



**Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group**

For immediate release

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Disabled children sitting comfortably thanks to a new NHS service

A new local service providing specialist chairs for children with specific mobility problems has made a positive difference to young patients.

The One Child, One Chair service is for children aged between three and 16, who have long term, significant, physical disabilities which affect their posture. Most of these children need a specialist wheelchair pushed by their parent or carer to be mobile.

Previously, children were given several pieces of equipment to meet their needs in education, home and for going out. Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the community children's therapists at Leicestershire Partnership Trust and the Blatchford wheelchair service in Leicester, all agreed that providing these children with one customised seat would be the best way to meet their needs, providing greater comfort and taking up less space at home.

The new seating system is specifically moulded or fitted for each child and care is taken to ensure that the seats provide the best possible posture and comfort. The seat is fitted to a buggy or wheelchair base which allows the chair to be easily pushed by carers, both indoors and when out and about. Some of the seats also have layers that can be removed, one by one, to accommodate the child as they grow over time; this means that a new chair is not needed as often as before.

One Child One Chair is an example of how the local health service is innovating to provide care that better meets patients' needs, under the Sustainability and Transformation Programme – Better Care Together.

Professor Azhar Farooqi, GP and chair of Leicester City CCG, said: "The success of this service is a result of close partnership working between several different organisations, pursuing an idea to offer a truly tailored service for each child. We are very pleased to have been able to make life easier for these children by introducing a system that, for the first time, really meets their specific needs. As well as providing improvements for children and their carers, the service is also proving to be highly cost-effective.



Better care together

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland health and social care

“We are looking to broaden the criteria for which children can receive this service but, before we do that, we are using this introductory phase to gain a full understanding of any changes that are required in order to get the service just right for our patients.”

Six year old Lois Ball, from Market Harborough, is one of the children who has been given a new chair under the One Child, One Chair service, and it has made a real difference. Her mother, Jodie Ball, said: “Lois has a disability which affects her muscle tone; she can’t support herself and she has a tendency to hunch forwards, so she needs a chair that fully supports her and keeps her upright.

“The wheelchair she had before was fine at first, but as she grew it didn’t support her properly. Also, the back support was flat, whereas her spine is slightly curved, so it really wasn’t very comfortable for her and she used to get red pressure marks from sitting in the chair. After a while she’d get a bit moany and tearful, you could tell she was uncomfortable.

“The new chair is moulded to fit her shape perfectly and give her support just where she needs it. She looks so snug in it, she must feel really safe and secure. It’s also slimline, so it fits through normal size doorways. It’s made such a difference, not just for Lois but for the whole family. We have two other children and now we can do more activities together, like having a day out, knowing that Lois is comfortable. It’s been the best thing for Lois and for us as a family.”

Susanne Ziegler, clinical lead for children’s physiotherapy at Leicestershire Partnership Trust, said: “It’s fantastic to see the positive response from families and children and know that we have been able to provide them with suitable seating equipment enabling them to live life to the full while protecting their body shape as best we can.

The benefits are more than just financial, they are huge when you think about the positive impact on health and wellbeing for all these children and their carers in the short and the long term.”

One Child, One Chair has been recognised for its innovation, receiving a nomination in the Partnership Working category of Leicestershire Partnership Trust’s Celebrating Excellence Awards and generating interest from CCGs across the UK.

ENDS

For an interview with Jodie Ball, or more information, please contact Anna Olek, Communications Officer on 0116 295 8463 or anna.olek@leicestercityccg.nhs.uk

Editor’s notes

The One Child, One Chair service is commissioned by Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group for children across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, in partnership with Leicestershire Partnership Trust and Blatchford.

The service was piloted from January to March 2017 and the full service commenced in April 2017.

For further details of the seating systems please see:

<http://www.blatchford.co.uk/products/category/seating/>

Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for planning and buying most health services needed by the people who live and work in their area. This includes the care you receive from your GP practice, hospital care, urgent and emergency care, community health care, mental health and learning disability services and rehabilitation for people living in their areas. Under the Health and Social Care Act, every GP practice is a member of a CCG.

Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group became a statutory body in April 2013. Leicester City CCG represents 59 GP practices and serves a population of 391,000 patients who are registered with those practices.

You can find more information about Leicester City CCG by visiting

www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk

Leicester City CCG also works together with the health and social care organisations in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to plan health services. In November 2016, a local Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) was published by all of these organisations, describing how we are going to work together differently to improve patient care with the resources that are available. You can read more about the STP by visiting

www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk