

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services Future Vision Event 2024 Feedback

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Sophia Gardens, Cardiff

Question 1

Full Summary Feedback

The feedback highlights several current challenges with the delivery of patient transport services, which can be grouped into key themes:

Resource Limitations and Inefficiency: There is a noted lack of additional discharge vehicles, which hampers the ability to manage the volume of demand efficiently. There's an increased demand from centralising services which stretches existing resources. Transport for patient discharges is often an afterthought rather than a planned activity.

Communication and Coordination Issues: Poor communication practices exist, including failing to speak with patients about potential alternative transport options and not properly verifying patients' eligibility for transport services. There is a lack of effective communication and sharing of best practices and standard operating procedures (SOPs) between health boards. Communication with transport providers is not as effective as it used to be, impacting service coordination.

Geographic and Demographic Challenges: Rural areas, such as mid Wales, have limited transport options other than Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS). Challenges are increasing due to demographic changes like an aging population, which affects mobility and increases medical and transport needs.

Service Planning and Integration: There are significant issues with integrating transport planning into overall health service planning, leading to inefficiencies and missed appointments. The need for better collaboration with public transport and potential use of community transport options to fill gaps in service.

Patient Experience and Expectations: There is a lack of adequate feedback mechanisms to gauge patient experiences and expectations accurately. Patient needs and expectations are not always well communicated or understood, affecting overall service satisfaction.

Policy and Eligibility Concerns: Policies on transport eligibility are not consistently applied or clear, creating confusion and potential inequities in service delivery. There is a need to reassess and potentially update the eligibility criteria to better reflect current needs and demographic changes.

Funding and Strategic Planning: Funding issues are recurrent, with discussions around the need for better financial management and focusing on outcomes rather than just budget constraints. Strategic planning for future demands and service adjustments is lacking, which is critical given the changing health and transport needs.

Overall, these challenges point to a need for improved strategic planning, better resource allocation, enhanced communication and coordination, and a more patient-centered approach in the delivery of patient transport services.

Question 2

Full Summary Feedback

The feedback outlines several future challenges for the delivery of patient transport services, highlighting areas for improvement and coordination. Here are some key points and a summary:

Service Coordination and Communication: There's a need for better coordination between appointment scheduling and transport services to avoid situations where transport arrives but the appointment is canceled or rescheduled. Improved communication could involve digital solutions, such as automated text messages to remind patients of their appointments and to confirm or cancel transport.

Weekend and Non-Traditional Hours Services: Expanding services to accommodate weekend appointments and non-traditional hours is necessary but currently challenging due to limited transport options during these times.

Digital Integration and Virtual Appointments: Increasing the use of virtual appointments could reduce the demand for physical transport, but there's also a need to ensure that all patients have access to the necessary technology. A responsive transport system that integrates digital solutions could help in managing real-time changes in appointment and transport schedules.

Patient-Centric Approaches: Giving patients the ability to book their own appointments and transport can empower them and potentially lead to better utilisation of resources. Engaging patients and the public in service design can lead to more tailored and acceptable solutions.

Logistics and Fleet Management: Efficiently managing the fleet and considering different patient needs in transport service design are crucial for accommodating an increasing and aging population with diverse health requirements.

Policy and Planning: There's a need for strategic planning that includes transport in the initial stages of healthcare service planning to avoid last-minute logistical issues. Political support and funding are vital for implementing changes that can sustain long-term improvements in patient transport services.

Special Considerations for Rural Areas: Rural areas face unique challenges due to limited public transport, necessitating creative solutions such as mobile clinics or community-hosted appointment sites.

Sustainability and Cost Efficiency: With rising costs for fuel and maintenance, there's a push towards decarbonising the fleet and considering alternative transport modes, which must be balanced with accessibility and patient needs.

Future-proofing and IT Innovations: Leveraging technology like AI could help in optimising route planning and managing patient data more efficiently, but there is also a caution about over-reliance on digital capabilities that might exclude non-tech-savvy individuals.

Overall, the delivery of patient transport services faces multifaceted challenges that require integrated solutions combining policy, technology, patient involvement, and strategic planning.

Question 3

Full Summary Feedback

The feedback provided centers on how the NHS in Wales can enhance collaboration with external stakeholders to optimise patient transport services. Here are the key points and a summary:

Service Flexibility and Efficiency: Address current inefficiencies, such as unnecessary charges and procurement issues. Adapt to changing demands with flexible service delivery and improve resource allocation to reduce cancellations and late discharges.

Communication and Data Integration: Improve local communication strategies and ensure data flows from higher-level committees to operational teams. Implement granular surveys to gather data from operational staff and identify common issues across Wales.

Patient-Centric Approaches: Focus on the whole patient journey, ensuring dignity and appropriate transport decisions. Expand patient feedback mechanisms to better tailor services to their needs.

Technology and Innovation: Enhance technological solutions such as integrated virtual appointments and apps for better service management. Consider using different types of transport and apps to provide patients with detailed transport information.

Strategic and Collaborative Planning: Collaborate more effectively across regions and with various stakeholders to align services with both national and local needs. Implement joint five-year plans and continuous strategic evaluations to ensure services meet future demands.

Training and Standards: Provide training for health board staff on patient needs assessment and efficient patient handling. Streamline practices to avoid poor service delivery and explore new transport options like using taxis for specific services.

Overall, to improve the collaboration in delivering patient transport services, NHS Wales needs to tackle existing service inefficiencies and enhance communication and data-sharing among all involved parties. By focusing on a patient-centric approach that includes extensive feedback mechanisms and respects the entire patient journey, the services can be more effectively tailored to individual needs.

Additionally, embracing technological innovations and strategic planning will help adapt services to dynamic demand conditions and integrate new solutions to optimise transport efficiency. Collaborative efforts should also extend to training programs and standardised procedures that align with best practices and regional needs.

Essentially, a more flexible, integrated, and patient-focused approach will likely lead to better outcomes in patient transport services within NHS Wales.

Question 4

Full Summary Feedback

Here are the key points and a summary concerning how the NHS can enhance collaboration with external stakeholders to improve patient transport services:

Enhancing Service Dignity and Accessibility: Ensure services are dignified and respect patient needs. Improve parking and access issues near healthcare facilities. Make clinics and services more accessible via public transport.

Technological and Operational Innovations: Develop a centralised communication hub and a single point of contact for better service coordination. Utilise technology such as a unified app for transport bookings and information. Learn from logistic models of companies like Amazon and Just Eat to improve information flow to patients.

Strategic Partnerships and Community Involvement: Consider broader and more flexible use of community transport options alongside traditional services like taxis. Engage community partners through funding and collaborative projects to maximize resources. Include stakeholders and operational staff in surveys and strategic discussions to share best practices and innovate together.

Patient-Centered Approaches: Prioritise understanding and meeting individual patient needs early in the service design. Consider patient consultations and feedback mechanisms to ensure transport services are responsive and appropriate.

Escort/Carer: Address the need for escort or carer transportation during the service design.

Resource and Capacity Management: Address the challenge of volunteer shortages and consider incentives to engage community participation. Reimburse public transport routes that cater to patient demographics to encourage usage. Enhance IT services for better data management and patient-centered service delivery.

Overall, To improve patient transport services, the NHS in Wales should focus on dignity, accessibility, and efficiency. Leveraging technology for centralised communication and patient information is crucial. This includes adopting a unified app and learning from logistic strategies of commercial enterprises. Community transport needs greater integration and recognition, potentially expanding through strategic partnerships and collaborative funding. Patient-centered approaches should guide service modifications, ensuring that transport services meet the specific needs of individuals, including considerations for escorts and carers.

Finally, improving volunteer engagement and optimising public transport routes can enhance the overall effectiveness and reach of patient transport services. Collaborative efforts should aim to blend innovation, strategic planning, and community involvement to create a robust and responsive patient transport system.