

Physiotherapy Department, Royal Hospital for sick children, Edinburgh

Wheelchair and seating services action plan.

I think this is an excellent report and to be commended as a positive move to improve wheelchair and seating services for people in Scotland.

Introduction

I agree with the comments made on mobility, postural support and independent living and that care pathways should provide smooth and seamless provision for users and carers.

Policy context and background (P4)

I support strongly the principles of collaboration, participation and a mutual approach to the provision of patient centered services.

Patient and user involvement

This is increasingly important in order to involve and enable patients and carers to take responsibility for their own care, to educate and inform users of structures and processes and to receive feedback which will be actioned by wheelchair user groups. The membership of the groups should reflect the breadth of users and carers as a mixture of professionals and patients/carers.

Partnerships and collaborations.

I agree with the important points made in this section and with the proposed actions which will greatly strengthen and improve the patient experience and that of professionals.

Service Redesign

Improving patient experience, managing demand and sharing learning are all vital components of redesign and each of the actions in this section is to be welcomed and supported in its implementation locally.

Building capacity

As physiotherapists working in a specialist centre I share the concept of building a service which offers care closer to home but at the same time maintaining the availability to provide a higher level of specialist skills which would be based in the centre. There is specific mention of the importance of support for children – age appropriate care, separate child clinics, staff who are appropriately trained in child development and very importantly transition from child to adulthood. I particularly welcome the observation that delays to provision for children can have a disproportionate effect particularly as they grow and change so quickly compared to adults.

I welcome the proposal to appoint an AHP director in each NHS Board, identification of training and education needs of support staff and the development of protocols which will offer users a transparent description of the service. Skill mix is vital as many roles can be undertaken by unqualified staff as long as they have adequate support and training in clearly identified competencies.

Referral, Assessment and provision

I strongly support the observations and actions in this section. There is work to be done on the development of a standard and consistent assessment but when achieved will greatly enhance an equitable and consistently high standard for all users.

Provision

There is lack of clarity in this section regarding the issue of wheelchairs for short to medium term use where the needs of children following injury, illness or surgery are more complex than just a standard wheelchair. If provision to meet mobility needs that is free to all is to be in place it should meet the needs of children with acute needs as well as those with long term or chronic needs.

Equipment, repairs and maintenance

I stringly support the concept of wider choice and the move away from "one size fits all." The recognition of advancing technology integrated with financial management is very encouraging.

IT and information management

I agree and welcome the proposed actions.

Quality and governance

The importance of consistent standards for funding and provision of wheelchairs in Scotland and shared best practice is to be welcomed and I am sure that this will be supported practically by staff on the ground.

Appendices

I support the use of these six dimensions of quality throughout our various services and support the action plans which should receive the support required to ensure that they are achievable.

Mo Grant,
Physiotherapy Services Manager,
Royal Hospital for Sick Children,
Edinburgh
13/08/08