

# healthwatch

## Kingston upon Hull

### Enter and View Activity

AJM Healthcare, Hull and East  
Yorkshire Wheelchair Services

Monday 16th September 2024



HealthCare

Mobility | Posture | Independence



## Contents

1. Introduction to Healthwatch .....	3
What is Healthwatch? .....	3
Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull.....	3
What is 'Enter and View'? .....	4
2. Abbreviations and Glossary .....	5
Abbreviations .....	5
Glossary .....	5
3. Disclaimer .....	8
4. Acknowledgements.....	8
5. Background.....	8
Website Description .....	9
6. Fees and Funding.....	9
7. Details of Visit .....	10
8. Methodology.....	10
9. Findings/ Observations.....	11
Service User Feedback.....	13
Staff Feedback .....	20
Partnership and Engagement Officer Questionnaire .....	21
10. Conclusion.....	25
11. Recommendations.....	25
Improving accessibility.....	25
Recruitment .....	26
Training of staff.....	27
Communication .....	27
Other .....	28
12. Distribution .....	28
13. Appendices.....	28
Appendix 1 – Staff Questions from the day.....	29
Appendix 2 – Staff Questionnaires completed online.....	31
Appendix 3 – Partnership and Engagement Officer Questions from the day .....	33
Appendix 4 – Service User Questionnaires completed online.....	36
Appendix 5 - Service User Questionnaire completed on the day.....	45

## **1. Introduction to Healthwatch**

### **What is Healthwatch?**

Healthwatch is the independent champion for people who use Health and Social Care services which exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care.

We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved, then share their views with those who have the power to make change happen. Helping people find the information they need about services in their area is another of our priorities.

### **In summary, the main aims of Healthwatch are to:**

- Help people find out about local care.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care.

### **Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull**

The Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull Team consists of members with varying specialties and experiences; they support the core duties of Healthwatch; delivering our statutory and contractual obligations to ensure that our communities voices are heard by those who provide and commission local services.

Each local Healthwatch is commissioned and funded by the Local Authority. In Kingston upon Hull, the organisation who has been commissioned to ensure the effective delivery of the Healthwatch Service is Hull CVS.

### What is 'Enter and View'?

As part of the legal powers developed under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, local Healthwatch organisations have the authority to deliver Enter and View visits.

Enter and View visits are conducted by a small team of staff and trained volunteers, who are prepared as authorised representatives to conduct visits to Health and Social Care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

#### **'Enter and View' is an opportunity for Healthwatch to:**

- Enter publicly funded Health and Social Care premises to see and hear consumer experiences about the service.
- Observe how the service is delivered, often by using a themed approach.
- Collect the views of service users (patients and residents) at the point of service delivery.
- Collect the views of carers and relatives.
- Observe the nature and quality of services.
- Collect evidence-based feedback.
- Report to providers, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Local Authorities, Commissioners, Healthwatch England and other relevant partners.

Enter and View visits may be carried out as announced visits, where we advise in advance of the time and date of the visit; with prior notice, whereby the service is advised of a period window of when the visit will take place; or if certain circumstances dictate as unannounced visits whereby the service does not know that a visit will be taking place. Services are also able to invite Healthwatch to their setting so that we can provide independent feedback.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the services first-hand.

## 2. Abbreviations and Glossary

### Abbreviations

- E+V: Enter and View
- CQC: Care Quality Commission
- NHS: National Health Service
- HWH: Healthwatch Hull
- ASC: Adult Social Care
- ICB: Integrated Care Board
- PWB: Personal Wheelchair Budget

### Glossary

<b>Adult Social Care</b>	Adult social care aims to help people stay independent, safe and well so they can live the lives they want to. This includes people who are frail, have disabilities, Neurodiversity, or mental health issues, as well as the people who care for them.
<b>Announced visit</b>	A visit planned by Healthwatch, and the place being visited.
<b>Anonymous</b>	Not naming people
<b>Authorised Representative</b>	An Authorised Representative is a trained staff member or volunteer with a current DBS in place who takes part in Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull's Enter and View activities.
<b>Personal Wheelchair Budget</b>	A personal wheelchair budget allows greater choice and control over your mobility needs, giving you

	<p>the chance to personalise your chair, your way.</p> <p>There are three different types of personal wheelchair budgets for you to choose from. You can opt for standard NHS provision, go for top-up options or choose a private alternative approved supplier.</p> <p><a href="#">PWB Brochure</a></p>
<p><b>Notional</b></p>	<p>This is the standard NHS provision of a wheelchair based on a clinical assessment of your needs. The wheelchair remains the property of the NHS, and the NHS pays to maintain the equipment in relation to normal wear and tear in line with our terms and conditions of loan.</p> <p><a href="#">PWB Brochure</a></p>
<p><b>Notional Combined</b></p>	<p>As with the notional PWB, you will be assessed to identify equipment that will meet your clinical needs.</p> <p>You will then have the option of using the value of this equipment to purchase another chair within the wheelchair service standard range, or to top up the PWB to purchase extras for the wheelchair, which would not ordinarily be provided.</p> <p>The wheelchair would remain the property of the NHS, and the NHS will continue to undertake maintenance on the wheelchair. If you have chosen a top-up option, you may need to pay for the repair of these items yourself. The equipment would be provided under our standard terms and conditions.</p> <p><a href="#">PWB Brochure</a></p>

<p><b>Third party</b></p>	<p>This is similar to the combined PWB. You will have an additional amount of money towards the repair and maintenance of the wheelchair added to your PWB by the wheelchair service. You are then free to use the money towards a wheelchair of your choice from any approved supplier of wheelchairs.</p> <p>Any equipment purchased using a third party PWB would be your property, and you would be responsible for maintaining and repairing it, as well as paying the difference between the PWB value and the cost of the equipment.</p> <p><a href="#">PWB Brochure</a></p>
<p><b>Service user</b></p>	<p>Service user describes anyone who has accessed (or is eligible to access) health or social care services. Carers are people who look after or support those with health or social care needs and can include partners and family members.</p>
<p><b>Project Officer</b></p>	<p>Healthwatch employee who carries out engagements and gathers experiences to create reports and produce findings for projects.</p>
<p><b>Local authority</b></p>	<p>This is where the local authority (typically the local council) agrees an amount to fully fund a person's support, whether it is in a residential placement or as part of a supported living package. The funding package is agreed following an assessment of the person's needs and covers both accommodation and support</p>

### **3. Disclaimer**

This report relates to the findings by the Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull Representatives during the visit to AJM Healthcare Group Limited, Hull on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and is only a representation of those spoken to and observations made on the day, plus feedback gained via online questionnaires.

### **4. Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch Hull would like to thank AJM Healthcare Hull for inviting us in. We appreciate the cooperation of the Partnership and Engagement Officer, staff, and service users who provided their experiences on the day and contributed to the Enter and View.

### **5. Background**

The Hull and East Riding Wheelchair Service is operated by AJM Healthcare. The NHS wheelchair service is commissioned by Humber and North Yorkshire ICB for those people that are registered with a GP in Hull or the East Riding of Yorkshire. The NHS wheelchair service provides wheelchairs and postural support to those people that meet the criteria to meet their clinical need. Where possible the service will recondition equipment.

The wheelchair service operates according to a contract that is agreed with the ICB and works to an 18 week pathway which aims to deliver equipment within 18 weeks of referral to the service. However there are many factors which can affect this timetable including availability of resources.

The AJM Healthcare, Hull and East Riding Wheelchair Service serves approximately 11,000 wheelchair users. They are contracted to take 250 referrals per month, but in reality, receive significantly more (at time of Enter and View).

The Service User Forum, with 21 registrants, along with Healthwatch (a regular attendee), played a key role in discussions that led to the Enter and View visit. The Forum is run by the Partnership and Engagement Officer, one of the projects that the service user forum has been working on is a comprehensive mapping from initial referral and eligibility assessment through service usage, repairs, and wheelchair recycling. The Forum aims to discuss current issues, share experiences, and develop solutions. For those unable or unwilling to attend the Forum, alternative participation methods are available, including direct input to the Officer. Some users also volunteer their time to create

artwork for the building. The Enter and View visit was agreed upon by the group to support the Forum's workplans and provide an independent perspective on current issues.

The announced visit to AJM Healthcare, Hull took place on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024, by two Authorised Representatives: Olivia Stevenson, Adult Social Care Project Officer and Ellie Whitfield Delivery Manager.

### Website Description

AJM Healthcare is the appointed NHS wheelchair service provider for residents currently registered with a GP in Hull and East Riding.

The service will provide you with all NHS wheelchair services, including:

- clinical assessments
- specialist seating
- delivery
- repairs and maintenance
- collection when the wheelchair is no longer required.

## 6. Fees and Funding

Wheelchairs can be funded in a number of ways and wheelchair users have the option of choosing a Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB)

A personal wheelchair budget can be managed in the following ways:-

**Notional personal wheelchair budget:** This is where the person chooses to use their personal wheelchair budget within the NHS commissioned services and the service purchases and provides the chair.

**Combined PWB:** This also offers the option for contributions to the personal wheelchair budget to enhance the wheelchair people can access. This contribution may come from an integrated package with other agencies such as education, social care, a voluntary or charity organisation, or through self-pay. This would have previously been known as a partnership voucher.

**Third party personal wheelchair budget:** This is where the person chooses to use their personal wheelchair budget outside of NHS commissioned services. An independent provider receives the personal budget via invoicing the NHS. This may also be contributed to as above. This would have been known previously as an independent voucher.

## 7. Details of Visit

<b>Details of Visit</b>	
<b>Service address</b>	Suite 4, The Shine Knowledge and Innovation Centre, St Mark Street, Hull, HU8 7FB
<b>Service Provider</b>	AJM Healthcare Group Limited  <b>Service Operations Manager</b> Alan Hadfield  <b>Partnership and Engagement Officer</b> Kerrie White  <b>Telephone</b> 0808 175 3969
<b>Date and Timings</b>	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2024  9.00am – 13.00pm
<b>Healthwatch Representatives</b>	Olivia Stevenson Adult Social Care Project Officer  Ellie Whitfield Delivery Manager

## 8. Methodology

Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull attended a meeting with AJM Healthcare on 26/07/2024 to be involved with the service user forum. The members of the service user forum discussed the opportunity for Healthwatch Hull to Enter

and View at the service with the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 being agreed between all parties for the Enter and View to be carried out by authorised representatives, Olivia and Ellie.

A questionnaire was devised from meeting minutes collected previously, which gave us a good understanding of the service and its background.

The Partnerships and Engagement Officer was provided with this set of questions in advance of the visit to go through with us on the day. Her responses were recorded verbatim (word for word) however, after the visit she requested the opportunity to fact check some of her answers and re send the answers to the questionnaire. These are included within the body of the report, and the original responses are included in appendix 3.

The QR code form, for service user feedback, was displayed in the AJM waiting area and also mentioned at the Service User Forum. The survey was open for 1 week following the Enter and View to gather timely and relevant feedback. Seven responses were received.

## **9. Findings/ Observations**

On arrival at AJM Healthcare, we approached the main entrance which was simple to locate. There was a buzzer system to get in, however, no one answered, instead the door opened outwards towards us. We felt this could create an inconvenience for service users who may not be aware of it opening outwards and could then get hit by the door.

There were no unpleasant smells inside and upon first impression everything was very clean and tidy. We were not greeted by anyone in the waiting area, just a lady who happened to walk through and check we were ok. Kerrie came down not long after to check if there was anything we needed and introduce us to the Service Operations Manager, then explained she would leave us a while to have a look around and experience the waiting area. No clients attended during this time. As it turned out there was one cancellation and one no-show.

We noticed a board showing every employee's photo and name on the wall as you walk into the building, which instantly puts you at ease as you can get an idea of who you may be speaking to and being involved with throughout your journey.

The TV on the wall displayed slides of information about AJM, including Personal Wheelchair Budgets and how to give your feedback on the service.



Figure 1 - TV Screen (PWB)



Figure 2 - TV Screen (Feedback)

The noticeboard displayed lots of useful information such as information on a wheelchair basketball group and AJM's own environmental policy. There were more boards with leaflet slots, displaying varying information for wheelchair users and we were able to add our own Healthwatch leaflet for service users to give their feedback.



Figure 4 - Leaflet Holder



Figure 3 - Noticeboard

The water dispenser in the waiting area makes the area more user friendly. We were told the vending machines were also due to arrive in the coming days. From information gathered during the service user forum, we were aware that the clinic room just off to the left of the waiting area is not sound proofed and conversations can be heard when waiting. However, it was also brought

to our attention that acoustic panels have also been ordered and will be installed as soon as possible.

One common theme we saw throughout the building was the how bare and white the walls were, with the bright overhead lights, and very much made the space feel clinical and cold. We were pleasantly surprised by the artwork in the children's clinic room and felt a similar theme could run throughout the building. This could help the service users feel more comfortable and at ease, especially while waiting for their appointment.



Figure 5 - Children's Clinic Room

Kerrie invited us upstairs to the training room where she was developing a road map for service users to give them a visual representation of what their journey should look like. A volunteer/ service user had designed this having been brought on board by Kerrie to help her, as well as gaining valuable feedback about the service, in a way other than the service user

forum.

Whilst in the training room, 2 members of staff came to speak to us and give us their experience of working at AJM Healthcare, which is included in Appendix 1. Kerrie then gave us a tour of the rest of the building, including the warehouse where all the production and manufacturing happens.

To gather comprehensive feedback, the Enter and View representatives left staff questionnaires in each department and placed QR code posters for service users to provide online input. Although they were unable to speak with users directly on the day, a staff member did give the questionnaire to one service user who completed it. Since then, HWH has received seven additional user experiences as well as five staff surveys. Keeping the online survey open for a full week after the visit also allowed more service users the opportunity to share their thoughts.

## Service User Feedback

### General

- We obtained feedback from 8 service users.
- There was a mixed response to the service at AJM.
- Most had a positive experience during their face-to-face appointments.
- All feedback said waiting times were something that didn't work well.

A staff member obtained one in-person service user piece of feedback on the day. They said AJM Healthcare works well because they have **“made me**

**more independent**", and that they **"talked to me, not at me"**, which **"made me feel good"**. This person had no issues with the service.

The rest of our service user feedback was obtained online through a Gravity Forms survey. While the total number of responses was relatively small, with 7 users providing input, the detailed qualitative information obtained helped build a greater understanding of the service.

### We asked... **What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

They responded...

1. *"They helped me get my electric wheelchair to exactly how I wanted it, I really like the fact that they talk directly to me and not to my support workers."*
2. *"When they get the order right, they are great. They have helped me to get wheelchairs and equipment."*
3. *"The wheelchair users' group is well run and is an interesting forum. I feel The Partnership and Engagement Officer (who leads the group) is enthusiastic, has developed good relationships with individuals. The service engineers are generally friendly and helpful."*
4. *"Nothing".*
5. *"They answer the phone".*
6. *"My NHS wheelchair was ordered and handed over by NRS and there was a lot wrong with it which they wouldn't rectify. AJM Healthcare acknowledged the issues and ordered the necessary equipment to make the chair more comfortable. It was a long wait for the new cushion, brakes and belt but now it's all been added it feels better. Given the positive experiences I've had on my two AJM appointments so far, I feel reassured that I can go to them in the future if any problems occur and it will get sorted."*
7. *"I found that my assessment and subsequent replacement wheelchair straightforward. However, I had to contact them as they said NRS had not passed my details on, even though I had been waiting almost a year."*

We then asked... **What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*"I feel the waiting times for appointments and equipment is inadequate especially when it takes months for me to receive the equipment I require, then when the equipment comes wrong it's so annoying when I specifically state what I need."*

*"Waiting for a wheelchair since April."*

*"I have been waiting for a back and wheel replacement for months, the supply chain issues are shocking. There are no communication updates when I call the response I get is "Sorry we are working on it and management is in talks with the suppliers"."*

*"No updates in regard to waiting times for items that have been prescribed to you, so you have no idea when to expect anything."*

*"They are slow fixing my electric wheelchair."*

*"My husband left hospital in December 2023; the wheelchair provided was too big to fit through our internal doors. He was non-weight-bearing and could not leave the house without patient transports support.*

*He made contact to explain the situation but was told that he had to get to the centre to be assessed as they did not offer home visits. This meant it was not until late March when he received his prosthesis that he could make an appointment to be assessed, this also meant we had to borrow a vehicle as the supplied chair would not fit in my car."*

One service user told us of a particularly detailed experience...

### Case Study

*"It was agreed in June 2023, that I needed a new wheelchair, and I am still not sorted. There was no contact between June 2023 and a wheelchair delivered to home on 14 Nov 2023.*

*At the handover, it was agreed that I needed different arm pads, cushion, the chair was the wrong height, and they agreed an engineer would attend to make adjustments, including fitting a handle to the fold chair and remove wheel rims.*

*I had to continue with my old chair and after nearly falling out of the chair twice due to a faulty brake, which I reported on 21 Dec 2023, I explained it was urgent and dangerous and was promised a call back, but received no response.*

*I telephoned wheelchair services on 27 December 2023, explaining the broken arm pad. They attended 29 December 2023 but couldn't repair it as although I had two spare panels, they were both for the right side and I needed a left sided panel. They agreed to order one and that someone would be in touch.*

*Telephone call to wheelchair services on 9 January, I was told that the part is no longer available due to the age of the chair, but they would double check and let me know. Again, explained that I couldn't get out of the house or go to work.*

*Telephone call from wheelchair services confirming parts can't be obtained as chair too old. Their solution was to come and see me and to try and make sure my new chair is suitable for use, but some parts still hadn't arrived....*

*On 22 February 2024 they arrived with another chair which was not suitable. Occupational Therapist said that they couldn't do any more and gave me a booklet with AJM Healthcare contact details to apply for private chair and they will give me £300 towards chair.*

*I had three different appointments, a change of representative, 4 invoices for chairs I hadn't seen at the time and after an appointment last week, was told it will be at least 3 months before the chair is available.*

2 April 2024 – Left hand brake not working at all. Telephone call to wheelchair services explaining the urgency and risk to me so they arranged a visit for Friday 5 April 2024. A mechanic attended, was very helpful, but couldn't fix it and said he would have to order new part. Suggested I rang wheelchair services early next week to check status.

9 April 2024 - Rang wheelchair services for an update, told they would check the situation and call me back.

11 April 2024 – Received no call back and so rang wheelchair services again. Was told that they are waiting to hear from supplier. I asked if someone could call me back and let me know how long it may be and was told they would contact me, once they have heard from supplier...

15 April 2024 – Telephone call from wheelchair services with appointment for following Monday. Explained how urgent it was and was told that was the earliest they could do it unless there is a cancellation.

22 April 2024 – wheelchair services attended and the two different types of brakes he brought didn't fit! He took more photos and said he will make it an urgent request. Telephone call to wheelchair services and asked to speak to Manager. Was told I needed to speak to the logistics manager, and they will email him asking to call me. Explained that if I didn't get a call back today, I will be contacting the BBC.

I did get a call back and eventually for the brake sorted, but I think the level of communication and service is appalling."

**Service Users were then asked how they feel about the services that AJM Healthcare provide and responded as follows...**

1. *"It's very clinical, this does not affect me but could be really detrimental for children and neurodiverse individuals."*
2. *"I've had a positive experience and felt calm and at ease during my appointments. I had a [staff member] with me during my most recent appointment which was good as the clinician had to go away and add on all the new parts to my wheelchair. As to be expected, this took a long time so it was nice to have company otherwise it would have been a long wait just sat alone."*
3. *"As above, the staff member I saw spoke to my friend more than me. Also, I expected to be able to try different chairs, rather than just talking. At the meeting, no measurements were taken, etc. It could have been done by phone call."*
4. *"I think only one person cares & the engineers/technicians/ front-line staff and managers are there to collect a wage and look busy."*
5. *"I feel very relaxed when I go there and that is because the staff are very nice and friendly the building has lots of room to get around as well as the rooms, they are very spacious."*
6. *"I feel that the staff are very helpful and try to get everything right for me. If they had someone at the front to welcome people in and ask them if they would like a drink. They need some soundproofing in the clinic rooms so everyone in the waiting room can't hear what they are saying in the clinic room."*

We asked AJM service users about the accessibility of the building and they said...

*"I find the access great, and they have lots of parking."*

*"The only accessibility issue I have is I can't ring the bell at the door by myself I need someone to do it for me."*

*"Terrible, if you do not drive or have access to a vehicle, as there is no public transport to the centre."*

*"Access to the car park and building was fine."*

*"Real actively accessible. Waiting area and consultation rooms are accessible for me but could make improvements such as Easier access to open the main doors. Call button is a bit of a stretch. Disabled toilet could be set out slightly better, for example, a smaller bin to allow more turning space."*

*"The paths to the building are terrible city council needs to improve the access. Doors at the centre heavy and the door frame is hard to get over."*

## Staff Feedback

### General

- We obtained feedback from five staff members.
- The majority said that all staff worked well together and there is high staff morale.
- Staffing levels were mentioned to be an area that doesn't work as well.

We spoke to one member of staff in detail on the day and introduced ourselves to the remaining workforce. We left them with paper copies of questions to fill in and return to us. We got the impression of good teamwork throughout the departments with employees saying, **“team works well together and are happy to help each other out”**, **“all staff work well together and there's team support”**, **“communication between clinical, customer services and warehouse”**.

There was an almost unanimous agreement that recruitment for certain job roles and staffing levels are an issue. We were told that **“no clinical lead for nearly 10 months, therefore no meetings or help provided so clinic staff left to fight for themselves”**. Someone else simply said **“understaffed”**. Another echoed with **“improve workforce planning as too big of a workload for amount of staff we have”**.

Staff members provided some other comments saying **“I enjoy working at AJM, however this has a lot to do with the people I work with and if it wasn't for these people I believe AJM would lose a lot of staff”**, **“If it wasn't for the people I work with within this depot I would most likely have left by now”** and **“If it wasn't for the staff that I work with from clinical, to customer services, to warehouse, I would have left a long time ago”**. This demonstrates a mutual feeling throughout the business that employees are feeling the pressure of the job and could lead to even more staff shortages if changes are not implemented soon.

When we spoke to one employee on the day, they told us about their workloads and the number of clients they see per day. They also mentioned the school clinics which are run and seem to work very effectively. It means that **“rather than them missing school to attend appointments, we go to them and can see between 10-12 pupils at a time.”**

When we asked about recycling of chairs and how they find this process to be, we were told that there has been a new auditing system implemented by the AJM clinical team that involves calling care homes and retrieving chairs that are not being used/ being used by people they don't belong to. They

reported this system to be working well and would say they have a good percentage of chairs now being returned and upcycled.

Recruitment was spoken about, and the feedback was **“Job roles here generally require an HCP registration but not much more, everything else can be learnt on the job. The job description can be too picky.”**

### **Partnership and Engagement Officer Questionnaire**

The following, is a formal response to our questionnaire, which was provided to Healthwatch **after** the visit to ensure factual accuracy.

#### **How many NHS patients are registered with AJM Healthcare Hull and East Yorks currently?**

Approximately 9,041 adults and 1484 children, making a total of 10,525 individuals.

#### **How many people are part of the service user forum?**

21 registrants with a 70/30 split of service users and professionals.

#### **Continuity of support – do people who use the service see the same professional each time?**

At AJM Healthcare, we ensure consistent and personalised care through a collaborative team approach. Our clients receive support from a dedicated team of professionals, including customer care representatives, clinicians, technicians, and field service engineers. This teamwork ensures that even if clients interact with different professionals, the quality and continuity of care remain high, as all team members share information and work together to meet each client's needs.

#### **How do you seek feedback from people not in the service user forum in particular?**

We actively seek feedback from individuals outside of our service user forum through various proactive community engagement and partnership initiatives. These include personalised consultations, where we connect directly with community members to understand their unique needs and perspectives. Additionally, we conduct surveys and host public meetings and workshops to facilitate open dialogue and gather suggestions. By partnering with a variety of local organisations and agencies, we extend our reach and gather diverse viewpoints. These efforts ensure we capture a wide range of

opinions and continuously improve our services based on community needs and preferences.

**Do you have a 24/7 support service for people who use the service to access for repairs/ queries?**

Opening hours -

Our service centre is open as follows:

Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 6.00pm

Saturday: 9.00am to 1.00pm

We carry out routine deliveries and collections as follows:

Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 8.00pm

Repair service -

Repair requests can be made at any time by contacting the service directly.

We carry out routine repairs as follows:

Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 8.00pm

We will respond to all emergency repair requests within 4 hours and complete the repair within 24 hours.

**You mention that the eligibility criteria is on the website, but do you have any ways of accessing those without digital platforms?**

For accessing the eligibility criteria for AJM Healthcare's Hull and East Riding Wheelchair Service without using digital platforms, you have a few options:

1. Visit the Office: You can visit the AJM Healthcare office in Hull and East Riding. They can provide you with printed materials and answer any questions you might have.
2. Call the Service: You can contact the Hull and East Riding Wheelchair Service directly by phone at 0808 175 3969. The staff can provide you with the necessary information over the phone or arrange for our partnership and engagement officer to get in contact with you.
3. Request Printed Materials: You can ask them to mail you printed copies of the eligibility criteria and other relevant documents.

**Are you still experiencing supply issues? Have you been able to source alternative suppliers or any solutions?**

From my understanding, the challenges are more about resourcing issues. The management team is actively addressing these in collaboration with commissioners.

**Do you work directly with community transport services to test your wheelchairs for safety or is this in a different way?**

At AJM Healthcare, we prioritise the safety and reliability of our wheelchairs. While we do collaborate with various stakeholders, including community transport services, our safety testing protocols are comprehensive and involve multiple stages. This ensures that products meet the highest standards of safety and performance before they reach our customers. All wheelchairs used for patient transport are crash tested by the manufacturers.

**Do you have a process for checking procurement or parts and making sure they are specific to those requested?**

AJM Healthcare has a thorough procurement process to ensure that all parts and equipment meet the specific requirements requested. This involves detailed verification and quality control checks at multiple stages, ensuring that the products we procure are accurate and adhere to our high standards of quality and reliability.

**Have you employed or recruited a person/ volunteer to be present in the waiting area?**

At AJM Healthcare, we are dedicated to improving our customers' experience. While we currently do not have dedicated personnel or volunteers in the waiting area, we are actively exploring workforce development plans based on feedback.

**How many members do you now have in your service user forum group?**

The group started in May with 15 members and has grown to 21 registrants. We meet monthly on the last Thursday. Our success is due to a terms of reference that goes beyond service feedback, allowing members to self-advocate on broader issues. This wider remit keeps people interested and engaged. We also bring in guest speakers to support the group. Additionally, we engage with members outside the forum by attending community groups such as disabled people's panels, parent and carer forums, school socials, and relevant charity support groups. For those wanting to provide one-on-one feedback, we can and have arranged individual consultation sessions.

**Have you managed to get more forum users engaged/ feedback gathered?**

Since commencing, we have significantly enhanced community engagement through various initiatives focused on both individual and group interactions. Examples include conducting surveys, holding consultation sessions, and organising community forums. By increasing our presence at key meetings and events, we have fostered stronger partnerships and collaboration. These efforts have collectively led to a more vibrant and participatory community.

### **How long is it currently taking to get a wheelchair issued?**

At NHS AJM Healthcare Wheelchair Service in Hull and East Riding, we strive to meet the 18-week wheelchair delivery benchmark. However, we acknowledge that individual case complexities, such as varying clinical needs and resourcing issues, can impact delivery times. For detailed data on our wheelchair services, please refer to the NHS England's National Wheelchair Data Collection, published quarterly since April 2019. This includes metrics on registered users, referral-to-delivery times, and expenditure, providing the information you may require.

### **What % of chairs that you issue are recycled? Do you think this could be more? Why are so many not recycled?**

In the last quarter, approximately 59% of our issued chairs were recycled, highlighting our commitment to sustainability. We continually aim to increase this percentage by enhancing our maintenance programmes, optimising logistics, and raising awareness about the benefits of recycling. A collective effort with our community will further help us further our dedication to environmental responsibility.

### **What could be done to improve the accessibility of AJM Healthcare could include; entrances/exits, toilets, buzzer system, location etc**

Based on service user feedback, several improvements are already in progress to enhance AJM Healthcare's building accessibility. Clearer signage has been added to the automated doors, the buzzer system has been made more user-friendly with guidance, the toilet facilities have been adjusted with a smaller bin replacing the larger one, and travel routes to the venue have been shared. All these enhancements have been completed to better serve our users. Additionally, other recommendations have been escalated, including installing acoustic boards for clinic doors to improve privacy and adding a call button in the main reception.

## 10. Conclusion

AJM healthcare provide a clean and tidy environment for their service users. This is further enhanced by the friendly and welcoming staff who were happy to be included in our enter and view visit. Staff acknowledge areas where service improvement is required and share a passion for being involved in this.

However, despite the welcoming environment, there are some issues regarding the accessibility of the building, making it difficult for service users to enter, and navigate the building with ease.

Staff shortages are having an impact on the ability of AJM to deliver an efficient service, contributing to long wait times for wheelchairs to be provided or repaired and communication with services users is not always effective, leaving them unsure about how long it will take to receive their chair.

For the staff working within AJM, the lack of a clinical lead for 10 months is a concern, leaving them feeling overwhelmed and overstretched with their workload. Despite this, staff appear to value each other and share a sense of camaraderie. The Partnership and Engagement officer and technicians, in particular, are passionate and deeply invested in their work.

We invite you to read our recommendations as outlined below. These have been devised from our observations on the day and feedback received during and after the Enter and View.

## 11. Recommendations

Following the Enter and View, Healthwatch Hull have devised the following recommendations for AJM Wheelchair Services Hull, which have been produced in line with the information collected on the day and feedback received.

### Improving accessibility

- **Partnership and Engagement Officer: To consider adding signage to the entrance door that notifies clients of the door opening towards them.** We noticed on arrival that this could cause inconvenience to service users, particularly if they are on their own. It was also mentioned by a service users saying, *“could make improvements such as easier access to the main doors.”*

- **Service Operations Manager: To consider swapping the bin in the disabled toilet for a smaller bin as it takes up quite a bit of room that would be useful for wheelchair users.** One service user said, *“Disabled toilet could be set out slightly better, for example, a smaller bin to allow more turning space.”*
- **Partnership and Engagement Officer: To consider adding artwork to the walls around the centre.** Some service users may be nervous and could feel quite overwhelmed by the blank white walls. It was mentioned that *“It’s very clinical, this does not affect me but could be really detrimental for children and neurodiverse individuals.”*
- **Service Operations Manager: To consider the possibility of making the entrance door lighter and removing the lip as you come through the door.** Individuals who are on their own or with one carer could find it difficult entering the centre. A service user fed back that *“doors at the centre are heavy and the door frame is hard to get over.”*
- **Service Operations Manager: To consider adding a page on the website with employees’ pictures and names, like the board as you come through the entrance.** This acts as a nice soft introduction for clients before they attend the clinic. One client said, *“If they had a section on the website with the team members on so everyone can see who works there.”*

## Recruitment

- **Service Operations Manager: To consider the possibility of recruiting more technicians to take pressure off current staff and meet demands.** Staff and service users have mentioned that staffing levels are low. Staff have said that the centre is *“understaffed”* and that the *“workload is too big for amount of staff”*. Service users have also noticed the problem and said, *“They need to employ more technicians to cover the demand as they only have 6 for the whole of Hull and East Riding.”*
- **Service Operations Manager: To consider hiring a new clinical lead.** It was mentioned by staff that they have been without a clinical lead for 10 months. They said this means *“no meetings or help provided so clinic staff left to fight for themselves”*. Having a clinical lead would help with

staff morale as they would have a port of call and someone to relieve some pressure. It should help with workload, leadership and direction.

### Training of staff

- **The Service Operations Manager and Customer Service Manager should ensure that customer service training considers the lived experience of service users.** This enables them to have a better understanding of service user needs. The forum could be used to co-produce this training.

### Communication

- **The Service Operations Manager: To consider revising communication methods for booking of appointments.** A few comments have been made that technicians have not turned up to appointments and a staff member also mentioned that clients don't always turn up. It could be that customer service staff make follow up phone calls to confirm or automated text messages could be sent. Clients said, "*Better communication they often forget to ring and book appointments in*".
- **Customer Service Manager: To consider making follow up calls after an appointment.** Customer services could make follow up calls/ emails/ texts to see how the client found their appointment, if they have another appointment booked and if there are any wait times. Customers asked that AJM are more transparent with them for things like wait times. For example, "*clear communication, how long it will take to provide the wheelchair, regular updates if there has been any changes*", and "*More communication in regards wait times of existing orders*".
- **Service Operations Manager: To consider providing an email address where a service user could send photos in the case of damage.** This could be much more convenient for some service users who don't always have time or transport to get to the centre. It could also take pressure off technicians as less appointments would be needed. One client said "*I would say that if they had an e mail where we can send photos of broken parts to instead of a technician having to come out to see what's broken, take pictures of it and send them to the office for them to order it.*"

## Other

- **Service Operations Manager: To consider providing home visits for those who struggle to leave the house.** This could be helped by recruiting someone new to cover that demand. A service user commented saying *"Home visits for those people who are unable to leave the house."*
- **Service Operations Manager and Rehab Technician Engineer: To consider allowing service users the opportunity to try a few different chairs.** Make it clear which option the technician believes is best, but it will also allow the client the opportunity to be involved. One person commented saying *"They need a service where you can go in and try out different wheelchairs (This would save an awful lot of time and expense)."*

## 12. Distribution

The report is for distribution to the following:

- AJM Healthcare – Hull and East Yorkshire Wheelchair Services
- Hull City Council – Adult Social Care Team
- Hull Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- NHS England
- Clinical Director of Nursing – Kate Rudston
- Healthwatch England and the Healthwatch Hull Website

Published on <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/reports-library> and <https://healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk/>

## 13. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Staff Questions from the day
- Appendix 2 – Staff Questionnaires completed online.
- Appendix 3 – Partnership and Engagement Officer Questions from the day
- Appendix 4 – Service User Questionnaires completed online.
- Appendix 5 – Service User Questionnaire completed on the day.

## Appendix 1 – Staff Questions from the day

### **What works well?**

*Working with customer service and clinical to answer queries, provide paperwork to logistics every Wednesday to make sure things are ready and waiting – less wait. Budgets are good. There's good contact between customer service and clinical.*

*We run school clinics also. There are 1,100 people on wait lists in schools across Hull and ER, so rather than them missing school to attend appt we go to them and can see between 10-12 pupils at once. There will be a rehab clinic tech and OT attend and it's about building relationships in a comfortable environment. Parents can come if they want to, but a message goes out to parents to gain consent. It's good because it keeps wait lists down and keep kids in school so doesn't disrupt their education.*

### **What doesn't work well? What don't you like?**

*Risers very rare through NHS – funding for extras is very hard – no money. Transport doesn't always turn up or send the wrong transport e3g electric wheelchair needs different type. Transport can be late – client not always at fault so do always try to see them and help.*

### **Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare?**

*Chairs not always returned from care homes and care homes are difficult, they don't have the staff to bring them, so they ask for home visits and there's a 9 month wait. Criteria has to be met if you can sit, if you can self-propel, they can have one if go through assessment. This one client didn't turn up and when I rang to find out, they said they didn't receive the letter, but our system says it was sent.*

### **Any other comments?**

*Not staffed for a receptionist currently because it is not paid for in the contract. Looking at the possibility of volunteers for reception but should bring snacks, drinks, medication and family members with them to support them.*

*There are 5 members of clinical staff, and we move rooms throughout the day so while one is doing an assessment/ consultation, one is upstairs doing notes and then we swap.*

*Clients can add some things themselves like bike lights and stickers, but they can't change the actual structure, so they wouldn't be allowed to drill into the actual chair.*

*If they are 15 mins late or more we can refuse to see them but we can also look at what their appt is and think well if this is just a quick chat or quick fix e.g. the wheelchair is too heavy, then it probably won't take the full hour anyway.*

*We take photos throughout the process to log in case of deliberate damage. However, it is quite difficult to prove, but if probably keep reoccurring we will have to have a proper chat with them.*

*Do training for wheelchair referrals for GPs, rehab teams and OTs – need to be able to do height, weight, measurements – can save time by having this info, they then don't need to come in for assessment then, so it keeps wait lists down. Wait for assessment can be 4-5 months.*

*If form filled in or bits missing can usually call them and explore e.g. don't know weight can ask for dress size/ trouser size and workout from there. This has led to better forms being completed. When requests are put in, they need to be appropriate e.g. not a £500 air cushion for someone who doesn't have pressure concerns because then it's just draining NHS funds.*

*1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – contract started.*

*250 referrals a month on contract but currently at 384 referrals per month and all referrals screened within 2 days at the minute.*

*HCP registration is needed to apply for job but everything else can be learnt on the job. The job description can be too picky. There is currently no clinical lead and hasn't been since Dec 2023. Therefore, recruitment could improve, maybe use a specialised service because it's hard to find the right people.*

*Referral to assessment and chair provided should be 18 weeks according to NHS guidelines. Depends on stock/ level of need and if the referral form has been completed well.*

*Repair clinics at AJM 9-3 each Monday and Wednesday. Only for minor repairs and needs booking in advance.*

*Work on the premise we validate feelings, explore options and go the extra mile.*

*Need to see complaint pathway and communicate this.*

*Regular communications with commissioner*

*Don't have text reminders.*

*Power chairs are not always suitable for the house – solution focussed, look what can be done e.g. different storage. Look at different ways we can help to move.*

*Meet people where they are at – individual meetings/ build relationships.*

*Not for everyone – go about this in individualised ways e.g. go to their home, come in separately.*

*Disability network groups, national development team inclusion. Hull parent carer forum.*

*Kerb is getting lowered, vending machines in oct, bubble fish tank will be going in waiting area – has arrived, acoustics will be fixed so can hear less in the waiting room. Sensory stuff needed in waiting room.*

*White walls, lights too bright – co produce.*

## **Appendix 2 – Staff Questionnaires completed online.**

### **1. What works well?**

*Communication between clinical, customer services and warehouse. Team morale, working friendships, extra effort each person puts in for others.*

### **2. What doesn't work well? What don't you like?**

*Lack of recruitment. No clinical lead for nearly 10 months, therefore no meetings or help provided. Clinical left to fight for themselves.*

### **3. Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare?**

*More staff to help with workload, clinical firefighting waiting lists, referrals, queries and home visits. Currently surviving but will burn out if this continues.*

### **4. Any other comments**

*If it wasn't for the staff that I work with from clinical, to customer services, to warehouse, I would have left a long time ago. AJM should not abuse that.*

### **1. What works well?**

*Setting individual daily tasks*

- 2. What doesn't work well? What don't you like?**

*My pay with my lifestyle*

- 3. Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare?**

*More staff.*

- 4. Any other comments**

- 1. What works well?**

*Team communication*

- 2. What doesn't work well? What don't you like?**

*Understaffed*

- 3. Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare?**

*More staff.*

- 4. Any other comments**

- 1. What works well?**

*Team communication – all staff work well together. Team support.*

- 2. What doesn't work well? What don't you like?**

*Understaffed, improve workforce planning, too big of a workload for amount of staff we have.*

- 3. Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare?**

*More staffing throughout all departments. More opportunities within company. Better pay. Reduce stress of workload. Better incentives.*

- 4. Any other comments**

*If it wasn't for the people I work with within this depot, I would most likely have left by now.*

- 1. What works well?**

*Team works well together and are happy to help each other out.*

**2. What doesn't work well? What don't you like?**

*Understaffed and overworked.*

**3. Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare?**

*More staff, more depot meetings to discuss issues and to resolve these.*

**4. Any other comments**

*I enjoy working at AJM however, this has a lot to do with the people I work with and if it wasn't for these people I believe AJM would lose a lot of staff.*

**Appendix 3 – Partnership and Engagement Officer Questions from the day**

Partnership and Engagement Officer Feedback

**1. How many NHS patients are registered?**

*All NHS – no one fully private currently*

**2. How many people in the service user forum?**

*21 registered – 70:30 split in terms of service users and professionals. Trying to get children involved through schools and art sessions to feed into newsletter.*

**3. Continuity of support – do they have the same professional each time?**

*Not particularly, sometimes get personal requests. If we receive particularly positive feedback from clients, customer service may book appointments with same therapist, if they are able and feel it would be good rapport.*

**4. How do you seek feedback from people not in the service user forum in particular?**

*Some people do not want to be in a group setting. So, for example someone made a music piece to say how they felt about the service. We have another young man who comes in and is helping with the service user pathway artwork.*

**5. Do you have a 24/7 support service?**

*You can call us at any time, even outside of our usual business hours (8am to 6pm, Monday to Sunday). If you call outside of business hours, your repair request will be passed on to our duty field service engineer. If your repair request is an emergency, we will call you back within four hours.*

**6. You mention that the eligibility criteria is on the website, but do you have any ways of accessing those without digital platforms?**

*If people have communication issues, and they ring through. I will guide someone through personally.*

**7. Do you still have supply issues? Have you been able to source alternative suppliers?**

*We have regular channels of communication with the commissioner and are looking at where the delay is and what needs addressing.*

**8. Do you have a process for checking procurement or parts and making sure they are specific to those requested?**

*We work on the principle that we validate people's feelings and try to accommodate even though what's been prescribed is right, you can't take away what they might feel. So, one lady had larger wheels and a thicker cushion added so she was higher up. Clinicians and warehouse staff have processes in place so paperwork is done on a Wednesday by the clinicians and then the warehouse staff can get everything ready and lined up for the rest of the week.*

**9. Have you employed or recruited a person/ volunteer to be present in the waiting area?**

*We are trying to get it included in the contract to be able to employ a receptionist. With volunteers there comes problems but would be great to have one.*

**10. Have you managed to get more forum users engaged/ feedback gathered?**

*It has progressed. Had 15 registrants. The service user forum is not for everyone though, so setting aside time to speak to people individually. Case load up to 21 individuals. Parents wanted info around groups and counselling so providing signposting to places like Parent Carers, Disability Network groups, National development team for inclusion etc.*

### **11. How long is it taking to get a wheelchair issued?**

*Short term wheelchair can be hired from charities like Red Cross. Try and introduce other options like banana boards to help with mobilising. MDT assess needs and decide if a person can have a different chair if they request it. There's not a great deal of funding out there so have to be careful what they tell clients. The waiting times can cause problems particularly with children. By the time it goes from assessment to delivery they may have changed size and shape so chair is no longer fitting well.*

### **12. What % of chairs that you issue are recycled? Do you think this could be more? Why are so many not recycled?**

*We are pretty spot on with recycling. We run audits with care homes where they go round and check who has what, and everything we issue has an audit trail. When it comes to recycling, I feel there could be more done in the community to come up with a creative way to use chairs. Engineers and other companies could give ideas.*

### **13. What could be done to improve the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*Vending machine is coming in October. Sounding boards coming for the acoustics in the clinic room. Kerb is being dropped around October time. Sensory stuff is going to be put in the waiting area, and we are going to use the service user forum to decide where the stuff will go.*

### **14. Other comments.**

*We are contracted to 250 referrals per month but currently have 384 referrals per month and all referrals are screened within 2 days at the minute.*

*It would be useful to do training for wheelchair referrals for GPs, rehab teams and Ots. This can save time by having this info, so they don't need to come in for an assessment as the wait for assessments at the minute is 4-5 months.*

**Appendix 4 – Service User Questionnaires completed online.**

**AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 1001**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*They helped me get my electric wheelchair to exactly how I wanted it, I really like the fact that they talk directly to me and not to my support workers.*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*They are slow fixing my electric wheelchair.*

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

*Better communication they often forget to ring and book appointments in, also to follow up on a repair to check everything is working as it should be, also they could be faster in repairing my wheelchair.*

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*I feel very relaxed when I go there and that is because the staff are very nice and friendly the building has lots of room to get around as well as the rooms, they are very spacious.*

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*The only accessibility issue I have is I can't ring the bell at the door by myself I need someone to do it for me.*

**Anything else.**

*no*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 997**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*When they get the order right, they are great. They have helped me to get wheelchairs and equipment.*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*I feel the waiting times for appointments and equipment is inadequate especially when it takes months for me to receive the equipment, I require then when the equipment comes wrong it's so annoying when I specifically state what I need.*

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

*I would say that if they had an e mail where we can send photos of broken parts too instead of a technician having to come out to see what's broken, take pictures of it and send them to the office for them to order it.*

*If they had someone at the front to welcome people in and ask them if they would like a drink.*

*They need some soundproofing in the clinic rooms so everyone in the waiting room can't hear what they are saying in the clinic room.*

*If they had a section on the website with the team members on so everyone can see who works there.*

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*I feel that the staff are very helpful and try to get everything right for me.*

*If they had someone at the front to welcome people in and ask them if they would like a drink.*

*They need some soundproofing in the clinic rooms so everyone in the waiting room can't hear what they are saying in the clinic room.*

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*I find the access great, and they have lots of parking.*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 996**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*The wheelchair users' group is well run and is an interesting forum. I feel Kerrie (who leads the group) is enthusiastic, has developed good relationships with individuals.*

*The service engineers are generally friendly and helpful.*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*My experiences of AJM have not been good over the last 2 years.*

*It was agreed in June 2023, that I needed a new wheelchair, and I am still not sorted. There was no contact between June 2023 and a wheelchair delivered to home on 14 Nov 2023*

*At the handover, it was agreed that I needed different arm pads, cushion, the chair was the wrong height, and they agreed an engineer will attend to make adjustments including fitting handle to fold chair and remove wheel rims.*

*I have had no contact since 14 November to explain what is happening, any delays, etc.*

*In the meantime, I had to continue with my old chair and after nearly falling out of the chair twice due to a faulty brake, I reported on 21 Dec 2023, explained it was urgent and dangerous and was promised call back, but received no response. Luckily for me, I have a friendly electrician who was doing some work for me and managed to sort it out.*

*On Christmas Day, I heard a snap and the side panel of my arm pad, snapped and then started catching on my wheel every time I moved.*

*I telephoned WHEELCHAIR SERVICES on 27 December 2023, explaining broken arm pad. They attended 29 December 2023 but couldn't repair it as although I had two spare panels, these for the right side and I needed a left sided panel. They agreed to order one and that someone would be in touch.*

*Due to the panel, I can't move without holding onto it and this meant I couldn't carry anything or push myself in my usual manner. Telephone call to WHEELCHAIR SERVICES 4 January 2024 for update – Part still on order and I explained that I couldn't get out of the house or go to work. Again, I explained it was urgent.*

Telephone call to WHEELCHAIR SERVICES 8 January, no response, so left message. No reply.

Telephone call to WHEELCHAIR SERVICES 9 January, told that part is no longer available due to age of chair, but they will double check and let me know. Again, explained that I couldn't get out of the house or go to work.

Telephone call from WHEELCHAIR SERVICES confirming parts can't be obtained as chair too old. Their solution is to come and see me tomorrow and to try and make sure my new chair is suitable for use, but some parts still hadn't arrived....

After all this and I have omitted some details, on 22 February 2024 (MB) WHEELCHAIR SERVICES arrived at work with another chair. Couldn't open chair and arm didn't spring back but had to be taken off. Not suitable. OT said that they couldn't do any more and gave me a booklet with AJ Healthcare contact details to apply for private chair and will give me £300 towards chair. Unsure that this is the correct way to get a wheelchair voucher. I then Telephone call to AJ Healthcare (non-NHS Part) and they queried wheelchair voucher system. Said I should apply before I get a quote from them. Back and forth between WHEELCHAIR SERVICES and AJM Healthcare and informed voucher was worth £457 (£150 for 5 years repairs!).

I am still waiting for a suitable chair. I had three different appointments, a change of representative, 4 invoices for chairs I hadn't seen at the time and after an appointment last week, was told it will be at least 3 months before the chair is available.

Separately from this, 2 April 2024 (MB) – Left hand brake not working at all. Telephone call to WHEELCHAIR SERVICES, explained the urgency and risk to me and they arranged a visit for Friday 5 April 2024. Mechanic attended, very helpful, but couldn't fix it and said he would have to order new part. Suggested I rang WHEELCHAIR SERVICES early next week to check status.

9 April 2024 - Rang WHEELCHAIR SERVICES for update, told they would check the situation and call me back.

11 April 2024 – Received no call back and so rang WHEELCHAIR SERVICES again. Was told that they are waiting to hear from supplier. I asked if someone could call me back and let me know how long it may be and was told they would contact me, once they have heard from supplier....

15 April 2024 (MB) – Telephone call from WHEELCHAIR SERVICES with appointment for next Monday. Explained how urgent it was and was told that was the earliest they could do it unless there is a cancellation.

22 April 2024 – WHEELCHAIR SERVICES attended and the two different types of brakes he brought didn't fit! He took more photos and said he will make it an urgent request. Telephone call to WHEELCHAIR SERVICES and asked to speak to Manager. Was told I needed to speak to the logistics manager, and they will email him asking to call me. Explained that if I didn't get a call back today, I will be contacting the BBC.

I did get a call back and eventually for the brake sorted, but I think the level of communication and service is appalling.

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

Where do I start?

- 1) Turn up for appointments when arranged (I have had one instance with the private side of AJM where they forgot they had agreed to attend!)
- 2) They need a service where you can go in and try out different wheelchairs (This would save an awful lot of time and expense)
- 3) Listen and talk to the user. At one appointment, I took a friend with me and despite being reasonable articulate and capable individual, they kept speaking to my friend, rather than me.
- 4) They need to employ more technicians to cover the demand as they only have 6 for the whole of Hull and East Riding.

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

As above, the staff member I saw spoke to my friend more than me. Also, I expected to be able to try different chairs, rather than just talking. At the meeting, no measurements were taken, etc. It could have been done by phone call.

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

Access to the car park and building was fine.

**Anything else.**

*I have cut down my comments as I have kept a detailed log since the issues started (and continue). If it was any other service, I would have made a formal complaint or looked for an alternative. However, apart from going private there is no alternative than to use AJM, so their service should be better Marks and Spencer's, etc.*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 993**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*Nothing*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*Waiting for a wheelchair since April*

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

*Resign NHS contract.*

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*Staff, facilities fine*

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*Ok*

**Anything else.**

*Really disappointed*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 991**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*They answer the phone.*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*I have been waiting for a back and wheel replacement for months, the supply chain issues are shocking. There are no communication updates when I call the response I get is "Sorry we are working on it and management is in talks with the suppliers".*

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

*Empathy - front-line staff do not seem to grasp the importance and inconvenience or safety issues involved with*

*Communication - I logged the fault on 7/6 I have called repeatedly for an update I called 19/9 to ask for specs so I could try and get at least the tyres replaced privately to be told "they've arrived we can buck those in for next week... if that would help" YES!!! YES... IT WOULD!*

*that proves my point about empathy.*

*hire front-line staff that are service users or have direct connections and understanding of what it's like.*

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*I think the only person who cares is Kerrie White & the engineers/technicians front-line staff and managers are there to collect a wage and look busy.*

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*the paths to the building are terrible city council needs to improve the access.*

*doors at the centre heavy and the door frame is hard to get over.*

**Anything else.**

*hire front-line staff that are service users or have direct connections and understanding of what it's like.*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**[AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 990](#)**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*My NHS wheelchair was ordered and handed over by NRS and it there was a lot wrong with it which they wouldn't rectify. AJM Healthcare acknowledged the issues and ordered the necessary equipment to make the chair more comfortable. It was a long wait for the new cushion, brakes and belt but now it's all been added it feels better. Given the positive experiences I've had on my two AJM appointments so far, I feel reassured that I can go to them in the future if any problems occur and it will get sorted.*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*No updates in regard to waiting times for items that have been prescribed to you, so you have no idea when to expect anything.*

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

*More communication in regards wait times of existing orders*

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*I've had a positive experience and felt calm and at ease during my appointments. I had Kerry with me during my most recent appointment which was good as the clinician had to go away and add on all the new parts to my wheelchair. As to be expected, this took a long time so it was nice to have company otherwise it would have been a long wait just sat alone.*

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*Real actively accessible. Waiting area and consultation rooms are accessible for me but could make improvements such as-*

- *Easier access to open the main doors. Call button is a bit of a stretch.*
- *Disabled toilet could be set out slightly better, for example, a smaller bin to allow more turning space.*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**AJM Wheelchair Enter and View Survey: Entry # 989**

**What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*I found that my assessment and subsequent replacement wheelchair straightforward. However, I had to contact them as they said NRS had not passed my details on, even though I had been waiting almost a year.*

**What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems with AJM Healthcare?**

*My husband left hospital in December 2023; the wheelchair provided was too big to fit through our internal doors. He was non-weight-bearing and could not leave the house without patient transports support.*

*He made contact to explain the situation but was told that he had to get to the centre to be assessed as they did not offer home visits. This meant it was not until late March when he received his prosthesis that he could make an appointment to be assessed, this also meant we had to borrow a vehicle as the supplied chair would not fit in my car.*

*We are now in mid-September and despite phoning and requesting an update, he still has not been provided with a chair, the consequences of this are significant as he is developing lesions from wearing his leg all the time.*

**Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare.**

*Home visits for those people who are unable to leave the house.*

*Clear communication, how long it will take to provide the wheelchair, regular updates if there has been any changes.*

*Customer service people to be able to actually support callers and be able to provide information requested.*

**How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? Could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*It's very clinical, this does not affect me but could be really detrimental for children and neurodiverse individuals.*

**How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare?**

*Terrible, if you do not drive or have access to a vehicle, as there is no public transport to the centre.*

**I understand that the information I provide is kept anonymous and will be used towards a report about AJM Healthcare.**

*I understand.*

**Appendix 5 - Service User Questionnaire completed on the day.**

**1. Are you a service user/ family member/ carer/ other?**

*Service User*

**2. What works well? What do you like? How has AJM Healthcare helped you?**

*Made me more independent*

**3. What doesn't work well? What don't you like? Have you had any problems or issues with AJM Healthcare?**

*No issues*

**4. Tell us what you think would improve AJM Healthcare**

*All good*

**5. How does being at AJM Healthcare make you feel? This could include staff, waiting areas, consultation rooms etc.**

*Talked to me not at me, made me feel good*

**6. How do you find the accessibility of AJM Healthcare? Could include location, entrances/ exits, buzzer system, waiting area, toilets etc**

*Good*

## Provider response

### Response to Healthwatch report

AJM Healthcare would like to thank Healthwatch, Kingston- upon-Hull for being part of our service user forum for the Hull and East Riding NHS Wheelchair service and for conducting the Enter and View Assessment.

We thank Healthwatch, Kingston-Upon-Hull for taking time to talk to us following the visit so that we could share our concerns about the factual inaccuracies within the report. Whilst we welcome the feedback, we are concerned that staff feedback is reported ‘verbatim’ and is not triangulated/checked for accuracy and the sample of eight service users is not a representative sample, when the service has over 10,000 registered users.

However, AJM Healthcare are committed to ongoing improvement and the findings and implementation of the action plan will be reported to our national Quality Board.

Recommendation	Action Plan	Target Date	Responsible Person
To consider adding signage to the entrance door that notifies clients of the door opening towards them.	Erect sign outside to notify service users will open outside.	April 2025	Service Operations Manager
To consider swapping the bin in the disabled toilet for a smaller bin as it takes up quite a bit of room that would be useful for wheelchair users.	Review guidance for Changing Places toilets, (which states large sanitary bin) and install appropriately sized bin.	April 2025	Service Operations Manager
To consider adding artwork to the walls around the centre.	Install appropriate artwork that meets requirements for dementia friendly, neuro diversity, adults and children	May 2025	Service Operations Manager
To consider the possibility of making the entrance door lighter and removing the lip as you come through the door.	We will work with the landlord to improve accessibility to the building. Ideally installing a power assisted door.	December 2025	Service Operations Manager
To consider adding a page on the website with employees’ pictures and names, like the board as you come through the entrance.	The website is currently being updated and service users and staff will be involved in the updating the information. We need to consider confidentiality and safety for our staff.	June 2025	Partnership and Engagement Manager

To consider the possibility of recruiting more technicians to take pressure off current staff and meet demands.	The number of staff is determined according to funding that is available and the contract with the ICB. We will undertake a review of workload.		Service Operations Manager/ICB
To consider hiring a new clinical lead.	Not all our services have a Clinical Lead. We will investigate the concerns of the staff and ensure that there are appropriate support systems in place.		Service Operations Manager/ Clinical Director
The Service Operations Manager and Customer Service Manager should ensure that customer service training considers the lived experience of service users.	A customer service training programme is being implemented throughout AJM. The training has been co-produced by our national forum and service users and our lived experience champion are involved in delivery. This will be delivered in Hull during the summer.	September 2025	Partnership and Engagement Manager
To consider revising communication methods for booking of appointments.	AJM is currently implementing Dr Doctor which is a patient engagement platform and will be used for communicating with service users who are able to use email/text. This is currently being piloted and will then be rolled out across the company, including the Hull and East Riding service.	December 2025	Business Improvement Manager
To consider making follow up calls after an appointment.	We will use DrDoctor to contact every digitally engaged service user after their appointment.	December 2025	Business Improvement Manager
To consider providing an email address where a service user could send photos in the case of damage.	This is already available.	Complete	
To consider providing home visits for those who struggle to leave the house.	Home visits are carried out in accordance with the criteria that	Complete	

	has been agreed as part of our contract with the ICB.		
To consider allowing service users the opportunity to try a few different chairs.	The wheelchair service has assessment stock of the most commonly used chairs. It is impossible to have every type of chair in every size. We are currently developing our service user information so that there will be more photos and video's of each type of chair available	June 2025	Partnership and Engagement Manager

