

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 8 th June 2023
Report Subject	North East Wales Community Equipment Service (NEWCES)
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North East Wales Community Equipment Service was formed in 2009 under a Section 33 NHS (Wales) Act 2006 Partnership Agreement. The service is jointly funded by three Partners, Wrexham County Borough Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Flintshire County Council. Flintshire are the host authority and lead partner. Governance is provided by the Partnership Management Board, chaired by the Integrated Lead for Adults in Flintshire and is made up of stakeholders from all agencies.

This report provides a description of the current service provided by the Community Equipment Service for North East Wales based in Hawarden and Queensferry. With a fleet of 7 vehicles the service delivers and installs over 37 thousand items of equipment a year across North East Wales and re-uses 93% of the equipment that is returned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members acknowledge the successful work of the NEWCES in support of hospital avoidance and safe return from hospital settings.
2	Member recognise the significant work undertaken in reusing equipment and cost avoidance savings for partners that supports the regional program.

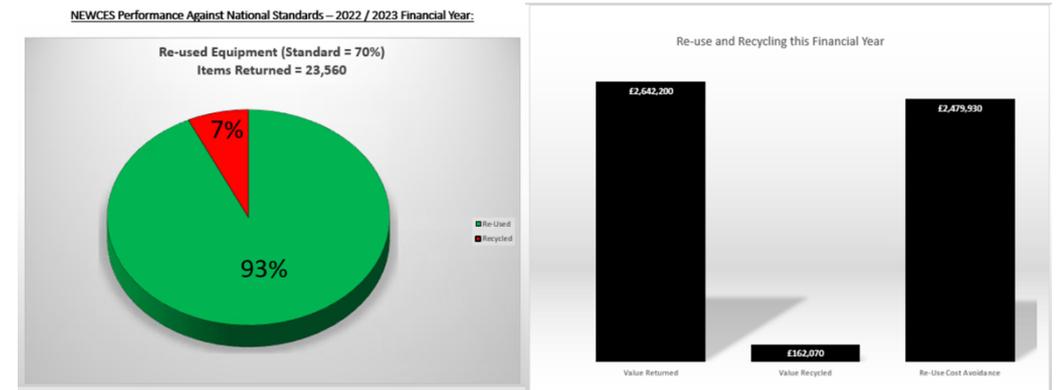
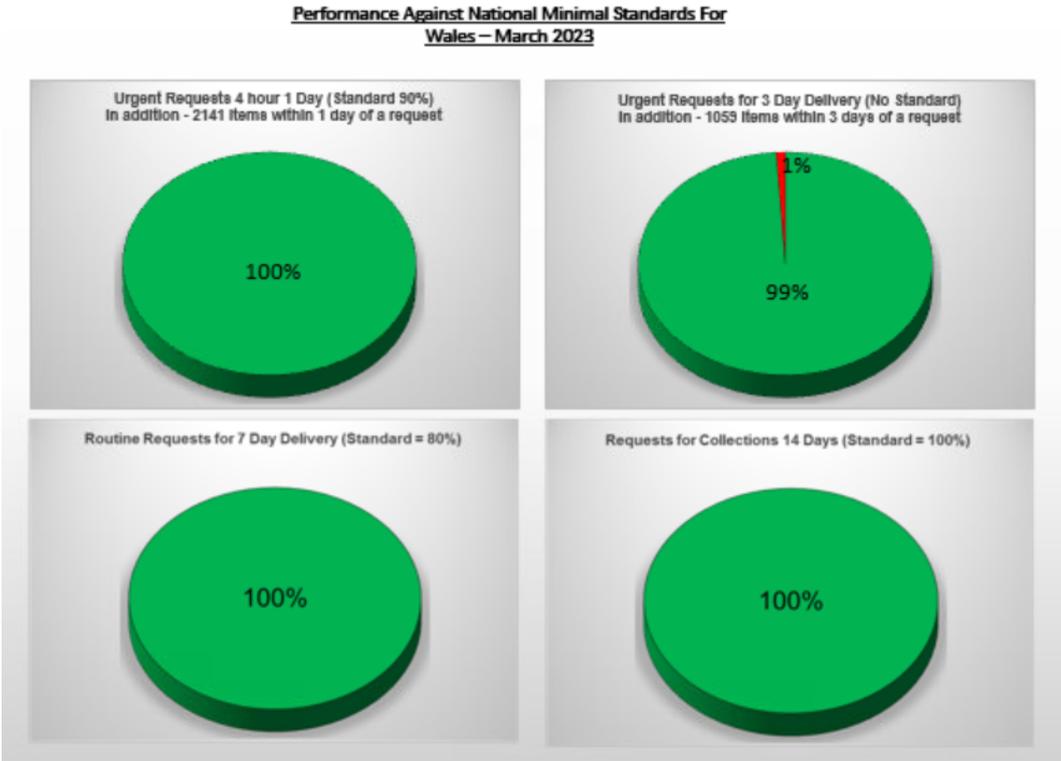
REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
1.01	The provision of community equipment is essential for promoting the independence of people with disabilities of all ages. The provision will often result in an individual's being able to cope independently without the need for other services and greatly increases hospital discharge rates and supports hospital avoidance.
1.02	In other cases, it will enable the safe and effective delivery of other services involving support with personal care. These include homecare, re-ablement services, intermediate care, residential and nursing home care.
1.03	NEWCES successfully provides equipment to individuals in the community, supporting all the hospitals in North East Wales whilst adhering to strict infection control standards.
1.04	With a fleet of 7 vehicles the service delivers and installs over 37 thousand items of equipment a year across North East Wales whilst collecting over 28 thousand items and re-using 93% of the equipment that is returned. This equates to an estimated cost avoidance of over £2.2m per year / £43k per week. Without reusing equipment, the allocated budget would be spent within 12 weeks.
1.05	<p>The pooled funding allocation for equipment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toileting equipment • Hoists, slings and standing equipment • Social Services Beds • Household and Bedroom items to aid mobility • Ramps and walking aids
1.06	<p>Along with pooled items of equipment the service supports Non-pooled Services (funding from outside of the pooled funds):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision and management of Pressure Care and Community Beds - BCUHB • Enhanced Care (Community Resource Team) • BCUHB and Education Paediatrics (seating and standers) and Paediatric Beds • Continuing Health Care - BCUHB • Ceiling track servicing and maintenance – FCC / WCBC • Physiotherapy Wrexham Maelor Hospital – BCUHB
1.07	NEWCES is recognised as an all-Wales leader and by managing the non-pooled equipment provision it is clear, Partners make significant saving to the public purse. Over the past 12 months the service has received 21,000 referrals/bookings from over 500 referrers. NEWCES exceeds the National Minimum Standards for Community Equipment Services in Wales
1.08	NEWCES operates a 4-hour service (Enhanced Care) assisting the hospitals and Community Resource Team. This is an ever-growing part of our service, whereby we support people with end-of-life care and equipment.

1.09 As well as operating from the stores we supply equipment to all North East Wales hospitals through the use of 18 satellite stores, this supports fast discharge and helps with Delayed Transfers in Care (DToC).

1.10 We have formalised a Customer Satisfaction process. Flintshire documents the positive impact of our service for patients across North East Wales and successfully reports this back to the Partnership Board.

1.11 The key performance indicators are:



1.12 The North East Wales Community Equipment Service having further developed digital advancements recently with the introduction of Personal Digital Assistants which speed up its core functions by integrating the use of advanced portable devices (hand held devices) into the community across North East Wales. Being the first service to initiate this electronic based process in North Wales, for a community equipment service.

1.13 The new process enables fully integrated live route optimisations through the database system which is not only efficient but also reduces the

	service carbon footprint whilst promoting fuel savings. The next development being the use of electric fleet vehicles which is controlled by Flintshire Fleet Contract.
1.14	The advanced portable devices have significantly enhanced productivity and stock control and provided a straightforward and slick patient experience / feedback.
1.15	NEWCES is now working in partnership with colleagues in both Flintshire and Wrexham Education for specialist equipment for children with disabilities. This includes specialist seating which is now centralised for North East Wales in Queensferry. As a result, practitioners are now able to come along to the NEWCES Queensferry and have a look at the special seating in store, if they are suitable for the child then they take this on loan, at no cost, we don't yet have the cost avoidance saving figure on this initiative, but commons sense tells us that schools are not now purchasing specialist seating without looking at what provision we have in Flintshire. The items are also serviced to ensure safety and maintenance.
1.16	<p>NEWCES is the hub for PPE distribution to care settings in Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough County which began during the COVID-19 outbreak. Initially this service was provided from the NEWCES Hawarden building however the demand rapidly escalated requiring NEWCES to obtain a secondary building to store the PPE stock provided by Welsh Government, Corporate and donations from the community. This service provision and stock control is actioned by the existing staff members of NEWCES who also provide weekly deliveries to WCBC for use in their care locations.</p> <p>Since the provision of this service NEWCES have distributed the following quantities of PPE which continues to increase daily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.5 million Aprons • 8.2 million Gloves • 4.5 million Masks • 81 thousand Visors <p>Since the provision of PPE was taken forward by NEWCES in early 2020 no care settings have gone without PPE as the stock control systems used by NEWCES for Community Equipment were replicated for this provision.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	NEWCES is a pool funded service provision where the Operational and Equipment costs are split across the three partners. This is identified in the Section 33 Agreement which is reviewed on a yearly basis and signed off every three years.
2.02	As NEWCES has developed the staff team have grown, the additional staffing costs have been built into the new non pooled service charges.

2.03	NEWCES operates and successfully functions on a pooled budget of less than £1M, which is divided between the partners, with Flintshire paying a total contribution of £295,368 per annum.
2.04	The service is an integral link to the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership - Procurement Services and purchases from a variety of All Wales Frameworks. Our service takes a lead role in regional and national initiatives. This includes, specification report writing for the tender stages, through evaluations and bimonthly contract review meetings for Wales. This has proven to lead to significant savings for Flintshire and its Partners.
2.05	The North East Wales Service prides itself on regional working and are currently working with BCUHB North West Wales in their community equipment service. An Operational Manager is seconded over to this area and has begun to implement and promote some of Flintshire's working practices. This to date has made significant savings for that region.
2.06	The service has a good and long-standing reputation which is demonstrated by other English and Welsh Authorities visiting the services and learning from our practices, as well as officers from Welsh Government.
2.07	The service of PPE provision was initially funded by Welsh Government however this funding was withdrawn mid-way through the 2022/23 financial year. The budget needed to provide the PPE service is currently impacting the NEWCES pool fund which includes Building, Vehicle, Employee and Miscellaneous resource costs.

3.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The service is responsible for the servicing, planned maintenance and 24hr call out systems for the following services across North East Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All lifting equipment for the three partners • Pressure Care and Bed management in the community • Paediatric Beds • Enhanced Care (Community Resource Team) • BCUHB and Education Paediatrics (seating and standers) • Continuing Health Care equipment - BCUHB • Ceiling track servicing and maintenance – FCC / WCBC <p>The service takes the lead for notifications for Safety Notices on equipment across North East Wales.</p> <p>All information is held on the Elms database system which is managed independently by NEWCES.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Not applicable.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Not applicable.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Janet Bellis, Senior Manager Integrated Services Contact Officer: Steve Featherstone, Service Manager, NEWCES. Telephone: 01352 701407 E-mail: janet.bellis@flintshire.gov.uk / steve.featherstone@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Pooled Service – A service provision where joint funding arrangements via the Section 33 Agreement are in place between the key three Partners, Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council and BCUHB. Funding split three ways equally.</p> <p>Non Pooled Service – A contracted service provision that NEWCES manages independently, for example we manage special bed provision for BCUHB and the special seating for Education.</p>