

Patient Transport Services: Impact on Adult Social Care

Concerns regarding the performance of Arriva Transport Solutions, the contracted provider by the NHS of non-emergency transport to and from Leicester's hospitals, were publicised at the end of July.

Dr Briggs, Managing Director of East Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning group, which manages the contract for Arriva, circulated a letter explaining the problems and the steps being taken to resolve these with Arriva. There was local media interest and the Chair / Vice Chair of Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission raised the impact of these transport problems on adult social care, in a letter to the Leicester Mercury (Saturday 26th July).

It is the case that delays in patient transport, but also in arranging medications to be taken home on discharge, do have an impact on the arrangements for social care services. Adult social care services are required for a number of people being discharged – either as a restart of an existing support package or a new provision of social care. Formal discharge notifications are made to social care to identify the date of discharge and liaison between health and social care staff will confirm the time that social care services are required, depending on the discharge time. The Council arranges services accordingly.

In circumstances where the discharge is delayed, for example because transport is delayed, there is a need to rearrange the social care services, to a later time or the next day, depending on the delay and the package planned. The delay is, of course, a concern for people using services. It is also disruptive to social care providers, whether internal reablement services or independent sector care providers, who have to reschedule their staffing rotas and will have wasted the prior efforts to establish a package at the right time. If communication breaks down, it is the case that a provider will attend a home address to start care provision at the agreed time, but the patient has not been discharged as planned, wasting resources.

It is not possible to accurately quantify the impact, as this will be managed by a wide range of organisations and there is no single system to capture this. A snapshot analysis of impact was taken within the Council's own Reablement Service. It was established that in a 7 day period, 2 care packages had to be rearranged due to transport delays; this equates to 10% of all cases during the period.

Adult social care is part of the system wide Urgent Care partnership. This allows for regular senior meetings across all those involved in the delivery and support to the acute care system, where such issues are raised and actions agreed to address

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concerns. In addition, the acute care system has been the subject of challenge by the Health and Wellbeing Board in two focussed meetings.

Individual case matters are dealt with in daily teleconferences between partners, which social care managers take part in.

Transport and medication delays are a feature of the current acute care challenges and there is system wide commitment to tackle this and other issues collectively.