



Equipment Services in Salford

**Addendum to main report showing progress
from Salford Equipment Services**

Updated May 2022

About us



Healthwatch Salford is your health and social care champion. Whether you've had a good or bad experience, we can use your feedback to improve services for everyone and we have the power to make NHS leaders and other care providers listen to what you have to say. We're completely independent and impartial and anything you say is confidential. We also offer information and advice to help you to get the support you need. Our service is free, simple to use and can make a real difference to people in Salford and beyond.

About this addendum



This is an addendum to our main report published in June 2021 following our project which looked at the experiences of people who had used Salford's Equipment Service 6 months prior.

We are pleased to share updates on the progress towards our 5 main recommendations as mentioned in that report. To read the report in full, please visit our website:

www.healthwatchsalford.co.uk/report/2021-06-07/equipment-services-project-report

Or call us in the office to receive a hard copy in the post: 0330 355 0300

Summary and recommendations from the main report in June 2021



The feedback from the survey was overwhelmingly positive: 92% of respondents say that the equipment that they have meets their needs; the vast majority of people rate all the parts of the service as excellent; 98% are happy with the service times available; 97% are happy with the delivery times available; 93% say that their equipment was delivered on the agreed day; and 80% say that they know what to do when a piece of equipment is no longer required.

However, notwithstanding this positive feedback, there are some comments which suggest that it would be beneficial to review different areas of the service in order to improve the service even further. Therefore, Healthwatch Salford makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation - 1

As the data shows that respondents commented on confusion between agencies and confusion over returning equipment (From enquiries to the Healthwatch Salford office and also see sections 8,9), then Healthwatch Salford recommends the establishment of a service user agreement between the Equipment Service and service user which outlines expectations on either side. For example, the Equipment Service might expect: that the equipment will be kept in good repair; that they will be notified of any need for repair/maintenance/replacement as soon as possible; and they will be notified should the equipment be no longer needed/the user has sadly passed away so that collection can be arranged. And, for example, the service user might expect: that they will be provided with equipment that meets their needs; are given all the information so that they understand which agencies are responsible for which pieces of equipment; know how and when to communicate with the service; and have a regular review to check that the equipment still meets their needs.

Response from Equipment Services in June 2021:

The service already places identity stickers, which include contact details, on all equipment that confirm it's on loan from Community Equipment Services.

Proposed action from Equipment Services June 2021:

The service will further develop a user agreement document outlining key information on area's such as :

- Process to follow on any damage / repairs to equipment
- How changes in need are reviewed / responsibilities of user to notify the service
- Process for the returning of equipment either using the collection service on offer and advertising the option of client representatives returning equipment to stores that includes directions / map of the building.

Unfortunately this cannot be implemented at the moment due to infection control measures, but we will endeavour to do so as soon as is practicable.

Updated response from Equipment Services, Spring 2022:

The establishment of the Northern Care Alliance and the ongoing merging of the websites has delayed progress in this area. A leaflet, incorporating the service user agreement and location of the service, is in the process of being updated, and this should be ready for comments from the CCG and Healthwatch Salford by April 2022.

Recommendation – 2

As the data shows that there were comments about disappointment over delays in timeframes (See sections 4 & 9), then Healthwatch Salford recommends clear written communication regarding timeframes, particularly regarding delivery/installation.

Response from Equipment Services June 2021:

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 93% of equipment delivered on the agreed date, and 97% on the availability of delivery slots. The service will review areas of communication between parties on agreed delivery dates where they need to change due to unplanned absences of staff.

Proposed action from Equipment Services June 2021:

SCC website will be updated to include performance targets. An online leaflet regarding the service to be developed and published on both SCC and SRFT websites. Include a map to Burrows and photo of Equipment services reception as well as information highlighted in Recommendation 1.

Further response from Equipment Services June 2021:

Occasionally the service becomes short-staffed with little notice leading to prioritisation of the pre booked equipment deliveries over the pre booked equipment collections. The service currently tries to reach people to advise them of the cancellation, but unfortunately this is not always possible, and we apologise for this

Further proposed action from Equipment Services June 2021:

We will endeavour to contact all service users as early as possible where unfortunately we have had to cancel collections. We will also advise people that they can drop items off directly to the Equipment store if they are able.

Updated response from Equipment Services, Spring 2022:

Leaflet see above.

A new asset database is in the process of being introduced for the Service. This will encourage more regular collection of non mandatory fields such as email and mobile numbers, so that service users can be reached more easily regarding delays in collections etc. The new leaflet will be emailed out to service users.

The business continuity plan prioritises deliveries over collections. Furthermore, collections from a location where the service user has sadly deceased are prioritised, but due to workload pressures, staff need to limit how many times they attempt to contact any particular service user.

Recommendation – 3

As the data shows that some respondents commented on carers/family members having a better understanding of need than the service user themselves, and needing to be there to coordinate deliveries/assessment (See sections 7,9), then Healthwatch Salford recommends that Equipment Services should involve carers or family members, where applicable and possible, on what the needs of the user might be, and in arrangements for deliveries/assessments.

Response from Equipment Services June 2021:

The information provided to Equipment Services generally originates from the prescriber or assessor.

Proposed action from Equipment Services June 2021:

The service will remind all prescribers such as Occupational Therapists of the importance of ensuring that all information regarding the requirement for a carer to be present for the delivery is passed onto Equipment Services when ordering equipment. If this is known it will be put on the driver's order, as it is now, so they are aware of any special circumstances.

Updated response from Equipment Services, Spring 2022:

Following the publication of the report, all staff were reminded of the importance of collecting any necessary information regarding the involvement of carers/family members. The developments made during the pandemic regarding infection control now mean it would not be necessary for any equipment to be left at the front door. This gives the opportunity for staff to ensure that the equipment is set up correctly and to check that the service user is ok.

Data is being collected regarding "preferred contact" and with the introduction of more regular text/email contact there will be the opportunity to keep family members/carers in the loop regarding more general developments within the service. The service is going to get guidance from the Children's team on how to manage preferred contact data for children transitioning to Adult Services.

Recommendation – 4

As the data shows that the service has not been reviewed for an extended period of time, moving forward, it is recommended that all services are reviewed regularly and in a timely manner in order to ensure that any potential issues are being picked up on, and thus ensuring that the service user remains at the heart of service provision. It would be beneficial to collect email addresses when any enquiry is made so that the service has another way of communicating with users, cheaply and quickly, and could therefore quickly remind users of how to return equipment, check if users need a reassessment etc.

Response from Equipment Services June 2021:

The service has a low number of complaints which is usually a good indicator of customer satisfaction. In recent years the influence of the Association of Greater Manchester has resulted in a review of the services in relation to performance against other services. It was reassuring to note that Salford scored very well across all areas and was one of the best.

Proposed action from Equipment Services June 2021:

We agree that all services should be reviewed and will endeavour to do this with service users, commissioners, staff and stakeholders more frequently.
In relation to email addresses, we have started collecting them.

Updated response from Equipment Services, Spring 2022:

The service is regularly reviewed, but this has historically been a more internal facing review. It is planned that the service will in future be reviewed by service users at the end of each financial year – this will come into force by March 2023.

The use of more regular email/text communication will be introduced by April 2022. A programme of reminders will be developed in the next 12 months, which will enable messages to be sent out regarding eg office opening times, product recalls and amnesties on equipment etc.

Recommendation – 5

As the data shows that over a third of respondents were carers/family members, almost half of respondents live alone, and almost three quarters have an impairment/disability and are possibly isolated and vulnerable (from enquiries to the Healthwatch Salford office, and also see demographic data and sections 1,4,8,9), then Healthwatch Salford recommends that Equipment Services continues to place an emphasis on empathy and the understanding of the patient journey, during all recruitment and training.

Response from Equipment Services June 2021:

We agree. It is very important to be empathetic and to listen. On occasion we do not get this right and we apologise for that. We will continue to ensure that all staff are trained and supported to communicate effectively

Proposed action from Equipment Services June 2021:

The Principal Manager of the service personally meets with all new staff members where the ethos of 'service user first' is foremost in the message to them. A comprehensive training package has been developed by the Administration Supervisor and time is given to each staff member to complete a full and varied set of training across the wider Independent Living Service enabling them to better see a service users journey and understand how many times that person may link in with us. This means they are better able to pinpoint areas of confusion or difficulties the service user may be experiencing, therefore allowing them to resolve issues more quickly and efficiently

Updated response from Equipment Services, Spring 2022:

There have been many staff changes within the service over the past year, and this has enabled the opportunity for further improvements to be made in recruitment and training. Quality Improvement processes are now being developed to enable a culture where staff coach and mentor each other to further understand the patient journey. Also, a post exit interview process with staff who are retiring has allowed the ethos and value of longstanding staff members to be harnessed, so that the knowledge can be shared within the service.

If you require this report in an alternative format, please contact our office on:

Telephone: 0330 355 0300

Email: info@healthwatchsalford.co.uk