they do not meet the eligibility criteria for a wheelchair. The Commissioner from the ICB explained that the eligibility criteria is changing slightly from 1st April 2025, and this might mean people in this situation can have a wheelchair.

Has had a wheelchair since 2019. They have daily issues with pain. Had a wheelchair which was condemned. Has made two complaints. Now has pressure sores on heel. They felt the response to the complaint outlined what has

happened not what should, or how the situation will be remedied. A chair has been ordered but now waiting 9 months for it.

Action: Stef (AJM Healthcare) will follow up outside of the meeting.

Graham (Healthwatch) explained that there had been 2 emails from people asking questions.

Action: Stef (AJM Healthcare) will follow up outside of the meeting.

4) Service Update. (Stef, AJM Healthcare)

Stef outlined the following:

Appointed Nathan Robson as Clinical Lead.

Customer Service Team Leader being recruited for, currently members of the wider team are covering reception when necessary.

Stef introduced a new member of the team, Kerry Thompson.

Kerry Thompson joined AJM Healthcare last September. She has been very vocal about poor service. Kerry was unsure about taking the role. Kerry spoke with AJM Healthcare directors and liked what they had to say about their vision and ethos. Kerry sees her role as to help improve AJM Healthcare's service.

Kerry explained that in the past she has campaigned for Changing Places, and Tesco now have 140 in their facilities. Kerry has also campaigned for accessible homes.

5) And 6) These items were postponed as previous items had over run.

7) Procurement (Sandra Pedley, Integrated Care Board)

Sandra explained that the current contract was due to end on 31.3.25.

The Integrated Care Board has extended the current contract with AJM Healthcare for 1 year.

This was due to national changes to the procurement process, and also due to the local and national elections during 2024 which meant that engagement with the public had to be on-hold during pre-election periods (purdah) as the provision of wheelchairs (as part of the NHS) was seen as an area that could be political.

The procurement process will take place during 2025, with the new service starting on 01.04.2026.

New eligibility criteria for the provision of a wheelchair comes into force on 1.4.2025, including self-referral whereas currently referral must be via a GP.

The Integrated Care Board are continuing to work with AJM Healthcare re patients waiting over 18 weeks. National guidance states that only 8% cases should be waiting over 1 weeks, however, the ICB has said it should be 0% ie no cases waiting over 18 weeks.

Cases can be closed by AJM Healthcare and then tell a patient about it – doesn't allow for the patient to be asked.

The ICB are wishing to carry out more patient engagement including surveys.

It was noted that appointment times need to be planned with the person, everyone is different, some people would rather a later appointment due to taking time to mobilise in a morning, whereas others would prefer an early appointment due to medication impacting their health later in the day. It was also felt that people might want appointments early evening as they work and are not always able to take lots of time off.

Action: The Commissioner has noted this.

It was noted that GP records do not always show that a patient is a wheelchair user, meaning that they should make referrals, or that they require appropriate equipment such as wheelchair accessible scales to get weighed.

Action: Healthwatch has raised this with the ICB.

8) Any Other Business

Wheelchair Alliance – a regular attendee of the Wheelchair User Forum has offered to become the Forum's representative at the national Wheelchair Alliance.

Date of next meeting

Date: 9th April 2025

Time: 11am to 1pm

Venue: Hybrid

City College Peterborough
Brook Street
Peterborough
Pe1 1TU