

Delayed Discharges relating to Equipment and Adaptations

The report by Age UK highlights the delays resulting from people awaiting equipment and adaptations, prompting their call for all new homes to be built to lifetime housing standards.

At a national level, there are reportable delays for this reason, which Age UK has used to calculate the costs in the report. However this should be set in context.

In July 2014, in England there were 88,779 delayed bed days across acute and non-acute care settings, of which 3,599 (4%) were due to equipment / adaptations. Of this total, 527 (0.6%) delays were attributable to social care.

In Leicester, a snapshot at the end of June 2014 noted a total of just 1 delay for a city patient as a result of community equipment or adaptations.

There are a range of mechanisms in place to ensure that delays for this reason are minimised:

There is a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Community Equipment Service in place, which supports the equipment provision needs for all three councils and clinical commissioning groups / NHS providers. There are stringent performance measures related to the delivery of equipment deemed to be essential for discharge, including same day delivery requirements. Leicester City Council hosts the contract lead role for this service. There are clear protocols in place regarding the responsible agency for ordering equipment.

Leicester has invested in equipment and minor adaptations as part of previous NHS transfers and now within the Better Care Fund. Additional winter funding has also been used to extend the operational hours of the equipment service. The council's reablement and crisis services have rapid access to a handypersons service to install equipment or minor adaptations. Both of these services are accessible to hospital staff who wish to make a discharge, including out of usual working hours.

Adult social care works closely with UHL, through daily teleconferences to ensure that any patients who may be delayed are discussed and steps taken to avoid this. In the event that major adaptations are deemed necessary to enable a return home, an offer of interim care in a setting outside of hospital, such as a care home, will always be made, to ensure that people are not staying in hospital for longer than necessary. As many elected members will be aware from constituency casework, major adaptations cannot be delivered quickly for a variety of reasons.

In summary, there is evidence to confirm that delays due to equipment and minor adaptations are not a problem in Leicester, significant assurances that services are working well to avoid such delays and systems in place to monitor this.