

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Experience Survey

The East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST) took over the contract for the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) in October 2018. This means that they now provide the service across Hertfordshire.

Non-Emergency Patient Transport is provided to people who are frail or need specialist assistance to and from appointments at hospitals, treatment centres and other similar facilities.

Late in 2018, Healthwatch Hertfordshire (HwH) received feedback from carers about their experience of using NEPTS when supporting a loved one. Their feedback highlighted the need for clarification around how carers were being assessed as “escorts” by the service. HwH was able to clarify the escort criteria and create a direct link between Carers and the East of England Ambulance Trust in order to provide a more direct route for their feedback.

In light of this feedback from carers, HwH carried out an exploratory survey to investigate service user experiences of using the current service, to identify what is working well within the service and what could be improved, as well as if experiences have changed over the past year since the new provider took over.

Aims & Objectives

- To gather service user experiences of using NEPTS
- To identify themes within experiences and use these to identify a need for and inform future work



Key Findings



We carried out an online and paper survey asking people how satisfied they were with various aspects of the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service. Both versions of the survey were sent out via our Newsletter to our members, the online version was also shared on social media.

In total we received 25 relevant responses to the survey and generally participants stated that overall they were very satisfied with NEPTS as a service. Particular emphasis was placed upon the “excellent” care and attitudes provided by the staff. We found that:

- **80%** (20 of 25) of respondents were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the **booking arrangements**.
- **64%** (16 of 25) were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the **communications** from the service including text reminders and updates.
- **72%** (18 of 25) of individuals surveyed were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ that the vehicle collecting them **arrived on time** and **48%** (11 of 23) were ‘very satisfied’ that their **journey was no longer than necessary**.
- When questioned about the staff within the service **88%** (22 out of 25) were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ that the **staff were able to meet their needs** for the journey. **72%** (18 of 25) were ‘very satisfied’ that the **staff were friendly and understanding**.

What you told us is working well:

Positive comments emphasised the usefulness of the service, and the quality of its staff.

“Brilliant service (especially the staff)”

“Excellent service, staff went above and beyond with making sure I was okay throughout the journey”

“Excellent time efficiency, very helpful friendly staff who go above and beyond their duties to make you feel as comfortable as possible... and they make sure you arrive on time or with extra time to spare so don't have to panic rush”

“[The staff] took me in a wheelchair, helped with walker, very helpful.”

“The person I spoke to was helpful and very polite”

Other positive comments highlighted that the vehicles used were thought to be safe, comfortable and clean. The overriding theme within the responses and comments was that when the service works well, it is highly valued by its users.

What you told us could be improved:

12% (3 of 25) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the service overall and 8% (2 of 25) were very dissatisfied. Where people using Non-Emergency Patient Transport had less positive experiences, this involved lateness of the vehicle when picking them up for, and from their appointments - sometimes resulting in missed appointments and delays in receiving care.

“Having to wait several hours [for the return journey] is not satisfactory”

“My mother in law is 88 and a cancer sufferer and gets stressed at the time they turn up as recently when they have turned up they are nearly always cutting the time fine to get her to Lister on time for her appointment. She always books well in advance.”

“Missed 2 appointments with physio due to the lateness of the transport”

“Because of missed appointments recently dissatisfied but normally good”

Additional feedback we received:

An emergent theme that came out through the survey results was that some people, who felt they needed help with transport, are unaware of NEPTS. One participant stated:

“I would like to get help. I get nothing and have to go to the royal Marsden”

This was reiterated through signposting calls we received from our membership throughout the duration of the survey.

We received eight signposting calls pertaining to NEPTS, which highlighted the following:

- Difficulty in understanding the eligibility criteria for using NEPTS
- Lack of awareness of NEPTS and how EEAST can be contacted
- Poor communication from the service
- Late arrival of the vehicle

This resonates with the feedback we previously received from carers about the service, and suggests that although the service as a whole is very satisfactory and valued by its users, promotion of the service, communication about who can use the service, and timeliness of the vehicles, could be improved.

