

## FREE PAPER 5

**The transfer from an acute NHS Trust to the private sector**

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**Summary**

Leicester wheelchair service part of the Leicester Disablement Services Centre was put out to tender in 2010 and moved from being an acute hospital trust to being managed by the private company, Blatchford in 2011. This presentation aims to share the challenges and opportunities this transition presented to our service.

**Aims and Objectives**

This presentation aims to share the following challenges and opportunities that were presented to our service in moving from an acute hospital trust to a private organisation. The presentation is from both a managerial and clinical perspective.

Aims and objectives to include the areas below:

- Implementation of tender
- Change management
- Communication strategy
- Use of new equipment
- Staff, users and partnership views

**Background**

The face and structure of the NHS is changing with increased momentum. The Department of Health (2011) report that by offering patients choices in wheelchair services they expect to see a much wider range of services offered including input from private and voluntary providers. There are currently many changes taking place within wheelchair services and the remit of this presentation is to share with you Leicester's journey through disinvestment from the NHS to a new provider.

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland wheelchair service were a part of a large directorate of clinical services within an acute NHS Trust along with orthotics and prosthetics. In 2009 the acute trust decided that the long term healthcare services offered by the Disablement Services Centre no longer formed part of the acute portfolio of services that the organisation wanted to manage. The services were disinvested from the Trust and the commissioner presented a specification to market to seek suitable new providers. In 2011 the contract was awarded to Blatchford, a company with over 120 years of healthcare experience.

This presentation sets out to explore the issues that managerial and clinical staff faced and to try and answer the many questions that we have received from other wheelchair services as to our experience of transferring from the NHS to a private company.

**Discussion**

The main purpose of the discussion will be to highlight the change process and to answer the many questions and challenges which we have received throughout this process. It is important that we prepare ourselves for these changes and embrace them to ensure we all position our services to allow us all to continue to provide the optimum service for our users. These changes are happening

and we all need to ensure the changes are in the best interest of all our key stakeholders (DOH, 2011)<sup>2</sup>.

As allied health professionals we have the power to influence change and we should use it. It is vital that the continued contribution and engagement of allied health professionals is central to support the emerging vision (DOH 2010).

Overall in Leicester the transition has been a positive one; however the trials which we have faced were not necessarily the ones we had prepared for. We would like to share these experiences with the delegates at PMG: with the continued changes within healthcare, particularly with regards to the *Any Qualified Provider* agenda and the number of PCTs who have chosen wheelchair services as one of their key areas, we feel we have a message which may help other areas through similar transfers.

## References

Department of Health (2011) [www.healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/any-qualified-provider-2/](http://www.healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/any-qualified-provider-2/)

Department of Health (2011)<sup>2</sup> [www.wp.dh.gov.uk/healthandcare/files/2011/07/Wheelchair-services](http://www.wp.dh.gov.uk/healthandcare/files/2011/07/Wheelchair-services)

Department of Health (2010)  
[www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_122666.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_122666.pdf)

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