

Specialist equipment services for disabled people: the need for change

Appendix A4

Examples of specialist service provision

Specialist equipment services offer patchy and markedly disparate patterns of cover nationwide.

In a number of localities, enthusiastic professionals with commitment and vision have identified need, garnered resources and then driven forward provision.

Elsewhere there is little activity.

The Working Party is grateful to the services that have provided information regarding their organisation, working practices and funding.

They are presented here in alphabetical order and in a structured format, but even so, their diversity makes for difficulty in comparing one with another.

Access to Communication and Technology [ACT]

Base

West Midlands Regional Rehabilitation Centre
Oak Tree Lane
Birmingham B29 6JA

Tel 0121 627 8235
Fax 0121 627 8892

Population served

5.5 million people resident in Birmingham, Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire

Provision

All modalities of EAT and their integration one with another.

In the West Midlands, ACT offers a varying provision from locality to locality, because of differing service level agreements with PCTs.

Nationwide it offers a service for complex users on a cost per case basis.

Currently it supports 485 ECS users within the West Midlands [89/million population] with 58% of system installation and 77% of system maintenance contracted out.

Service organisation

ACT is managed by a Consultant Clinical Scientist and a Project Board reporting to Specialist Commissioners.

Referral

Written referral with an on-going commitment for support from professionals and from funding agencies is required.

Funding

Comparison with ECS based services is impractical, because the communication and computer access technology in which ACT is most experienced tends to be more costly and because the service is commissioned by so many different agencies.

Bristol DSC Environmental Controls Service

Base

Disablement Services Centre
Southmead Hospital
Bristol BS10 5NB

Tel 0117 959 5788

Fax 0117 959 5730

Population served

2.2 million people resident in Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire

Provision

ECS only – [Communication aid services in Bristol are well established and are also documented within this Appendix]

The Bristol service supports 246 ECS users [112/million population] with over 90% of system installation and equipment maintenance carried out in-house by its own specialist personnel. During 2002 it provided 49 new ECS.

Service organisation

The service is managed by a specialist rehabilitation engineer reporting to the manager of the Disablement Services Centre at Southmead Hospital.

Referrals

Referrals are accepted in any format from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers.

Timely Assessment and Equipment Provision

95% of assessments are within three weeks of referral. They are carried out by the service's technical personnel and overseen by the service's medical officer.

90% of provision is within one month of assessment.

Funding

Funding is provided by three Strategic Health Authorities. In 2003 this totalled £350,000 – equating to £159,000 per million population.

Communication Aid Centres in Bristol

Base

Two centres, the Communication Aid Centre at Frenchay Hospital [CAC] and the Paediatric Communication Aid Centre at Claremont School [PCAS].

Speech & Language Therapy Dept
Frenchay Hospital
Bristol BS16 1LE

Tel 0117 975 3946
Fax 0117 918 6558
17.47

Population served

A locality provision for one million people based on the catchment of the Bristol neurosciences service and a further five million people throughout South and South West England.

Provision

Communication aids, computer access technology, switching systems and comprehensive patterns of user and professional training.

The service is also developing a research led telecare provision.

Service organisation

CAC is overseen by experienced senior Speech & Language Therapists reporting to North Bristol NHS Trust and the Local Educational Authority. In collaboration with NHS PASA, they have been instrumental in developing service specifications and advising on the deployment of specialist expertise nationwide.

Referral

Referrals are accepted from professional personnel, from potential service users and from their carers

Funding

The North Bristol NHS Trust provides £39,000 per annum to cover equipment purchase for the immediate catchment and for the provision of assessment equipment for the regional and supra-regional service. It also meets staffing costs of £110,000 per annum.

***Department of Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering, Barnsley
District General Hospital***

Base

Barnsley District General Hospital
Gawber Road
Barnsley S 75 2EP

Tel 01226 730000 ext 2689

Fax 01226 208159

Population served

753,000 people resident in South Yorkshire

Provision

ECS, communication aid and computer access, specialist switching and wheelchair controls, customised and bespoke assistive technology.

The service supports 290 service users [385 per million population] and during 2002 provided 145 new devices or systems.

Additionally it is involved in several major research projects with hundreds of participants.

Service organisation

The service is led by a Consultant Clinical Scientist and is provided by clinical scientists and technologists working on an inter-disciplinary basis with medical, para-medical and social service colleagues.

Referrals

Referrals are accepted in any format from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers.

Timely Assessment and Equipment Provision

Assessment is by an inter-disciplinary team whose composition is determined by the needs of the potential user.

80% of assessments take place within two weeks of referral and 90% of provision is within three months of that assessment.

Funding

PCTs contribute according to their population and their requirements

Electronic Assistive Technology – East Yorkshire

Base

Bioengineering Department
Hull Royal Infirmary
Hull HU3 2JZ

Tel 01482 675753
Fax 01482 676750

Population served

600,000 people resident in East Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull
17.50

Provision

Bespoke systems, communication aids and computer access technology throughout Hull and East Yorkshire, together with ECS in East Yorkshire.

The ECS service presently supports 50 users [88/million population] with 95% of system installation and maintenance contracted out. Typically it installs eight new systems per year.

Service organisation

The service is managed by a Consultant Clinical Scientist with medical assessment by a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine and with other clinical colleagues involved as and when required.

Referral

Referrals are accepted from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers. They are presently received at a rate of 100 per annum.

Timely Provision.

All ECS provision is within three months of medical assessment.

Funding

Budgetary allocations for ECS vary between PCTs. Total funding for the equipment and its maintenance is of the order of £40,000 per annum. This equates to £67,000 per million population.

Communication aids are funded predominately by charities.

The Electronic Assistive Technology Service at Lincoln

Base

Community Rehabilitation Centre
Long Leys Road
Lincoln LN1 1FS

Tel 01522 781008
Fax 01522 538752

Population served

650,000 people resident in Lincolnshire, but additionally many out of area referrals for complex and integrated provision.

Provision

All modalities of EAT are installed and maintained by the service's own technical personnel.

Service organisation

The service is managed jointly by a Consultant Clinical Scientist and a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine reporting to Specialist Commissioners.

Referrals

Referrals are accepted from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers.

Timely Assessment and equipment Provision

Assessment is carried out expeditiously by appropriate members of the interdisciplinary team – and usually involves both the Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine and the Consultant Clinical Scientist.

Funding

Funding is sufficient to avoid undue delay in the provision of equipment.

Electronic Assistive Technology North West [EAT[NW]]

Base

The Walton Centre for Neurology & Neurosurgery
Lower Lane
Liverpool L9 7LJ

Tel 0151 529 2022

Fax 0151 529 5485

Population served

6.6 million people resident in Cheshire and Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Southern Cumbria

Provision

All modalities of EAT – but primarily ECS

EAT[NW] supports 894 ECS users [133/million population] with over 60% of system installation and equipment maintenance carried out in-house by its own specialist personnel.

During 2002 it provided 228 new ECS and 17 new communication aids.

Service organisation

EAT[NW] is overseen by a Consultant Clinical Scientist and three Consultants in Rehabilitation Medicine reporting twice yearly to Specialist Commissioners.

Referrals

Referrals are accepted in any format from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers.

Timely Assessment and Equipment Provision

Referrals are passed on immediately to one of fourteen locality based medical assessors.

90% of assessments are within two weeks of referral and are usually carried out by the medical assessor in collaboration with EAT[NW] technical personnel or therapists.

90% of provision is within three months of assessment.

Funding

PCTs contribute on a risk sharing basis according to the population served.

Funding equates to £145,000 per million population per year. This covers ECS provision and a limited sum for communication aids, computer access systems and telecare.

Electronic Assistive Technology in Southern Derbyshire

Base

University of Nottingham Rehabilitation Research Unit
Derby City Hospital
Derby DE22 3NE

Tel 01332 625680

Fax 01332 625681

Population served

550,000 people resident in Southern Derbyshire and the City of Derby

Provision

Primarily ECS, but also a small number of communication aids

The service supports 55 system users [100/million population] with equipment installation and maintenance contracted out.

During 2002 it installed seven new ECS

Service organisation

The service is coordinated from within the University Department of Rehabilitation Medicine and reports to Specialist Commissioners.

Referrals

Referrals are accepted from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers.

Timely Assessment and Equipment Provision

90% of assessments are carried out by medical consultants and members of the inter-disciplinary team within a month of referral and 90% of equipment provision is within a further three months.

Funding

Funding of £60,000 per annum is sufficient to support ECS provision and maintenance. This equates to £109,000 per million population.

If other modalities of EAT are required, the service applies for additional funding on a case by case basis.

Environmental Control Service [South East Thames]

Base

Disablement Services Centre
Medway Maritime Hospital
Gillingham Kent ME7 5NY

Tel 01634 833923
Fax 01634 817923

Population served

3.8 million people resident in East Sussex, Kent and South East London

Provision

The service supports 363 system users [96/million population] with equipment installation and maintenance contracted out.
During 2002 it installed 97 new systems.

Service organisation

A Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine reports to Specialist Commissioners.

Referral

Referrals are accepted from professional personnel, from potential users and from carers.

Timely Assessment and Equipment Provision

Referrals are passed on immediately to one of three locality based medical assessors.
78% of assessments are completed within six weeks and 84% of equipment is installed within three months.

Funding

PCTs contribute according to their population. The present revenue budget of £111,000 per million population is specifically for ECS.

North Thames Regional Environmental Control Equipment Service [NTRECES]

Base

Alderbourne Rehabilitation Unit
The Hillingdon Hospital
Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 3NN

Tel 01895 279759
Fax 01895 279737

Population served

6.2 million people resident in Essex, Hertfordshire and North London

Provision

Routine provision is primarily ECS, but much is complex and includes integration with specialist wheelchair controls, communication aids and computer access when required.

NTRECES currently supports 534 ECS users [86/million population].
95% of system installation and maintenance is contracted out, but temporary in-house installations are readily available for extended trial assessments.
During 2002 NTRECES carried out 105 new user assessments and installed 86 new environmental control systems.

Service organisation

A Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine oversees the service and reports on a six monthly basis to Strategic Health Authority Specialist Commissioners.
Day to day management is by a Clinical Scientist based at Hillingdon who is supported at a local level by three Specialist Occupational Therapists.

Referral

Referrals are accepted from health professionals and enquiries from potential users and carers are welcome.

Timely Assessment and Equipment Provision

Referrals are prioritised according to a potential user's circumstances and clinical need. Urgent assessments take place within four weeks and all referrals are assessed within six months – delay is commonly consequent upon factors beyond the service's control.

Assessments are conducted by locality based Specialist Occupational Therapists and Consultants in Rehabilitation Medicine who are able to call upon other specialist colleagues as and when required.

If there is need for temporary equipment provision, this is arranged by the in-house rehabilitation engineering team.

Funding

Funding for ECS is from Specialist Commissioners working on behalf of PCTs on a capitation and risk sharing basis.

It currently equates to £134,000 per million population per annum and includes project funding for a limited number of communication aids and integrated control devices.