

# **What would a great community equipment service look like?**

## **Findings from a survey of prescribers**

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## Executive Summary

### Key findings from the survey

- 104 prescribers completed a questionnaire giving their views on what a great community equipment service would look like.
- Those responding to the questionnaire were more likely to: be regular users of the service; order equipment for adults; and order both standard and special items. They were also most likely to use the standard 7 day delivery option.
- Views were gathered on various aspects of a community equipment service and from these comments key themes were identified around:
  - **Equipment catalogue:** Easy to access and navigate; specific functions to facilitate its use; wide range of products; detailed descriptions of products; quality images; and comments on the ordering process.
  - **Ordering process:** Easy to access and use; specific functions to facilitate ordering; support with the ordering process; availability of stock; delivery process; and good communication.
  - **Delivery process:** Reliable service; responsive service; delivery time slots; usable equipment; qualities of staff; and good communication.
  - **Installation service:** Reliable service; efficient service; usable equipment; qualities of staff and good communication.
  - **Maintenance service:** Accurate record keeping system; usable equipment; prompt service; qualities of staff; and good communication.
  - **Collection service:** Timely collection; collection time slots; flexible service; and good communication.
  - **Complaints process:** Easy to access; clear and simple process; prompt response; open and clear communication; action taken; and qualities of staff.
- Responses included suggestions for service developments; identification of innovations; and comments relating to the current provider. Comments on the current provider have not been included in this report.

## 1. Introduction

Birmingham has an integrated community equipment loans service which is funded by local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Birmingham City Council, and delivered by an external provider.

The provision of community equipment to adults and children enables independent living, facilitates patient discharge from hospital and can contribute to reducing overall costs in the health and social care system.

The current contract for delivering the service is due to expire in 2019 and commissioners in the NHS and Birmingham City Council are working on what is needed for a future service. An important part of this process was obtaining views from health and social care staff (prescribers) about what a great community equipment service, fit for the future, might look like. Prescribers are clinical staff (occupational therapists, physiotherapists, district nurses) who assess clients of all ages and order equipment to enable independent living and facilitate discharge from hospital. To obtain their views a questionnaire was developed and distributed to the 3,000 prescribers who currently use the service.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was developed and uploaded for access by prescribers only to Birmingham Be Heard, which is Birmingham City Council's consultation database.

A link to the survey was then circulated by email to 3,000 prescribers who order equipment through the current community equipment loans service.

The survey was launched on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018 with an initial closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> May. Prescribers were sent several email reminders about the survey and the closing date was changed to 21<sup>st</sup> May as some staff were experiencing problems accessing the survey's website. A Word version of the questionnaire was also developed and shared with a small number of staff from Birmingham Community Healthcare Foundation Trust who reported continued difficulty accessing the online survey.

The closing date for the survey was later changed to 28<sup>th</sup> May to allow for the link to be shared at a meeting of hospice staff and to contacts via a CCG contract manager.

### 2.2 Analysis

Responses were captured on the Birmingham Be Heard consultation database.

One completed Word version of the survey questionnaire was returned and this was manually inputted into the Birmingham Be Heard database.

### **2.2.1 Quantitative analysis**

Closed questions were coded according to a predetermined coding structure. Survey responses were extracted from Birmingham Be Heard and entered onto an Excel database for analysis using pivot tables. The findings are reported in section 3.

### **2.2.2 Qualitative analysis**

Survey responses to open text questions were extracted from Birmingham Be Heard and entered onto an Excel database for analysis.

The qualitative analysis was undertaken in several stages. Comments to each question were considered and manually coded. Themes were then identified from the coded data to inform the key findings. A check on the reliability of the process was undertaken by a second analyst who reviewed the results for a sample of respondents.

The findings are reported in section 3.

## **2.3 Survey limitations**

The survey was distributed to 3,000 prescribers but only a small proportion (104, 3.5%) responded.

Problems caused by some NHS trusts' firewalls blocking access to the survey website may have contributed to the low response rate. Advice was given to staff to request that trusts 'whitelist' the Birmingham Be Heard website or for them to access the survey from a device not connected to an NHS network.

## **3. Key Findings**

104 staff completed a questionnaire.

### **3.1 Quantitative findings**

#### **Question 1 - Which organisation do you work for?**

More respondents were from the Birmingham Community Healthcare trust than any other organisation. No responses were received from those working in Birmingham Children's Trust or the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital.

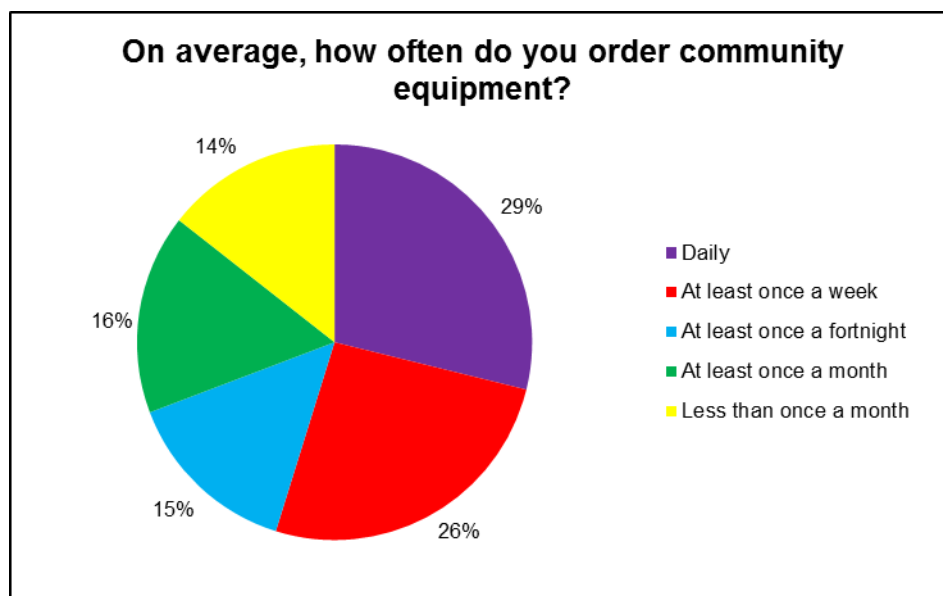
**Table 1: Question 1 - Employing organisation**

Organisation	Number	%
Birmingham Children's Trust	0	0%
Birmingham City Council	26	25%
Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	45	43%
Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust	3	3%
Birmingham Women's & Children's NHS Foundation Trust	3	3%
CJOT	1	1%
Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust	14	13%
Hospice	5	5%
Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	0	0%
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust	4	4%
University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust	3	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Question 2 - On average, how often do you order community equipment?**

104 responses were received to this question with the majority of respondents being regular users of the service; on average placing orders daily or at least once a week.

**Figure 1: Question 2 - Frequency with which orders are placed**



### Question 3 - Who do you order equipment for?

Most of the respondents order equipment for adults.

**Table 2: Question 3 - Citizen group receiving equipment**

Citizen group	Number	%
Adults	88	85%
Children	14	13%
Both adults and children	2	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Question 4 - What equipment have you ordered?

The majority of respondents order both catalogue/standard stock items and Specials.

**Table 3: Question 4 - Type of equipment ordered**

Equipment type	Number	%
Both catalogue/standard stock items and Specials	67	64%
Catalogue/standard stock items only	36	35%
Not answered	1	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Question 5 - Which delivery time are you most likely to use when ordering equipment?

49% of those responding to this question were most likely to use 7 day delivery.

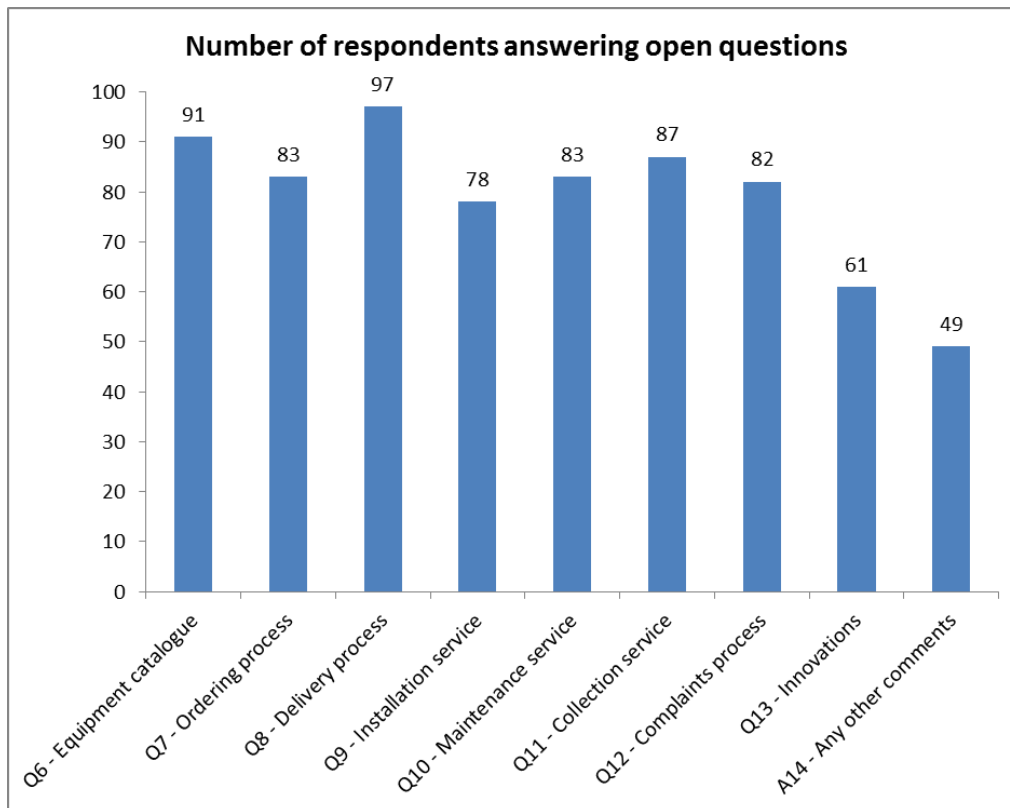
**Table 4: Question 5 - Delivery time**

Delivery time	Number	%
Emergency delivery - 4 hours	9	9%
Next day delivery	20	19%
3 day delivery	23	22%
7 day delivery	51	49%
Not answered	1	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.2 Qualitative findings

The survey included 9 open questions. Of these, respondents were most likely to answer question 8 (93% of respondents) which was about the delivery process and were least likely to provide additional comments for question 14 (47% of respondents).

**Figure 2: Number of respondents answering open questions**



#### Question 6 - Describe up to 3 features that would make an equipment catalogue great to use

91 respondents answered this question, providing 223 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Easy to access and navigate.
- Specific functions to facilitate use of the catalogue.
- Wide range of products.
- Detailed descriptions of products.
- Quality images of products.
- Comments on the ordering process.



### Easy to access and navigate

The online catalogue would be easy to log into via the Internet and available across all platforms. It would be simple to navigate with a logical layout and quick access to menus. The content would be easy to read with equipment organised accurately within appropriate categories and subcategories, as well as including an alphabetical index. 'Used for' headings would be helpful and being able to view the details of products without the extra step of a 'View details' option.

### Specific functions to facilitate use of the catalogue

A number of comments identified specific functions that would make an equipment catalogue great to use. These included:

- Flexible, effective search tool;
- Shortcuts for frequently ordered items/'Your favourites' section;
- 'Live' help function for submitting queries;
- Profession specific pages;
- Suggestions of alternative products;
- Use of tick boxes to avoid having to duplicate information;
- Live information on stock levels; and
- Indication of products that have to be purchased privately.

### Wide range of products

The catalogue would include a wide range of items that prescribers could order, with specific mention made of: bariatric equipment; small items; and the need for more specialist equipment. It was suggested that recycled Specials should be added to the catalogue as standard stock and if items are requested regularly on special order it should be possible to add these to stock.

### Detailed descriptions of products

The importance of having full, accurate descriptions of all products, including non-stock items/Specials/recycled items, was stressed such as:

- Full dimensions;
- List of adaptations/parts and description of what is included with the equipment;
- Details of parts missing from recycled equipment;
- Performance information such as weight capacity and how long an item lasts e.g. mattresses;
- The conditions and age ranges for which the equipment is suitable;
- An item's compatibility with other equipment e.g. compatibility of bed rails with beds;
- Fitting instructions, where appropriate; and
- Contraindications.

In addition, guidance would be useful on what else to order with an item.

One respondent indicated that the use of millimetres as a unit of measurement in descriptions could be difficult to work with.

### Quality images of products

A great equipment catalogue would need to include large, clear, good quality pictures of the exact make/model of all items, including non-stock items/Specials. The ability to enlarge images would also be helpful. Two comments suggested including videos, such as, a video of the equipment in use and a 360 degree view of items. One respondent commented that it would be useful to have illustrations that could be shown to patients to explain equipment.

### Comments on the ordering process

Although question 6 was specifically about features of an equipment catalogue, some of responses were related to the process of ordering/an ordering system - thereby overlapping with question 7.

Comments included:

- A simple ordering system, easy for all to use and with fewer authorisation issues;
- Clarity on who could order which equipment;
- Being able to view items in the store and order from there;
- Using clinical reasoning to make decisions, with the forms available from within the system;
- Reducing the amount of paperwork, in particular, for special orders;
- Being able to highlight special considerations regarding an order;
- Having dedicated staff to do the ordering; and
- Being able to track orders.

### Other comments

A range of other suggestions, although not all related to an equipment catalogue, were provided by a small number of respondents including:

- **Support:** Having staff to advise about equipment; instructions for clients; a facility to demonstrate equipment.
- **Stock levels:** Items would be available in stock; stock replaced regularly; buffer stock in place.
- **Condition of equipment:** Equipment would be clean, safe to use and not missing any parts.
- **Delivery process:** Cheaper delivery with guaranteed response time and the ability to select a delivery date.

### **Question 7 - Describe up to 3 things that would ensure an excellent ordering process**

83 respondents answered this question, providing 183 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Easy to access and use.
- Specific functions to facilitate ordering.
- Support with the ordering process.
- Availability of stock.
- Delivery process.
- Good communication.

#### **Easy to access and use**

The ordering process would be online, with the option to order by phone. One respondent suggested having an App. The process would be fast with quick access through gatekeeping, and simple to use regardless of who was funding the equipment. It would need to be available seven days a week.

Suggestions for what would make the ordering process easy to access and use included:

- Prompt assistance with password reset;
- Intuitive navigation and clear step-by-step instructions;
- An efficient way to identify if a client existed on the system;
- Easy to find patient list and easy to create client details;
- Streamlined process with simple forms for clinical reasoning and ordering beds; and
- Being able to list most recently ordered items first.

One respondent queried the need for clinical reasoning forms as prescribing is carried out by professionals.

#### **Specific functions to facilitate ordering**

A range of specific functions were suggested for an excellent ordering process. These included:

- Only allowing clients to be added who fall within the boundary area;
- An effective search engine;
- A frequently ordered/previously ordered page;
- Suggestion of other items to accompany an order, such as, bed rails for beds;
- Notification of close technical equivalents;
- Drop down boxes/tick boxes to simplify ordering;
- Clinical reasoning forms embedded within the process;
- A way to consolidate duplicated clients;

- Information on the availability of authorisers and confirmation when order had been authorised;
- Space for delivery notes;
- Flagging up missing information;
- Ability to edit an order after it had been placed;
- Ability to place an order and arrange a collection with the same process;
- An automated log for orders for peripheral stores; and
- Being able to track an order.

### **Support with the ordering process**

An excellent ordering process would provide assistance with ordering such as:

- Delivering training;
- Providing examples and instructions for completing orders;
- Sourcing additional quotes for prescribers;
- Having dedicated staff to do the ordering; and
- Providing access to advisors for specific queries, with a contact email for non-urgent queries.

### **Availability of stock**

Ordering would be facilitated by having sufficient numbers of items in stock; details of the number of items available; information on whether an item was out of stock; and date for when it was expected to be in stock.

### **Delivery process**

The ordering process would be supported by a delivery process that:

- Provided a choice of delivery response times;
- Offered delivery time slots, including weekend deliveries;
- Delivered on time;
- Allowed for part deliveries;
- Was able to be flexible with orders placed just outside the window for next day delivery; and
- Had low delivery charges.

One respondent suggested that non-working days should be counted.

### **Good communication**

The service would acknowledge orders and include an expected delivery time; provide updates (by text/email) about deliveries; and automatically notify the prescriber when an item had been delivered. This information could be provided by a tracking system.

It would be helpful if prescribers were contacted by phone rather than by email about problems with an order and they should be contacted before an order was cancelled.

The service would also be expected to be persistent in trying to contact clients about a delivery.

### Other comments

Other suggestions were made by a small number of respondents including:

- Providing access to stores to check recycled items and to trial stock;
- Automatically providing standard accessories on recycled items;
- The need for useful descriptions of items, such as, what was included with Specials; and
- Having up to date information from CCGs regarding the interface between partners for ordering.

One respondent indicated that knowing equipment was being sent out in a clean and good condition would be important for an excellent ordering process.

### Question 8 - Describe up to three features of a great delivery process

97 respondents answered this question, providing 231 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Reliable service.
- Responsive service.
- Delivery time slots.
- Usable equipment.
- Qualities of staff.
- Good communication.

#### Reliable service

A great delivery process would deliver on time; drivers would follow instructions from prescribers; and equipment would be fitted/set up as specified.

#### Responsive service

The service would be responsive providing self-collection options for clients; offering a range of delivery response times; and providing extended weekend delivery hours for urgent cases. One respondent suggested offering next day delivery for bathing equipment and 3 day delivery for equipment for end of life patients. Other suggestions included having alternative delivery points across trusts and posting out slings as standard.

### **Delivery time slots**

A great delivery process would provide focused time slots for deliveries, possibly offering a choice of time slot, so that clients/families could better plan their time.

### **Usable equipment**

The delivered equipment would be clean and complete, with fitting carried out on site where possible. Equipment would be accompanied by instructions for use; a demonstration; and advice on maintenance.

### **Qualities of staff**

A range of comments were made relating to the staff involved in the delivery process. They would need to be friendly, helpful, patient and understanding towards the client/family. Staff would have respect for equipment and unpack, set up, assemble and demonstrate it if needed. Fitters would ensure they had the correct tools with them and check measurements to inform decision about whether equipment would fit.

### **Good communication**

A great delivery process would make arrangements with the client/family; providing them with sufficient notice; notifying them if the delivery was likely to be after 5pm; and contacting the client/family by phone if unable to deliver.

Liaison with prescribers would be important including: advising them of delivery dates; providing updates; giving accurate reasons for non-deliveries; informing them of any changes made to an order; and contacting them before cancelling an order. Order tracking would be useful.

A comment was made that nurses out visiting may not have access to emails and would need to be contacted by phone about any problems.

### **Other comments**

Other comments on considerations for a great delivery process included:

- Maintain stock levels to avoid delays.
- Lower charges for smaller items.
- One respondent suggested providing the family with a printable receipt.

### **Question 9 - Describe up to 3 things that would ensure an excellent installation service**

78 respondents answered this question, providing 170 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Reliable service.
- Efficient service.
- Usable equipment.
- Qualities of staff.
- Good communication.

#### **Reliable service**

The work would be carried out correctly and in a timely manner to ensure client safety and facilitate hospital discharge. Heights of equipment would be adjusted as specified by the prescriber and having the client present would ensure the correct placement etc. of equipment.

#### **Efficient service**

A number of comments identified efficiency as important suggesting specific time slots for installation/fitting; installation carried out at the time of delivery; involving prescribers with the fitting so that any problems could be resolved quickly; and reducing the amount of plastic waste.

#### **Usable equipment**

Several suggestions focused on the equipment being installed. It would need to be complete; clean; and checked to ensure it was without faults and in working order.

#### **Qualities of staff**

Technicians would have good people skills and be friendly, helpful, and considerate.

Installation would be carried out by properly trained staff who were knowledgeable about products; had the correct tools for the task; checked whether or not equipment fitted; and left the work area clean and tidy. In certain situations, fitting and demonstrations would need to be carried out by prescribers, for example, when clients have a cognitive impairment.

Some respondents indicated they would appreciate technicians using their initiative and providing correct equipment without having to liaise with prescribers. Others, however, expressed concern that technicians did not have sufficient training to suggest alternatives.

### Good communication

An excellent installation service would provide contact details and communicate with the client before visiting to ensure clients were aware of what was to be done. Information would be provided about the equipment including: how to keep it clean; instructions for charging; and expected dates for servicing.

Prescribers would receive confirmation when equipment had been installed along with timely and accurate feedback regarding any problems. Guidance would be useful on which equipment could be installed and on the installation of rails.

### Question 10 - Describe up to 3 features of a great maintenance service

83 respondents answered this question, providing 175 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Accurate record keeping system.
- Usable equipment.
- Prompt service.
- Qualities of staff.
- Good communication.

### Accurate record keeping system

A great maintenance service would have an accurate record keeping system able to provide automatic notifications and ensure timely maintenance, testing and servicing of equipment, including Specials. One respondent suggested the maintenance schedule for an item could be set up at the time of ordering the equipment. An online log book where prescribers could view maintenance/service records would be useful and a copy of the service report for an item could be left with the client.

### Usable equipment

Several respondents commented that a great maintenance service would ensure that equipment, including Specials, was clean, complete and in full working order before it was put onto the catalogue or sent out.

### Prompt service

The maintenance service would be available seven days a week and prompt in repairing faulty equipment and providing a replacement if equipment could not be repaired.



### Qualities of staff

Staff would be caring, polite and courteous, with a positive attitude. They would be experienced, suitably trained and knowledgeable about equipment; and able to set up and maintain Specials. One suggestion was that drivers could look at all the equipment in a client's property and identify any maintenance issues.

### Good communication

Guidance would be provided on maintenance responsibilities and charges. Equipment would be labelled and a card could be left when equipment was delivered. The service would be easily contactable, including out of hours, with a phone number that clients could use. The service would book appointments with clients/family to ensure access to equipment. Prescribers would be informed about any issues with equipment; given feedback; and notified when issues have been resolved.

### Other comments

A small number of comments were made regarding replacements, such as, maintaining a stock of items so that replacements could be done easily in-house and supplying filters for nebulisers.

## Question 11 - Describe up to 3 things that would ensure a great collection service

87 respondents answered this question, providing 171 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Timely collection.
- Collection time slots.
- Flexible service.
- Good communication.

### Timely collection

The service would be available seven days a week providing a timely and prompt response sensitive to the needs of the client/family. It would be possible to arrange a collection within seven days, with collections from the bereaved prioritised and able to take place on the same day or the next day following a client's death. Collections from NHS bases and schools would be timely and planned so as to take place over a minimum number of days.

One suggestion was that the collection service could provide similar timescales as for the delivery of equipment.

### Collection time slots

The collection service would provide allocated time slots for collection, offering a choice to clients/families.

### Flexible service

A great collection service would be flexible and able to pick up all unused equipment from a property even if it were not listed for collection; not on the system; or did not have a code/number on the product. The service would also be able to combine collection with delivery of other items.

It would support self-return of equipment with, for example, check-in systems at stores and local drop points in the community and in hospitals.

### Good communication

A great service would be easy to contact, for example, by providing a designated freephone number and also accepting bookings by text and email, including accepting bookings from clients/families. Equipment would be labelled and the importance of returning unused equipment would be stressed to clients.

The service would keep the client/family informed about any changes to a collection and confirm when the driver was on the way. Email confirmation could also be sent to the prescriber when equipment had been collected.

If collection would not be cost-effective, this would be explained clearly to the client/family and prescribers would also need clear information about which items could not be re-used/collected so they could advise clients.

### Other comments

A number of other suggestions were made regarding a collection service including:

- **Collection charges:** Low collection charges; collection to be free of charge when collection and delivery were completed together.
- **Staff:** Staff providing the service would be polite, courteous, happy to help, have good quality spoken English and provide a welcoming environment in the store.
- **Equipment tracking:** A system that could identify and locate equipment to maximise the re-use of items.
- **Use scrap metal vans:** One respondent queried whether dedicated scrap metal vans with decontaminating equipment could be used.

## Question 12 - Describe up to 3 features of a great complaints process

82 respondents answered this question, providing 175 suggestions.

**Key themes** identified were:

- Easy to access.
- Clear and simple process.
- Prompt response.
- Open and clear communication.
- Action taken.
- Qualities of staff.

### Easy to access

A great complaints process would be easy to access with the facility for prescribers, clients and family members to report a problem online, by email or by phone. It was suggested that a dedicated phone number could be provided, perhaps with a separate number for client/families but taking into account that some clients have problems with automated phone menus.

### Clear and simple process

The complaints process would be simple with a clear channel for directing complaints. It would include details of who to direct complaints to; timescale for response; and how to escalate if the issue was not resolved. The complaints form would be simple to complete with one suggestion being that the form for prescribers could be linked to the client's notes to avoid the need to retype this information. The process would be transparent, independent and unbiased.

### Prompt response

A great complaints process would provide a prompt, timely response. One respondent suggested parents should receive a response within 24-48 hours and another suggested resolution of complaints within 3 days.

### Open and clear communication

Communication would be open and clear, with the service actively seeking feedback. The option to informally discuss an issue before moving to a formal complaint should be available. Complaints would be acknowledged; the complainant kept informed; the prescriber notified of any complaint related to an order/equipment; an apology given when appropriate; and clear feedback provided of the actions taken (e.g. you said, we did) as well as information on what was learnt. One suggestion was that complaints and solutions should be made available online for prescribers to view.

### Action taken

Action would be taken to resolve the complaint and to prevent it from reoccurring. Complaints would be taken as an impetus to improve, with complaints examined for lessons learnt.

### Qualities of staff

Those handling complaints would possess listening skills and be empathetic; diplomatic; take time to understand the problem; avoid making assumptions; and be open and honest, admitting when things had gone wrong.

### Other comments

One respondent suggested the service could be promoted and clients supported to better understand how the service operated by providing access to stores, along with tea/coffee and biscuits.

### Question 13 - Describe up to 3 innovations that you think could impact on community equipment services within the next five years

61 respondents answered this question, providing 125 suggestions.

Responses included a mix of innovations/developments and suggestions for developing the service.

### Innovations/developments impacting on service

<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widespread use: IT in houses; CCTV.</li> <li>• Improving the service: Face Time &amp; Skype for remote appointments; have App for service; barcodes to scan items in and out.</li> <li>• Equipment provision: More digital and electronic services; sensors; access to telecare.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services needing to be rationalised.</li> <li>• Cuts to funding.</li> <li>• Increases in funding.</li> <li>• Fewer community nurses.</li> </ul>
<b>Population &amp; lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing and ageing population.</li> <li>• Increasing number of people with complex needs.</li> <li>• More people living in flats/apartments rather than houses.</li> </ul>

<b>Health &amp; social care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct payments &amp; personal health budgets.</li> <li>• Reduced length of hospital stay.</li> <li>• Drive for single-handed care.</li> <li>• Seven day week service.</li> <li>• Needs of community rehabilitation teams to discharge clients.</li> <li>• Access to service for wider multi-disciplinary team e.g. clinical nurse specialists; health care assistants.</li> <li>• Privatisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring service back into shared control of the NHS and local authority.</li> <li>• Provide shop for purchase of low level items not needing an assessment.</li> <li>• Equipment prescriptions.</li> <li>• Have in-house equipment experts to maintain, repair and adapt stock, with specialists on children's equipment.</li> <li>• Provide catalogue for self-purchase items, indicating when referral was needed to a therapist.</li> </ul>
<b>Store facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have satellite stores in accessible parts of the city, with highly qualified staff.</li> <li>• Provide access to store for therapists to collect/reserve equipment and for clients/families to collect smaller items.</li> <li>• Have area to try out recycled equipment and hold children's seating clinics.</li> <li>• Provide self-service system for therapists when collecting equipment.</li> </ul>

### Suggestions for service developments

<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with equipment advisory group meetings.</li> <li>• Good communication with peripheral stores.</li> </ul>
<b>Public awareness</b>	<p>Raise awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the service can provide.</li> <li>• What is not available.</li> <li>• Items are on loan and not new.</li> <li>• Costs of service.</li> </ul>
<b>Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast website with effective search facility.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need wide range: bariatric equipment; corner baths; deluxe transport slings for Oxford Journey; chair raisers; specialist chairs; air flow mattresses.</li> <li>• Include smaller items.</li> <li>• Add frequently ordered Specials to standard stock.</li> <li>• Recycle all equipment.</li> </ul>

<b>Ordering process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide wider range of specialist items on fast track order.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide faster delivery times including to peripheral stores.</li> <li>• Offer choice of time slots.</li> </ul>
<b>Installation/fitting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be carried out by prescriber who can check client's ability.</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have maintenance agreement in place which also covers Specials.</li> <li>• Provide comprehensive cleaning system for equipment.</li> <li>• Repair equipment/ replace parts to ensure equipment was usable before it was issued.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment records</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good monitoring and tracking of equipment.</li> <li>• Update pre-contract items.</li> <li>• Provide log of all maintenance/repairs on website with access by prescribers.</li> </ul>
<b>Collection service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively check if equipment is still needed.</li> <li>• Provide fast collection, especially when end of life or bereaved.</li> <li>• Timely collection of unused items from schools.</li> <li>• Make it easy to return items.</li> <li>• Enable clients to email when equipment needs collecting.</li> <li>• Offer equipment amnesties.</li> <li>• Reduce wastage.</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain staff.</li> <li>• Clinician to trouble shoot/liaise between service and prescribers.</li> <li>• Someone to advise about equipment.</li> <li>• Staff with good knowledge of equipment; staff with expertise of paediatric equipment</li> </ul>

#### **Question 14 - Any other comments about what a future community equipment service could look like?**

49 respondents answered this question, with many responses covering a range of issues.

The majority of comments provided suggestions for a future service and a small number gave examples of innovations/developments. In many cases the comments reiterated topics covered in responses to earlier questions.

## Innovations/developments

- Seven day working.
- More integration with other community services.
- Contract with citizens to ensure return of equipment.
- Provide a non-profit service owned by the NHS and local authority.

## Suggestions for the future service

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polite and responsive phone service.</li> <li>• Phone/email line for technical queries and advice.</li> <li>• Communication and joint working between the service and prescribers.</li> <li>• Provide information on the complaints process.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the service by providing information to GP surgeries; community centres and schools.</li> </ul>
Catalogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review of catalogue with prescribers.</li> <li>• Catalogue for self-purchase items.</li> </ul>
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice: bariatric equipment; different kinds of raisers; access to telecare; smaller items for prescribing to palliative care patients.</li> <li>• Interest from families in equipment to help people with dementia.</li> <li>• All equipment to be clean and usable; items kept charged where appropriate.</li> </ul>
Ordering process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy two tier gatekeeping process and clear instructions on the gatekeeping process.</li> <li>• Guidance where there are preferred suppliers for equipment.</li> <li>• Simple process for clinical reasoning with forms embedded within the process.</li> <li>• Minimum number of comment/instruction boxes.</li> </ul>
Delivery process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely and reliable, adhering to delivery dates.</li> <li>• Offer 3 day service as standard.</li> <li>• Focused time slots for clients.</li> <li>• Good delivery process for self-purchase items.</li> </ul>
Installation/fitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitting and installation to be done by prescriber.</li> </ul>
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance contract in place.</li> <li>• Set a basic standard for all recycled items.</li> </ul>
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective recycling and customisation of stock.</li> <li>• Stock of parts available to facilitate recycling.</li> </ul>

Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well organised.</li> <li>• Good product knowledge.</li> <li>• Take responsibility when things go wrong.</li> <li>• Dedicated staff to advise on equipment for children.</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training and equipment case studies to prescribers to raise awareness of the range of equipment available and of new items on the market.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less bureaucratic.</li> <li>• Client centred, customer service approach with good provision for all the community.</li> <li>• Accessible service.</li> <li>• Reliable, responsive and efficient service.</li> <li>• More of everything.</li> </ul>

## 4. Next Steps

An overview of the findings from the survey was presented to members of the Professional Equipment Advisory Group (PEAG) and the Children's Equipment Advisory Group (CEAG) in June 2018 to confirm the main themes identified from the results and to provide an opportunity to collect further suggestions for a great community equipment service. In addition, 24 respondents to the survey who expressed an interest in participating in a focus group were contacted to gather further feedback. The information collected will be used to inform the development of a commissioning strategy and a service specification.

## 5. Appendix 1: Copy of questionnaire

### Your views on what a great community equipment service would look like

#### Overview

Commissioners in the NHS and Birmingham City Council are working together on what is needed for a future integrated community equipment service.

An important part of the process is getting views from prescribers about what a great community equipment service, which would be fit for the future, might look like.

We want to know your views on what you think a great community equipment service would look like and any innovations we could consider. The online questionnaire includes 15 questions and will take about 10 -15 minutes to complete.



Your responses will be anonymous. However, there will be the opportunity to provide an email address if you wish to participate in a focus group about future community equipment services. The email address will be separated from your responses to preserve your anonymity.

This survey will close on 28th May 2018.

**Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the online questionnaire.**

Your responses will help us to provide a better community equipment service for prescribers and patients.

We will be sending out a summary report to all prescribers after the survey closes to let you know what we have found out.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact  
[ACInfoResearch@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:ACInfoResearch@birmingham.gov.uk)

### **About You**

#### **1. Which organisation do you work for? (This question requires an answer)**

*Please select only one item*

Birmingham Children's Trust (Social Care)

Birmingham City Council

Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust

Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust

Hospice

Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

Other

*If other, please specify:*

#### **2. On average, how often do you order community equipment?**

*Please select only one item*

Daily

At least once a week

At least once a fortnight

At least once a month

Less than once a month

### **3. Who do you order equipment for?**

*Please select only one item*

Adults

Children

Both Adults and Children

### **4. What equipment have you ordered?**

*Please select only one item*

Catalogue/standard stock items only

Specials only

Both catalogue/standard stock items and specials

### **5. Which delivery time are you most likely to use when ordering equipment?**

*Please select only one item*

Emergency delivery - 4 hours

Next day delivery

3 day delivery

7 day delivery

### **Ordering Process**

**6. Describe up to 3 features that would make an equipment catalogue great to use.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

**7. Describe up to 3 things that would ensure an excellent ordering process.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Delivery Process**

**8. Describe up to three features of a great delivery process.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Installation Service**

**9. Describe up to 3 things that would ensure an excellent installation service.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Maintenance Service**

**10. Describe up to 3 features of a great maintenance service.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Collection Service**

**11. Describe up to 3 things that would ensure a great collection service.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Complaints Process**

**12. Describe up to 3 features of a great complaints process.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Innovations**

**13. Describe up to 3 innovations that you think could impact on community equipment services within the next five years.**

Suggestion 1

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

### **Any Other Comments**

**14. Any other comments about what a future community equipment service could look like?**

Comments:

### **Would you like to take part in a Focus Group?**

**15. We are planning a focus group to gather further feedback about a future community equipment service. If you would be interested in participating in a focus group, please provide your email address for us to contact you.**

Email Address: