Dear Mr Taylor

Re: Wheelchair Services in Hampshire provided by Millbrook Healthcare

Thank you for your letter that was received on 16 March 2015 on behalf of Healthwatch the MS Society and Personalisation Expert Panel. I am grateful to you for bringing the concerns of the service users about the communication, delays and provision of wheelchairs.

As you are aware at the time of redesigning the service and working to identify a new organisation to provide the service, commissioners were not accurately informed about the waiting list which would be passed to the new supplier. When Millbrook Healthcare started their service on the 1 April 2014 they inherited a long waiting list which was not foreseen.

We now have an agreed plan to reduce waiting times over the next 6 months. Commissioners from each of the five Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England have worked together with Millbrook Healthcare to identify a preferred option for clearing the backlog and to manage the increase in referral rates the service is currently experiencing. To meet the requirements of the agreed recovery plan, Millbrook Healthcare has increased staffing levels to ensure a sustainable delivery of the service.

A review will take place in April 2015 to assess what has been achieved and a plan for the following 6 months will be developed.

You have asked three questions relating to ensuring that feedback from patients forms part of service improvement and I will answer each question in the order they were presented.

What mechanisms do you have in place to actively review the contracts you have with the providers of commissioned services to ensure that patient feedback is actively considered and acted upon?

We have monthly contract review meetings with our providers of wheelchair services. These meetings focus on a review of performance against contractual terms and conditions. This includes activity and finance, quality and performance standards.
A key requirement of the quality standards is for our providers to proactively demonstrate that service user and carer experience is being actively sought and acted upon. This includes:

- The requirement for Millbrook Healthcare to establish with service users, carers and user groups the key expectations of the service which form the basis of the ‘expectation assessment’ and to demonstrate achievement using comprehensive user and carer/parent engagement and feedback. Millbrook Healthcare is required to implement a continuous improvement cycle where expectation is not being met and to report the actions taken.

- Evidence that user and carer/parent identified outcomes are being met.

- Millbrook Healthcare undertake audits of patients experience of the service and the production of a 6 monthly report detailing patient feedback and how this is being utilised to improve and develop the service.

In addition, a variety of quality standards are monitored including compliments, complaints and incidents.

**What role does customer feedback play in your role of commissioning the services for wheelchairs on behalf of Hampshire CCGs?**

Patient and Public involvement is critical in the design and development of services. Comprehensive Patient and Public Involvement engagement was undertaken as part of the development of the new service specification to ensure that the views of local people informed and helped actively shape the newly commissioned service.

Customer feedback continues and is also critical in monitoring the quality of services we commission and helps us to ensure that our providers are providing high quality and responsive care in line with the commissioned outcomes and quality standards. Customer feedback is a core quality requirement for providers within the contracts that we hold. This is to ensure that we continue to get regular feedback and can take action required in line with the terms and conditions of the contract.

**Can you demonstrate that patient feedback will be taken very seriously in relation to wheelchair services commissioned in Hampshire in the future?**

We take patient feedback very seriously. As stated, patient feedback has been used to inform the new service model and will continue to be used as an important means to monitor the quality of the service provided and to help ensure continuous quality improvement.

Whilst at this time this is not the service that we wish our patients to receive we are working hard to overcome the current challenges and deliver the service we have commissioned. There is commitment from the five Clinical Commissioning Groups to deliver real improvements. As part of this work a realistic plan to achieve the specified waiting times has been developed and agreed.

We recognise that wheelchair services nationally are of varying quality and therefore we are devoting time to being involved with multiple national work streams to improve the quality of wheelchair services now and in the future.
I do hope that the above information provides a satisfactory response to the concerns raised and addresses them all fully. I appreciate, however, that there may be further questions or comments and I would be happy to reply to these.

Yours sincerely

Mr Mike Fulford
Chief Financial Officer (Deputy Chief Officer)

for and on behalf of

Heather Hauschild (Mrs)
Chief Officer