

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE (ICES) PRESCRIBER SURVEY 2013 SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Background

The Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) provides daily living equipment and adaptations, including pressure care equipment to support people living in their own homes, following assessment by a suitably qualified prescriber. The integration of community equipment services was born out of the NHS Plan (DH, 2000) to modernise service delivery in this area by combining health and social care provision into single, integrated community equipment services by 2004 (DH, 2001).

The service is provided by Sussex Community NHS Trust and jointly commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council and the local Clinical Commissioning Group. The service itself receives referrals from local health trust and social services staff, prescribers from the local mental health Trust and those from the Children's and Young People's Trusts. Equipment is procured from private companies.

Within the current financial climate of providing best value for money and the streamlining of health and social services, the ICES management team conducted a prescriber survey to investigate practitioner's experiences of referring to and working with ICES, with particular reference to communication pathways, access to information and technical support.

The survey was sent to prescribers via email during November 2013 and feedback was collated, analysed and an action plan formulated to ensure that the service continues meeting the needs of service users and prescribers. Specific regard was given to ICES's involvement in admission avoidance, crisis management and supporting timely discharge from in-patient settings.

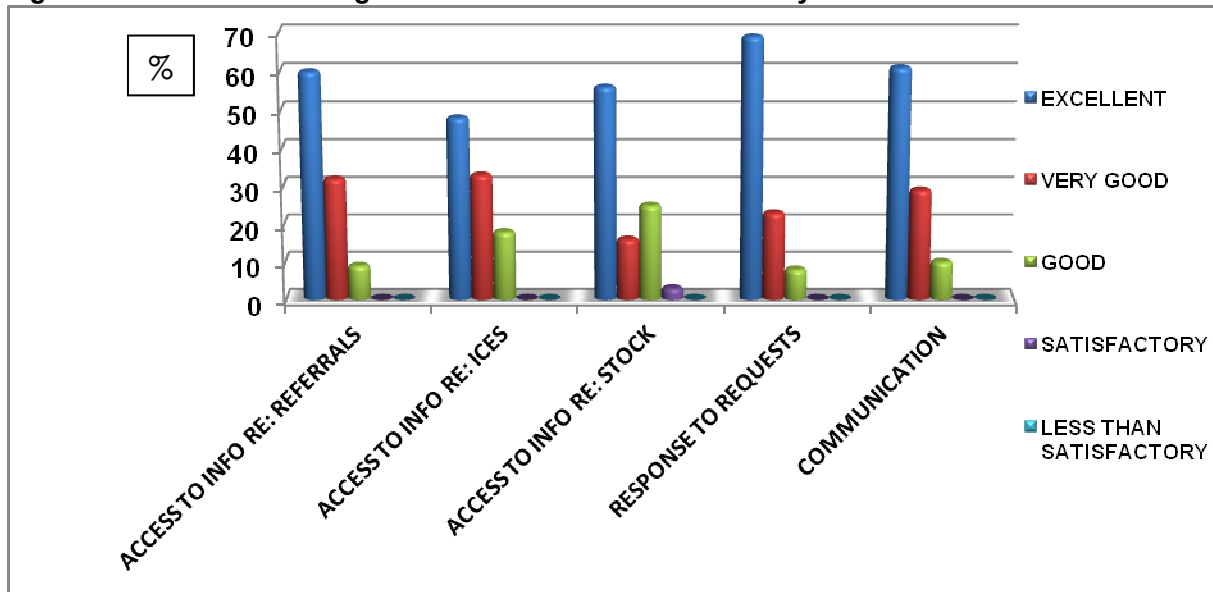
Results: A total of 59 prescribers from across the local health economy responded (69% response rate). The survey detailed very positive feedback from clinicians. It is clear that prescribers really value an "in-house" service and the familiarity that this provides in terms of communication, continuity, speed of response and access to information. Prescribers find ICES staff extremely helpful, efficient and really rate the personal service they receive.

The survey also highlighted the importance of the technicians and how prescribers find their input and expertise most valuable, particularly with regard to carrying out joint visits. Some prescribers have experience of working with other providers, which compare less favourably with their experiences of ICES. Prescribers felt that outsourcing the equipment service could have a detrimental effect on the service that they themselves provide.

The majority of respondents rated ICES as excellent in all aspects of communication, including response to referrals (see Figure 1). Prescribers valued the personal, helpful and efficient service, both on an informative and administrative level and in terms of technical support in carrying out joint visits. Prescribers commented that being an "in-house" service facilitated this way of working and enhanced communication pathways. This was one of the most valued aspects of the service.

In terms of access to information about ICES, prescribers have access to a web page, where they can retrieve information about standard stock items, referral pathways and paperwork. 70% of prescribers felt well-informed of changes to service provision within ICES, through email, web page, or through the established Equipment Prescriber's Group (EPG) (which meets bi monthly) and is attended by professional representatives from stakeholder services. This forum enables decisions about equipment provision, pathways and best practice to be discussed.

Figure 1: Prescribers' Ratings of ICES Communication Pathways



| Prescriber's comments about ICES as a whole | Prescriber's comments about their experiences of other equipment providers |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ ICES is reliable always very helpful in supporting OTs to facilitate quick discharge ☞ ICES seem to provide an efficient, personalised and flexible service. ...Being able to speak directly to the person dealing with a certain part of the process is brilliant ☞ Equipment company with a conscience ☞ Reliable and flexible service ☞ The service is excellent and I greatly value all the support and help they have given me ☞ They are very efficient in booking in equipment in crisis situations (e.g. hospital beds and hoists) and being able to call them and get an immediate response means fewer delays and definitely can prevent hospital admission.....I feel able to call them and ask for their specialist knowledge whenever needed and they are always helpful ☞ Person-centred and effective ☞ ICES saves time and money and avoids client frustration ☞ Patients are impressed by the speed of delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ After using privatised services in the past, I think we are very lucky to have ICES. ☞ ...there is no personal service – little or no option for joint visits ☞ Although there were set time periods for delivery of equipment, the equipment frequently wasn't delivered within the timescales...not knowing who was at the end of the phone, and no continuity of contact also created issues, as you have to go through the problem again to a different staff member. ☞ I use ICES and XXX equipment stores. ICES is the easiest, quickest service to use. Very reliable and always very helpful in supporting OTs to facilitate quick discharges. ☞ My experiences with other equipment providers has shown that it is far from easy, as there are frequent delays, excessive bureaucracy and conflicting information much of the time. |

Recommendations: The survey detailed very positive feedback from clinicians. Areas for ICES service development have been identified which includes developing a training programme for new staff and prescribers, particularly around new items of equipment. Other developments include having up to date web-based stock lists and implementation of the on-line ordering system. These developments will continue to support the high quality service that ICES provides.

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OT PROFESSIONAL LEAD 08.01.14