Update since our review of Non-Emergency Patient Transport survey

October 2026

Since conducting our review of Non-emergency patient transport (NEPTs) in 2025, we have met with EMED, the service provider, to discuss progress made on meeting our report's recommendations for service improvements. EMED have shared the following updates with us. It does not address all of our recommendations, and we have made clear which recommendations these updates relate to (as highlighted in bold).

We will continue to monitor NEPTS as well as our engagement with both EMED and commissioners of the service to ensure that people's experiences are brought to their attention.

Recommendation 1: A focus on reducing delayed hospital pickups.

Adapting vehicles to support patient need

- EMED vehicles are described as being 'multiflex' meaning they can be modified to meet patient need. This supports patients with changing mobility requirements.
- EMED are trialling a double stretcher vehicle at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton to relieve pressure on waiting times for those for need transportation by stretcher.
- EMED is providing additional vehicle support outside of their standard contract operational hours. They operate a vehicle which can be stepped up to support patients who have High Dependency needs. This is a specialist vehicle which is designed to carry patients who need access to transport to support Intra-facility transfers, but who do not require full intensive care transport. This vehicle has been used for out of hours hospital transfers when needed and has supported patient safety and hospital flow. The service is currently supporting approximately 35 A&E transfers per week.
- EMED have deployed an 'overnight' vehicle to support with transporting patients outside of normal hours.

Parking

- EMED are continuing to work with University Hospitals Sussex to improve parking access at the Emergency Department (A&E) to better facilitate patient transfers.

Working with partners

- EMED are continuing to work with SECamb (who provide emergency 999 transportation) to ensure that the right patients are transported by the most appropriate service.
- EMED have set up a working group with University Hospital Sussex which has a focus on improving access and are meeting with them fortnightly to discuss patient flow. They are also engaging with renal departments to maximise transport usage, for example, by coordinating pick-ups for patients who live near to each other.

Recommendation 2: Strengthening communication and escalation paths

- EMED have recruited two Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers (HALOs).
    - The first supports community hospitals to strengthen the on-ground co-ordination of transport. This role provides a single point of contact for Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT) teams, enabling transport requirements and discharge issues to be addressed in real time. The Community HALO regularly visits sites, works directly with ward teams and discharge coordinators, and helps ensure transport requirements are understood earlier in the discharge planning process. The role has been particularly valuable in supporting patients whose discharge may be affected by social care arrangements or delayed care packages.
    - The second HALO supports Renal services across Royal Sussex County Hospital to improve patient flow across the site.
- EMED have updated patient information leaflets to make them more accessible and detailed than previous versions. They have also produced videos to explain the service and set expectations around what patients can expect. You can also read details about their Patient Zone and read their newsletter (click here to read their most recent one).

- EMED are working with Kidney Care and the Alzheimer's Society to improve the experience of our most vulnerable patients.
- They are also working with Luminus in Surrey to review their website and patient fronting leaflets/ information to ensure it is accessible to all.

Recommendation 4: Reviewing use of private hire taxis.

- EMED told us that their use of private hire taxis is down by 14%. What this means is that 98% of patients are now traveling with a CQC-regulated provider.

Recommendation 6: Delivering a more consistent service across the whole of Sussex so that all patients have a positive experience.

- EMED are holding regular weekly operational meetings with local renal teams to review patient demand and clinical acuity (the severity of patient's illness/ medical conditions and the care required to manage patients safely and effectively and transport requirements). These meetings allow activity levels and journey patterns to be assessed regularly, enabling resources to be adjusted where necessary. This is particularly important for renal patients, many of whom require transport multiple times each week. The meetings have proved productive and support ongoing operational oversight and partnership working.
- EMED are working in partnership with Emergency Departments in Surrey and Sussex to focus on transporting the most appropriate patients as recommended by Emergency Department staff, rather than focusing solely on reaching key performance measure they have been set. They are looking to review their contract with NHS Surrey and Sussex to reflect this.