

Recommendations for changes to PTS contracts in London

PATIENT TRANSPORT SERVICES (PTS)

Quality Standard for London's Patient Transport Services (PTS) - Proposals for London's commissioners and providers of PTS

1) Quality comes first - not price

- All commissioners of PTS services must put quality and safety before price.
- Service users must be involved and consulted in the drawing up of the tender specification.
- LINks, the Patients' Forum, community groups with as special interest in PTS and services users, must be present during the process when providers make presentations to commissioners.
- There must be a minimum of two community representatives at each provider presentation to commissioners, one of whom is service user.

2) Patients Transport Vehicles

- PTS vehicles must be designed to ensure the safety and comfort of patients
- PTS vehicles must meet all safety criteria including safe mechanisms for door locking.
- PTS vehicles must be designed with surfaces that ensure and enable effective cleaning and sterilisation.
- PTS vehicles must always be clean inside and out and surfaces treated to ensure the highest standards of sterility.

3) Training of staff

- All PTS staff must be trained in infection prevention and control techniques and must be familiar with DH guidelines for the reuse of linen and cross-infection from uniforms.
- All PTS staff must be receive equality, diversity and disability inclusion Training.

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- All PTS staff must receive training in lifting patients including specialised training to assist heavy patients.

4) Eligibility criteria

- Eligibility criteria must be clear and transparent.
- Service users must be involved and consulted in the drawing up of the eligibility criteria.
- Eligibility criteria must be published in a format that is accessible to patients, carers, GPs and acute sector provider staff, i.e. Easy Read, Large Print, Braille, on yellow paper, on DVD/cassette, different languages and proactively made available to them
- There must be an easily available appeals procedure which can be used by patients if the provider refuses to provide a PTS vehicle.
- Providers must not refuse patients a PTS because they have a taxi-card.
- Patients must not be refused PTS because they have their own transport, e.g. an adapted vehicle. A professional assessment must be carried out on each individual case.

5) Patients with disabilities

- All PTS vehicles must be clean and fit for purpose.
- PTS providers must ask patients or carers question about the patients impairment or special needs, i.e. wheelchair, guide dog, hearing dog or other hidden impairments.
- A wheelchair accessible ambulance must be sent when required and this provision must include powered wheelchairs.
- PTS providers must enquire whether patients have 'patient specific protocols' which require specific care in relation to the person's clinical or impairment needs.
- PTS staff must be trained in dealing with vulnerable patients and provided in sufficient number to meet the needs of the patient/patients being carried.
- PTS staff must be responsive to patients' personal hygiene needs during journeys.
- Commissioners must take account of the particular needs of patients with disabilities during any waits in hospital waiting areas.

6) Access to the service

- A PTS specific telephone number for PTS control, should be available to all PTS users for booking transport, inquiring about the location of a PTS vehicle and other access enquiries.
- The PTS specific telephone number must be answered within a fixed number of rings by a person not a machine.

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- The PTS specific telephone number response standard must be widely distributed with the telephone number and a text-phone number.

7) Communications

- Patients must be given a specific time for arrival for the PTS vehicle and immediately informed of any delays by the PTS crew, e.g. due to vehicle breakdown/traffic delays/incorrect form of transport allocated or other reasons.
- Information about any delay in collecting a patient must immediately be transmitted to the service provider so that clinic staff can make arrangements to see the patient on arrival.
- The practice of asking patients to be ready several hours before their appointment must stop.
- PTS crew must phone the next patient to be collected after they have collected the previous patient, to inform the patient of the actual time of arrival.

8) Hospital Discharge

- PTS providers should be provided with the name and contact details of the discharge-coordinator for each discharged person they have been allocated to return to their home.
- Any delays due to poor discharge planning should be reported to the discharge coordinator.

9) Post-clinic collection/return to home address

- Patients must be collected for their return journey within one hour of the end of their clinic/investigation appointment.
- Patients must be returned to their home within two hours from the end of their clinic/investigation appointment.
- Patients must have access to staff and a telephone (at a suitable height for patients using wheelchairs) so they can confirm the time they will be collected after their appointment.
- Special account should be taken of the needs of patients with diabetes and other conditions that might be affected by delays.
- PTS providers must give an undertaking that vulnerable patients will not be subject to long circulation journeys to reduce PTS costs.

10) Complaints procedure

- All PTS providers must ensure that there is a complaints procedure, that is well advertised and effective.
- All responses to complaints must be robust and address the actual complaint within a specified time.

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- PTS providers must use data from complaints investigations to improve services. Details of improvements must be communicated to patients.
- Details of PTS complaints, recommendations from complaints and remedial action must be provided to local LINKs and the Patients Forum.

11) Transfers between hospitals

- Carers must be notified immediately when a hospital transfer has been agreed.
- PTS providers must notify the patient and carer of the actual time that the patient will leave the first hospital and arrive at the second.
- PTS crew must make sure that the patient is appropriately dressed during their transfer.

End

MA, MN, SB, BS
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