

## **Spotlight Series**

Community Equipment in Medway



## Spotlight Series

### Community Equipment in Medway

In May 2019, we proactively sought feedback from people who are using community equipment across Medway. This service is currently provided by the Medway Integrated Community Equipment service or MICEs.

We sought feedback from people who use the service. We wanted to know what worked well and what could be improved. Everything we heard is detailed in this report.

# **Executive Summary**

## **Our Aim: We wanted to do two things:**

- **Gather feedback directly from people who had used the community equipment service recently**
- **Share the findings with Medway Council and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure the service could be improved for the future.**



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## **Overview: What did we find?**

**We heard a mix of feedback. Some people told us the process to get the equipment was easy. However others told us it took over a year for equipment to arrive.**

People shared with us the challenge they faced to get the correct equipment at the right time.

People talked about deliveries being cancelled and no notifications being given when delivery times changed.

# **Executive Summary**

## **What have we recommended?**

We heard a mix of feedback. Some people told us the process to get the equipment was easy. However others told us it took over a year for equipment to arrive.

An Easy Read version of the equipment catalogue should be created including versions in Braille, audio, large print and alternative languages

Consider the option for people to buy additional equipment through the website

The range of equipment for people with visual impairments should be increased

Delivery staff should be trained to ensure they understand the importance of keeping furniture in the same place for customers with a visual impairment

Customer service training should be considered for all staff including how to communicate to customers about delivery times

The website should be improved to enable those with visual and physical impairments to use it easily. For example, audio and font increases

Review and expand the range of children's equipment



Healthwatch Medway recommends that any future work should include patients to ensure their voice and experience is heard directly by Medway Community Equipment Service.

We will continue to support the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure they are hearing from patients and that their feedback is used to support improvements to the service.

## **How did we go about it**

We collected feedback via an online survey

We encouraged members of the Medway Physical Disability Forum and Kent Association for the Blind to share their views

We heard from 12 people aged between 26 and 65.

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## **What did people tell us?**

We heard some powerful stories from people who use community equipment across Medway.





## Accessibility

People talked to us about the challenge to understand the catalogue particularly if they needed it in different formats such as large font, audio or Braille

People with visual impairments talked to us about the limited range of equipment to support them. For example white handrails in a white bathroom were not suitable for all people

People with visual impairments told us how difficult they found it to use the website



## Staff training

People shared stories of delivery staff moving furniture in their homes and the issues this causes for people with limited visibility.

## **More options**

“I’m lucky that I could afford to buy the equipment I needed. Others may not.”

Users of children’s equipment asked for a wider range of options

“I use direct payments so I would be happy to purchase directly.”

People mentioned that they would like the option to make private purchases through the website to supplement their needs

## **We also heard about....**

We heard mixed feedback about the ordering and delivery process.

“My father was left for weeks without equipment. It meant my father’s discharge from hospital was delayed.”

“The whole process was an absolute shambles.”

“It would be useful if they measured properly before wasting our time waiting for an all day delivery only to find it doesn’t fit.”

“I had a very good service. I had to replace some items but it only took three days.”

“After 18 months, I eventually got someone helpful and finally the equipment was delivered”

# Healthwatch Medway

**Healthwatch Medway is the independent voice for local people in Medway.**

We gather and represent people's views about any health and social care service in Medway.

Our role is to understand what matters most to people and to use that information to influence providers and commissioners to change the way services are designed and developed.

Our **FREE** Information and Signposting service can help you navigate Medway's complicated health and social care system to ensure you can find and access the services that are available for you. Call us on 0800 136 656 or email [enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com)



## **By Telephone:**

Healthwatch Medway

**Freephone 0800 136 656**

between the hours of 10:00 - 16:00  
Monday to Friday



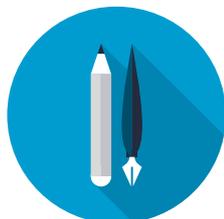
## **By Email:**

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## **Online:**

[www.healthwatchmedway.com](http://www.healthwatchmedway.com)



**By Post:** Write to us or fill in and send a Your Comment Counts form. **Freepost RTLG-UBZB-JUZA 5A New Road Avenue, Chatham, ME4 6BB**



## **Face to Face:**

Call **0800 136 656** to arrange a visit



## **By Text:** Text us on **07525 861 639**.

By texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's British Sign Language interpreter will make contact and arrange a time to meet face to face.