

E-Zec Medical Transport Services - Trading As EMED Group Limited

E-zec Medical Transport - Bristol

Inspection report

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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

Ratings

Overall rating for this location

Requires Improvement



Are services safe?

Requires Improvement



Are services effective?

Inadequate



Are services caring?

Good



Are services responsive to people's needs?

Requires Improvement



Are services well-led?

Requires Improvement



Summary of findings

Overall summary

We carried out this focused follow-up inspection on 5 July 2023.

We did not inspect all key questions as defined within our methodology but focused on those areas highlighted in the warning notice as requiring significant improvement following our comprehensive inspection on 24 January 2023.

We have not changed the rating of the service as we focused on the areas we told the service required significant improvement previously identified in the Section 29 warning notice.

The inspection was announced with one working days' notice to ensure the registered manager would be available.

During our focused inspection we reviewed all information to ensure the required actions against the Section 29 warning notice served against the provider in February 2023 had been completed.

We found that all areas of the warning notice had been met as follows:

- Patients had experienced a significant reduction in transport delays, particularly for dialysis.
- The management team demonstrated improved awareness of patient delays by improving journey scheduling methods.
- Patients were able to access transport when they needed it.

Although this was not part of the warning notice, we found the following improvements:

- Clinical waste bins were locked and secured correctly.
- Storage of chemicals were safely secured in a locked cupboard.
- Staff facilities has been resolved following concerns identified.

Summary of findings

Our judgements about each of the main services

Service	Rating	Summary of each main service
Patient transport services	Requires Improvement 	



Summary of findings

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Summary of this inspection

Background to E-zec Medical Transport - Bristol

E-Zec Medical Transport -Bristol is operated by E-Zec Medical Transport Services Ltd. The service provides non-urgent, planned transport for adults and children with a medical need who need to be transported to and from NHS services. Patients are required to meet the eligibility criteria agreed with the local Integrated Care Board (ICB) to access the service, which includes being registered to a General Practice surgery. The service is commissioned by this ICB which serves the local community.

E-Zec Medical Transport Bristol's fleet consists of 49 vehicles, including cars, vehicles for transporting people on stretchers, and vehicles with wheelchair access. The service is located in Bristol where they have 2 premises. One unit is where the call centre and some managers are based whilst the other unit location is where vehicles and supplies are stored. There are 2 satellite bases in Yate and Nailsea. We did not visit the satellite bases.

There is a registered manager in post at this location. Registered Managers have a legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act and associated regulations about how the service is run.

The service is registered to provide the following regulated activity:

Transport services, triage and medical advice provided remotely.

The service provides approximately 71,600 patient transport journeys per year.

Following our inspection in January 2023, the provider was served with a warning notice under Section 29 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 requiring them to:

- Make significant improvements to the responsiveness of the service.
- Reduce long waiting times for some patients to be collected and returned following outpatients/dialysis appointments.

How we carried out this inspection

This inspection was undertaken by a CQC inspector. During the inspection we spoke with 3 members of the management team.

As this was a focused inspection to follow up the warning notice, we did not speak with people who use the service for their views.

You can find information about how we carry out our inspections on our website:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/what-we-do-inspection>.

Our findings

Overview of ratings

Our ratings for this location are:

	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led	Overall
Patient transport services	Not inspected	Inspected but not rated	Not inspected	Inspected but not rated	Not inspected	Requires Improvement
Overall	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement

Patient transport services

Effective

Inspected but not rated 

Responsive

Inspected but not rated 

Is the service effective?

Inspected but not rated 

Response times

The service monitored and met, agreed response times so that they could facilitate good outcomes for patients. They used the findings to make improvements.

The service now had effective systems and processes to reduce the number of patients having long waiting times for collection, return journeys and cancelled transport at the last minute.

Performance was monitored by Key Performance Indicators (KPI) from the provider and local Integrated Care Board (ICB) who managed the contract for patient transport.

The service had improved their discussions with the ICB, shared information that related to proposed improvements and successful results achieved as a result.

During this inspection, we found the service had achieved an overall KPI compliance rate of 89% in April 2023, 90% in May 2023 and 89% in June 2023 against a 90% target that was set by the local ICB.

Senior Managers recruited more staff, adopted a new scheduling system and introduced more single crewed vehicles where patients did not require 2 members of staff. The service updated their system so that hospitals could make them aware when patients were ready for collection to ensure a more effective service.

The service stopped providing transport for patients who were being discharged from a local NHS hospital and their emergency department. This eased pressure on control room staff to arrange short notice discharges and allowed them to concentrate on planned journeys for patients.

Senior managers shared information which confirmed completion of 30,297 journeys between February 2023 and June 2023 at an average of 6,059 each month.

Senior managers introduced Patient Safety Liaison Assistant (PSLA) roles that were based at each local hospital. Their role was to monitor patient collection delays by using live scheduling data. They could locate them to offer support, food and fluids until their transport arrived. This was introduced as an initial trial and was due to be introduced nationwide.

Data from March 2023 to May 2023 showed that 5 patients were late for their dialysis appointment. No patients were late for dialysis treatment in June 2023. This demonstrated a significant improvement from our previous inspection where 15 patients waited for over 3 hours during a week in November 2022.

Patient transport services

Data from March 2023 to June 2023 showed that there were 6 delays in collecting patients following dialysis treatment. The longest delay was between 1 and 2 hours. All patients were seen by the Patient Safety Liaison Assistant (PSLA) to check on their wellbeing and provide food and fluids if requested by the patient. This showed a significant improvement when compared to December 2022 where 336 patients waited for over 1 hour to be taken home following dialysis. The service identified a long wait as any delay over 2 hours. These patients were highlighted and put on the 'service recovery board' (SRB) system. Their next 5 journeys were closely tracked and monitored for improvement. The SRB also included anyone with a complaint that had been upheld by the service. Managers and call centre staff demonstrated an increased awareness of patients on the service recovery board and monitored repeat occurrences for close investigation. Data from March 2023 to June 2023 showed that there was 1 outpatient delay of over 2 hours, compared to January 2023 where there were 56 delays of over 2 hours.

Is the service responsive?

Inspected but not rated 

Access and flow

People could access the service when they needed it, in line with national standards, and received the right care in a timely way.

Managers monitored waiting times. We found a significant improvement in transport waiting times since our last inspection and performance had significantly increased. The service had been under close scrutiny by the local Integrated Care Board following our warning notice and closely monitored improvements made by the service.

At our previous inspection, we identified concerns about a provider that was subcontracted to provide transport on behalf of this service. Managers confirmed this arrangement has ceased.

The service significantly reduced the total of over 1hour delays by introduction of improved scheduling methods, staff recruitment and increased use of single crew vehicles to maximise the number of vehicles available.

Managers and staff worked hard to significantly reduce the number of last minute journey cancellations. Data provided confirmed that there were 9 cancelled journeys in April 2023, 18 in May 2023 and 14 in June 2023. This demonstrated a substantial improvement when compared to 48 cancelled journeys in February 2023 and 39 in March 2023.

Managers investigated all cancelled journeys to establish the cause and attempted to prevent them from happening again.