

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Experience Survey

In October 2018, the East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST) took over the delivery of the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) within Hertfordshire. Since then, we have heard less from Hertfordshire residents about their experience of NEPTS. In light of this we (Healthwatch Hertfordshire - HwH) created an exploratory survey to understand if experiences and/or views had got better, as well as if experiences have changed over the past year since the new provider took over.

What is Non-Emergency Patient Transport?

EEAST defines Non-Emergency Patient Transport as a service provided to people who are frail or need specialist assistance to and from appointments at hospitals, treatment centres and other similar facilities. This is subject to their eligibility criteria, which is assessed when booking.

Aims & Objectives

- To gather service user experiences of using NEPT services delivered by EEAST only
- To identify themes which indicate if experiences are different or similar to previous feedback
- To focus on experiences of using NEPTS, rather than experiences of not being able to use NEPTS. (This is so that data gathered complements feedback previously obtained)
- To use the findings to evaluate the need for future work



What we did

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** responses to the survey. Although the findings supported previous feedback, it is important to note that due to the small sample we have not drawn generalisable inferences or conclusions.

What you said



Overall respondents impressed the importance and value of the service, and placed a particular emphasis upon the “excellent” care and attitudes provided by the 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”

Overall:

- 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**.
- 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 said could be better

12% (3 of 25) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the service overall and 8% (2 of 25) were very dissatisfied. Where people had less positive experiences, this more frequently 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

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

The above also resonates with the feedback we previously received from carers about the service. Their feedback highlighted the need for clarification around how carers were being assessed as "escorts" by the service. Although HwH was able to clarify the 'escort criteria' and create a direct link between Carers and the East of England Ambulance Trust; the collective feedback suggests that although the service as a whole is hugely valued by its users, key areas of improvement are around the transparency of the eligibility criteria, and lateness of vehicles.

What next

HwH has the opportunity to raise these issues through membership on the Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group NEPT (EEAST) Performance/Quality Committee and the North Central London Patient Transport - User and Experience Forum as well as through discussions with NHS England.