

EMED GROUP QUALITY ACCOUNT

2025 – 2026

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO EMED

EMED Group Ltd is the trading name for ERS Transition Ltd and E-zec Medical Transport Services Ltd, following the merger of the two organisations in February 2023. This Quality Account reflects our continued development as a single, integrated organisation, providing safe, effective and patient-focused services across the UK.

This report sets out how we have monitored, reviewed and improved the quality of our services over the period April 2025 to March 2026. It is intended to provide a clear and balanced view of our performance, highlighting both areas of good practice and those where further improvement is required.

EMED provides a range of specialist transport services supporting patients, service users and the wider health and care systems. These include non-emergency patient transport, high dependency and discharge services, mental health transport, and healthcare courier services. As our footprint has grown, so too has the complexity of the environments in which we operate, requiring a continued focus on safety, reliability, communication and patient experience.

Throughout the year, we have continued to strengthen our approach to quality and patient safety. This has included embedding the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), enhancing our governance processes, and improving how we identify and learn from incidents. Alongside this, we have continued to develop our understanding of patient experience, recognising that timeliness alone does not define a good service, particularly for patients who may be vulnerable or require additional support.

We have placed increasing emphasis on listening to the experiences of patients, carers and colleagues, using this insight to inform service improvements. Through structured engagement activity, including collaboration with Healthwatch and national charities including condition-specific partnerships supporting renal, dementia and neurodiverse patient cohorts, we have been able to better understand what matters most to those who use our services and translate this into meaningful operational change.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we have also strengthened our approach to communication, accessibility and inclusion. This includes ongoing work to improve how information is shared with patients, ensuring that services are as inclusive and accessible as possible for all who rely on them.

This Quality Account has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out by NHS England. It draws on information from across the organisation, including our operational systems, governance processes, and feedback from patients, colleagues and stakeholders. All information has been reviewed and validated through our internal governance processes and approved by the Executive Leadership Team.

We recognise that the health and care system continues to operate under significant pressure, and that patient transport plays a critical role in supporting access to care, patient flow and overall system performance. EMED remains committed to working collaboratively with NHS partners and stakeholders to deliver high-quality, compassionate and reliable services, while continuing to learn, improve and adapt.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

EMED Group provides a range of specialist transport and support services to the NHS, local authorities and other partners across England. Our services play a critical role in supporting patient access to care, facilitating hospital discharge and contributing to the effective flow of patients through the wider health and care system.

Our core service offering includes:

- Non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS), supporting patients to attend outpatient appointments, renal treatment and other planned care
- High dependency and urgent transport services
- Hospital discharge and transfer services
- Specialist mental health transport through our Safe Care division
- Healthcare courier services, including the transportation of clinical samples, medical records and equipment

During 2025–26, EMED continued to operate across a wide geographical footprint, supporting multiple Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and healthcare providers. The scale and complexity of our services have continued to grow, reflecting both increased demand and the expansion of contracts.

The delivery of these services requires close collaboration with NHS partners, including hospitals, community services and commissioners. EMED works as part of the wider health and care system, supporting patient pathways and contributing to improved access to care.

Our numbers:

- 2,006,493 journeys
- 3,623 employees
- 1,402 vehicles

All data correct as of 31 March 2026

We recognise that patient transport is not solely a logistical function, but an integral part of the patient journey. As such, our approach to service delivery places equal emphasis on safety, reliability and patient experience, ensuring that services are delivered in a way that is responsive to the needs of those who use them.

Throughout the year, EMED has continued to develop its operational capability, supported by investment in systems, data and infrastructure including business intelligence and digital reporting capability. This includes the use of digital platforms to support booking, dispatch and performance monitoring, enabling more effective management of services and improved visibility of patient journeys.

EMED remains committed to delivering high-quality, patient-centred services that support the needs of patients, partners and the wider health and care system.



STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am pleased to present EMED's Quality Account for the year ending March 2026.

This year has continued to highlight the important role patient transport plays within the wider health and care system. Across EMED, colleagues have continued to deliver services in increasingly complex and pressured environments, while maintaining a strong focus on patient safety, compassion and reliability.

I am particularly pleased with the progress made in strengthening our quality and patient safety culture during the year. We have continued to embed learning-focused approaches across the organisation, ensuring that incidents, feedback and operational insight are used to support continuous improvement.

Listening to patients, carers and partners has remained an important priority throughout the year. The insight gained through feedback and engagement activity continues to shape our understanding of what matters most to the people who use our services and helps inform how we improve the care and support that we provide.

We recognise that performance metrics alone do not fully capture the quality of a service, particularly for patients who may be vulnerable or have additional needs. As a result, we have continued to develop our approach to measuring and improving quality, ensuring that patient experience sits alongside safety and operational performance.

We also recognise the challenges that are facing the wider NHS, with increasing demand and ongoing system pressures. Patient transport plays a critical role in supporting access to care and patient flow and at EMED we remain committed to working collaboratively with our NHS partners to support the system as effectively as possible.

While we are proud of the progress made during the year, we recognise that there is more to do. Our priorities for 2026-27 reflect our continued focus on improving communication, strengthening patient safety, enhancing accessibility and supporting our workforce.

I would like to thank all of our colleagues for their continued commitment and professionalism, and our partners for their ongoing support. Together, we will continue to build a service that delivers safe, effective and patient-centred care.

I have reviewed this Quality Account and confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information reported is accurate and presents a balanced view of the quality of NHS services provided by EMED, including areas where further improvement is required.

Craig Smith
Chief Executive Officer

ACCURACY STATEMENT

In the preparation of this Quality Account, EMED's Quality and Patient Safety Director confirms that the organisation's quality and performance information reported within the Quality Accounts is accurate and reliable.

The Quality Account draws information from several EMED support systems and key personnel:

- Radar Healthcare – Quality Management System
- Bamboo HR – HR and people compliance system
- Cleric – Dispatch system
- Fleetcheck – Fleet compliance system
- Lightfoot/Crysal Ball/WebFleet – Fleet Telematics Systems
- EMED Chief Executive Officer
- EMED Chief Operating Officer
- EMED Chief People Officer
- Managing Director for Patient Care Division
- Managing Director for Safe Care Division

All information contained within the Quality Account has been checked and verified by EMED Group's Quality and Patient Safety Director and other personnel listed above.

The Quality Account has been written and prepared in accordance with the Department of Health guidance.

The Quality and Patient Safety Director confirms that, to the best of her knowledge and belief, this Quality Account has been prepared in accordance with the required standards.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Understanding and improving patient experience remains central to how EMED defines quality. While contractual performance measures provide an important view of service delivery, they do not fully reflect the lived experience of patients and service users. Throughout 2025-26, we have continued to strengthen how we listen to, understand and respond to patient feedback, ensuring that insight is translated into meaningful improvement.

Feedback is gathered through multiple channels, including the Friends and Family Test (FFT), formal complaints, compliments, surveys and direct engagement with patients and stakeholders. This information is recorded and reviewed through our governance systems, enabling us to identify themes, monitor trends and take action where required.

During the reporting period, patient feedback data included:

Complaints outcomes:

- Fully upheld: 63.9%
- Partially upheld: 16.8%
- Not upheld: 8.4%

A small proportion of complaints remain uncategorised at the time of reporting and are therefore not included within the percentages above.

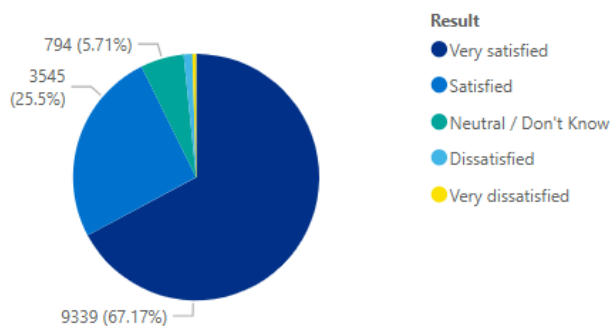
Compliments:

A total of 211 compliments were received during the reporting period.

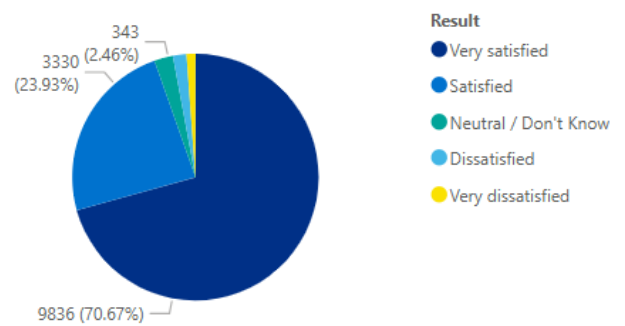
Friends and Family Test (FFT):

- Very good: 68.9%
- Good: 23.8%
- Neither good nor bad: 2.6%
- Poor: 1.9%
- Very poor: 1.8%
- Don't know: 1.0%

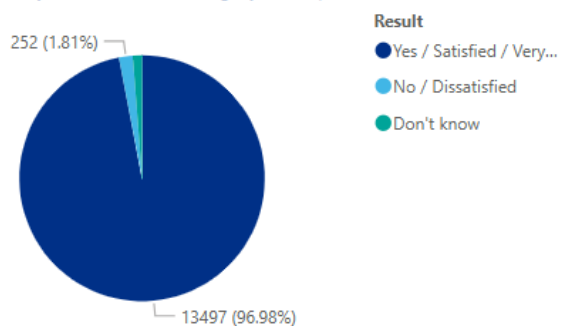
When you booked your transport, how satisfied were you with the booking process?



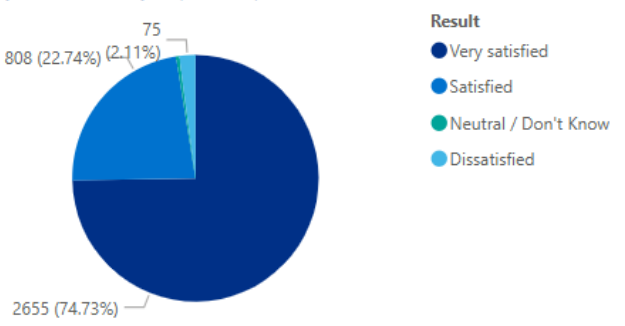
How satisfied were you with the ability of EMED staff to meet your transport needs?



Do you feel that you were treated with dignity and respect?



Were you satisfied with your patient experience whilst in the ambulance?



A consistent theme identified through patient feedback during the reporting period has been the impact of delays and the importance of clear, timely communication. Patients have told us that while they may understand that delays can occur, a lack of information can increase anxiety and negatively affect their overall experience.

In response, EMED has continued to strengthen communication with patients, including improving how delays are communicated and enhancing the information provided at the point of booking and during transport. This includes clearer messaging around shared journeys and expected travel times alongside improved patient information relating to eligibility criteria and how transport decisions are made, supporting patients to better understand how the service operates and what to expect.

Alongside this, we have placed increased focus on proactive engagement and co-production. Working in partnership with organisations such as Healthwatch and national charities, we have developed structured engagement approaches to better understand the experiences of specific patient groups, including those who may be more vulnerable or have additional needs. This included the continued development of structured engagement and sensemaking approaches, supporting the translation of lived experience into operational improvement activity.

Through these engagement activities, we have identified key themes including the importance of dignity, communication, predictability and psychological safety. These insights are being used to inform service design, staff training and operational processes, ensuring that patient experience is considered alongside performance metrics.

We have also continued to recognise and share positive feedback from patients and service users, highlighting the professionalism, compassion and dedication of our colleagues. Compliments are routinely shared with teams to reinforce good practice and support a culture of pride in delivering high-quality care.

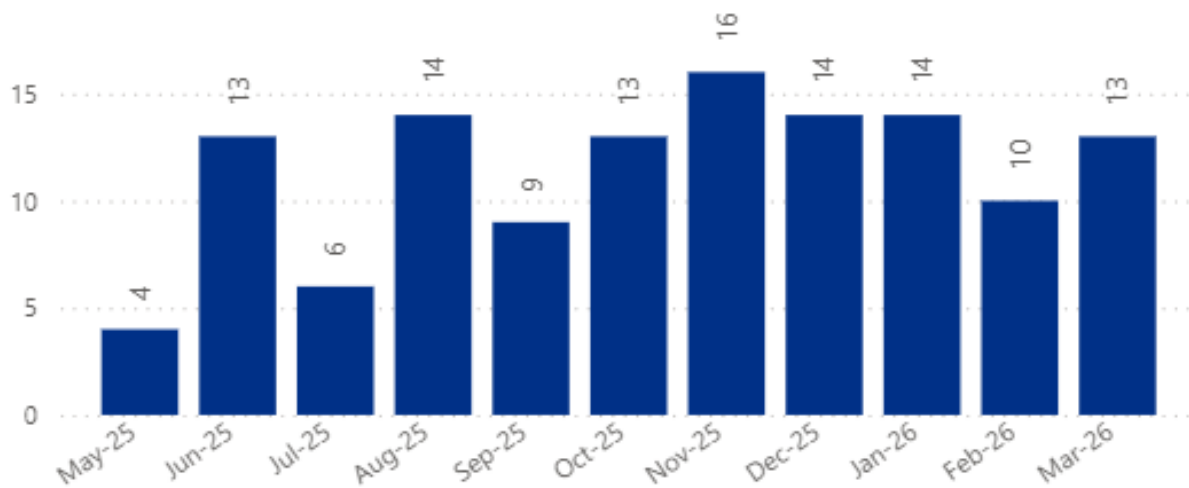
At EMED, patient experience is not viewed as a standalone element of service delivery, but as a core component of quality. EMED remains committed to strengthening how we capture and use patient insight, ensuring that feedback continues to drive improvement and supports the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred services.

PATIENT SAFETY AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Patient safety remains a central priority for EMED, underpinning all aspects of service delivery. Throughout 2025–26, we have continued to strengthen our approach to identifying, reporting and learning from incidents, ensuring that patient safety is embedded within both our governance processes and day-to-day operations.

Patient Incidents

Number of, as a % of Journey Activity



During the 2025–26 reporting period, EMED recorded a total of 124 patient safety incidents across all services. Incident data is routinely reviewed through governance processes to identify themes, trends and opportunities for learning and improvement.

All incidents are recorded and managed through our quality management system, providing a consistent and transparent approach across the organisation. Incidents are categorised, risk assessed and reviewed through defined governance processes, with oversight provided by the Quality and

Governance Team and escalation to senior committees where required. This ensures that all events are appropriately investigated and that learning is identified and acted upon.

A key area of focus during the year has been the continued embedding of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF). This has supported a shift towards a more open, learning-focused culture, moving away from a blame-based approach and towards understanding the underlying factors contributing to incidents. PSIRF training compliance across the organisation reached 93% during the reporting period.

Through PSIRF, EMED has strengthened its ability to identify themes and patterns across incidents, enabling a more proactive approach to patient safety. Learning is shared across the organisation through structured governance forums, learning bulletins and sharing of case studies across services, including themes relating to communication, delays and patient experience. This supports consistency and continuous improvement across all contracts and regions.

Specific areas of focus during the reporting period have included wheelchair safety and driving standards, both of which continue to represent key areas of risk within patient transport services. Delivery of the wheelchair safety improvement plan contributed to a reduction of over 50% in wheelchair-related incidents during 2025–26. Targeted reviews and learning activities have been undertaken in these areas, informing updates to training, operational processes and risk assessments.

We have also continued to enhance our incident reporting systems and processes to improve clarity, usability and alignment with NHS partners. This includes ongoing development of our systems to support effective reporting and integration with national platforms, ensuring that patient safety data is captured and shared in a consistent and meaningful way.

Patient safety incidents and learning are routinely reported to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) through formal quality reporting processes and are discussed at contract review meetings. Internally, incidents are reviewed through governance and performance meetings, ensuring that learning is embedded at both local and organisational level.

EMED recognises that patient safety is closely linked to operational delivery and patient experience. Delays, communication challenges and system pressures can

all impact on patient safety, and we continue to take a holistic approach to identifying and managing risk.

Looking ahead, EMED will continue to build on its PSIRF approach, strengthening how learning is embedded and ensuring that patient safety remains at the forefront of service delivery. This includes ongoing investment in staff training, system development and governance processes to support a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

SAFE CARE DIVISION

EMED Safe Care provides urgent and non-urgent secure mental health transport services across England and Wales, operating 24 hours a day to support patients requiring specialist transport and care.

During the reporting period from April 2025 to March 2026, the Safe Care division continued to expand significantly, with journey volumes increasing by 55% to more than 17,000 journeys.

In April 2025, EMED commenced delivery of secure mental health transport services for Sussex ICB and Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust. This represented a significant mobilisation delivered in partnership with Patient Care colleagues. Over the past year, strong working relationships have been established across the system, alongside ongoing work to improve both patient experience and operational efficiency.

During October 2025, Safe Care launched a partnership with the Lived Experience Network, reflecting our commitment to ensuring that people with lived experience help shape and influence the future development of the service. In October we welcomed colleagues to join our crews on several journeys and welcomed the feedback we received about the care we provide. In February 2026 we held our first Lived Experience Advisory board agreeing our terms of reference and discussing some strategic decisions for Safe Care. We look forward to seeing this grow over 2026.

Over the last year we have implemented a dedicated dispatch team in our control centres which is regionalised, this enables us to provide a more responsive and knowledgeable service to our customers.

We have developed a new risk assessment which enables us to better evaluate the risks of each journey, to ensure the correct skill mix of crew is sent to support and in turn ensure the safety of each patient and crew member.

We continue to be committed to ensuring we always use the least restrictive interventions during the journeys we undertake and work closely with our customers and training providers to ensure this continues. We have continued to reduce the percentage of our journeys which use restrictive practice and continue to work towards the pledges we have made to the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN).

	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
Reported use of physical restraint	84	78	75	70	54	83	96	81	69	65	60	67
POD (Safe Space) Usage	56	49	59	42	37	62	61	54	51	49	43	33
Use of mechanical restraint	39	35	29	35	26	35	54	51	47	37	34	32

Throughout the year, Safe Care continued to focus on delivering least restrictive, trauma-informed and person-centred care, recognising the importance of dignity, communication and psychological safety during transport.

COMPLIMENTS

From Patients:

"Because the staff have been very supportive, you've made it better being sectioned. This is the first time I've laughed in weeks."

"10/10 in all areas. I wish all crews and companies were like this."

"100% brilliant, just as last time. Well taken care of, let me play music. Spoke to me the whole time, X was amazing and supportive as she was last time. Driving was good."

"I would like to thank the two crews with X and Y I have a difficult time in A+E when going from the psych ward to general A+E and these two crews always treat me like a human and with respect these crews are very good at reading my body language and giving the correct support with my autism especially. I don't know the names of the other people in these crews but both crews are amazing with me."

From NHS Colleagues:

"I just wanted to send an email to say how amazing the staff were, they were super professional in a very pressurised situation, which was so helpful for the family, who were really stressed from the situation"

AHMP, Sussex

"The conveyance was as perfect as it could be, the man who led the crew helped the patient get dressed and pack what he could- they were patient and professional. It felt very supportive and I felt the patient was safe in their care."

AHMP, Hertfordshire

EMED'S PEOPLE

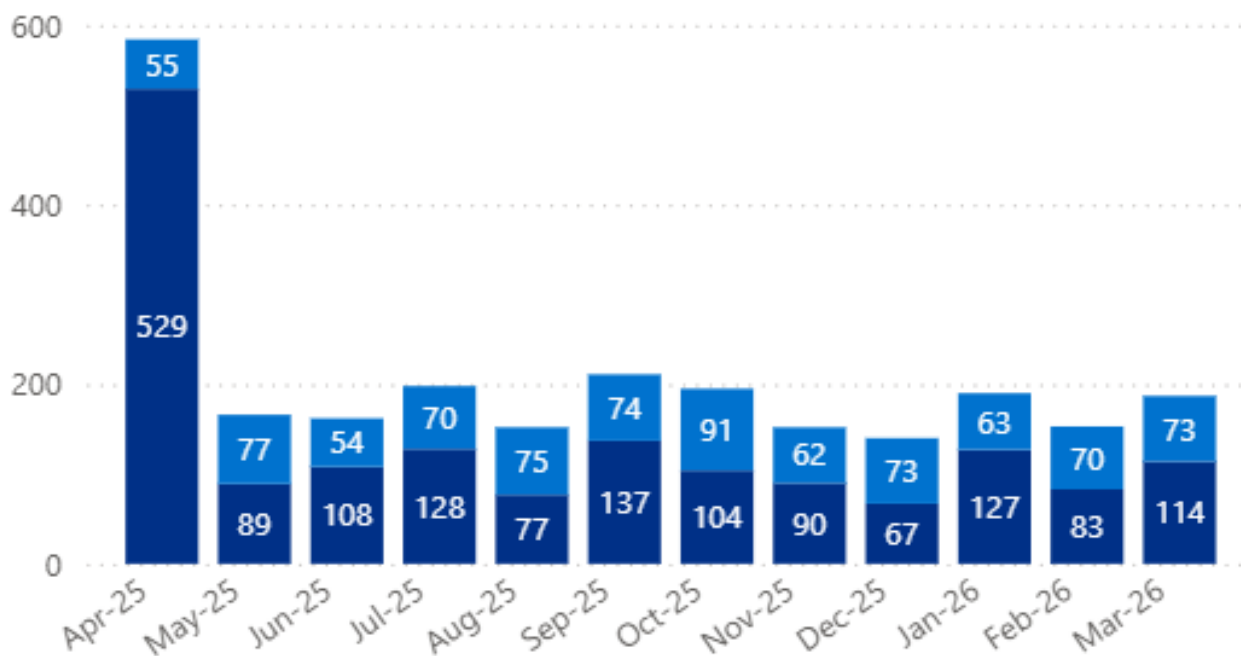
Workforce trends are monitored throughout the year to support workforce stability and safe service delivery.

Key workforce indicators for the reporting period include:

- Staff turnover (rolling 12 months): 23.05%
- Sickness rate: 5.48%
- Staff injuries: 360
- RIDDOR reportable incidents: 22

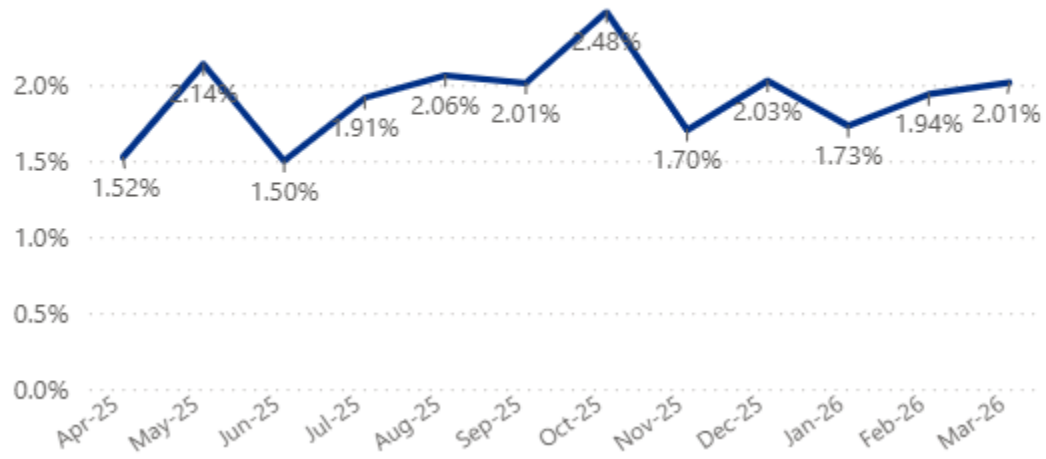
Starter and Leavers

● Starters ● Leavers



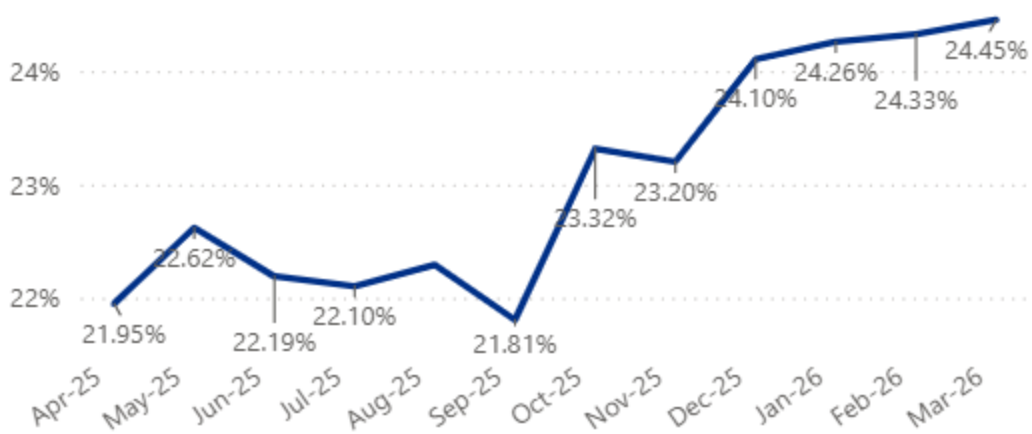
Monthly starters and leavers during the 2025–26 reporting period.

Leaver % by Month



Monthly leaver percentage across the reporting period.

Turnover by Month



Rolling workforce turnover rate by month.

Our people are central to the delivery of safe, effective and compassionate services. The quality of care we provide is directly influenced by the skills, experience and wellbeing of our colleagues and we remain committed to supporting our workforce to deliver the highest possible standards.

During 2025–26, EMED continued to grow as an organisation, reflecting both the expansion of our services and the increasing demand for patient transport across the health and care system. Alongside this growth, we have maintained a focus on workforce stability, training and wellbeing, recognising the important role these factors play in service quality.

We routinely review workforce data to understand trends and identify areas for improvement. This includes monitoring staff turnover, sickness absence, training compliance and workplace safety. These indicators provide valuable insight into the health of the organisation and inform targeted interventions where required.

Staff turnover remains an area of focus, reflecting both the challenges of operating within a pressured healthcare environment and the scale of organisational change. In response, EMED has continued to strengthen its approach to recruitment, onboarding and retention, with a focus on supporting colleagues throughout their employment journey.

During the reporting period, workforce trends were also influenced by continued organisational growth, mobilisation activity and wider recruitment pressures experienced across the healthcare sector. EMED continues to monitor these trends closely and remains completely focused on retention, wellbeing and colleague support.

We have also maintained a strong focus on training and compliance, ensuring that colleagues are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to deliver safe and effective care. Mandatory training, safeguarding awareness and role-specific competencies continue to be monitored and supported across all of EMED's regions.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues remains a priority. We continue to monitor incidents, including staff injuries and reportable events and the Group uses this information to inform improvements to working practices and its support mechanisms. Initiatives to support wellbeing, including access to a range of mental health resources and employee support programmes, remain in place across the organisation.

Alongside this, EMED continues to promote an inclusive and supportive working environment. Through ongoing engagement and awareness initiatives, we aim to create a culture where colleagues feel valued, respected and empowered to contribute to the delivery of high-quality care.

We recognise that a stable, supported and engaged workforce is essential to delivering a consistent and high-quality service. EMED remains committed to continuing to invest in its people, ensuring that colleagues are supported to deliver safe, effective and patient-centred care.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

EMED is committed to providing services that are wholly inclusive, accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of the patients and the communities we serve. We recognise that equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to delivering high-quality care and to supporting a positive experience for both patients and our colleagues.

Throughout 2025–26, EMED has continued to promote an inclusive organisational culture, supported by engagement, awareness and education initiatives. This includes the development of regular Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) communications, such as monthly awareness campaigns and calendar spotlights, which highlight key themes including wellbeing, religion and belief, neurodiversity and inclusion.

We also have in place a good number of ED&I Champions who have undertaken some awareness champion training. They support the delivery of EMED Group's ED&I Strategy and help drive behavioural and cultural change across the organisation. They are also able to support with any questions or queries that are raised directly that may relate to an ED&I matter.

These initiatives aim to support greater understanding, encourage open conversations and promote inclusive behaviours across the organisation. They also provide practical guidance for colleagues and managers, helping to ensure that individual needs are recognised and supported within the workplace.

EMED continues to recognise the importance of creating an environment where colleagues feel valued, respected and able to contribute fully. Promoting equality and inclusion within the workforce supports not only staff wellbeing but also the delivery of compassionate and person-centred care.

Alongside this, we are committed to ensuring that services are accessible to all patients, including those who may have additional communication or accessibility needs. This includes ongoing work to improve how information is provided and how services are experienced, ensuring that barriers to care are minimised wherever possible.

EMED will continue to build on this work during 2026–27, strengthening its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that inclusive practice remains embedded within both service delivery and organisational culture.

QUALITY ACCOUNT NATIONAL INDICATORS

Quality Accounts are required to include reporting against a set of common quality indicators where relevant to the services provided.

The indicators set out below reflect those considered applicable to EMED's commissioned services for the reporting period.

Indicator: Complaints

2025–26: 63.9% fully upheld, 16.8% partially upheld, 8.4% not upheld

Commentary: Complaint themes continue to reflect communication and delays, with learning informing service improvements.

Indicator: Friends and Family Test (FFT)

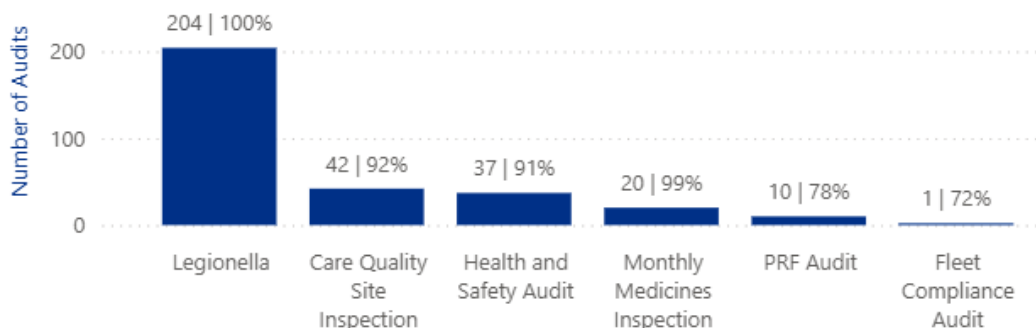
2025–26: 92.7% positive (Very good or Good)

Commentary: The majority of patients report a positive experience, reflecting continued focus on patient-centred care.

AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS

Audits

Number of and Cumulative Score



Volume of audits completed during 2025–26 with cumulative compliance scores by audit type.

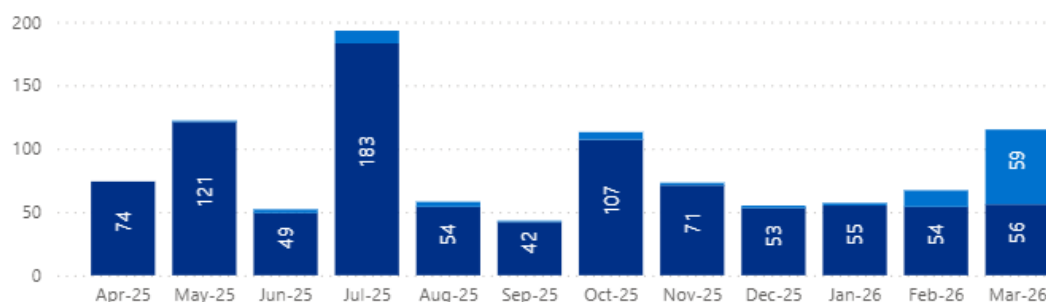
EMED monitors actions arising from audits, inspections and governance activity to ensure timely completion and oversight.

During the reporting period, EMED services were subject to Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection activity across a number of regions, including Surrey, Somerset and the North East. Feedback and findings from these inspections have informed ongoing quality improvement and governance activity across the organisation.

Total Actions over Time

Number of by Open/Closed

● Closed ● Open



Total actions identified through audits and governance activity, showing open and closed actions by month.

EMED operates a structured programme of audits and inspections to provide assurance that services are delivered safely, effectively and in line with organisational policies and regulatory requirements.

The Quality and Governance Team leads all internal audit activity across the organisation. These audits are designed to assess compliance with key standards, including care quality, health and safety, infection prevention and control, medicines management and operational procedures.

Where areas for improvement are identified, formal action plans are created and managed through our quality management system. These actions are assigned to local operational teams, with oversight provided by regional Quality and Governance leads to ensure timely completion and sustained improvement.

Audit findings are reviewed through governance processes at both local and organisational level, enabling themes and trends to be identified and addressed. This supports a proactive approach to quality improvement and ensures that learning is shared across contracts and regions.

In addition to internal assurance processes, EMED is subject to external inspection and oversight, including regulation by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and review by NHS commissioners. Feedback from these inspections is used to inform ongoing improvement activity and strengthen governance arrangements.

EMED remains committed to maintaining high standards of compliance and continuously improving the quality of services through robust assurance processes and effective oversight.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE AND DATA PROTECTION

EMED is committed to ensuring that all patient and organisational information is managed securely, appropriately and in accordance with relevant legislation and national guidance.

Information governance is supported through established policies, procedures and training, ensuring that colleagues understand their responsibilities in relation

to data protection, confidentiality and information security. Compliance is monitored through regular audits and governance processes.

EMED maintains robust systems for the secure handling and storage of information, including the use of digital platforms to support operational delivery and reporting. These systems are designed to ensure that data is accurate, accessible where required and protected from unauthorised access.

The organisation continues to align with national frameworks and requirements, including the NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit. Ongoing work is undertaken to strengthen data quality, improve reporting and ensure that information supports effective decision-making and service improvement.

Oversight of information governance is provided through designated roles, including the Caldicott Guardian and Information Governance leads, supported by the wider Quality and Governance framework.

EMED recognises the importance of maintaining trust in how information is managed and remains committed to upholding the highest standards of data protection and confidentiality.

PROGRESS AGAINST OUR 2025–26 PRIORITIES

During 2025–26, EMED focused on a number of quality improvement priorities identified in the previous year's Quality Account. Progress against these priorities is summarised below.

- Strengthened our approach to patient safety through the continued embedding of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), supporting a more consistent, learning-focused approach across the organisation. We continued to focus on delivery of PSIRF training with compliance across EMED currently 98%. We have embedded review meetings with teams to ensure effective investigation and development and embedding of learning. We have updated our PSIRP to ensure its captures key themes based on information analysis. We successfully delivered our wheelchair safety improvement plan, resulting in a reduction of over 50% in wheelchair-related incidents during 2025–26.

- Improved how we capture and respond to patient experience, using feedback from complaints, FFT and engagement activity to identify themes and inform service improvements. We also developed service level agreements with local health systems to improve clarity around reporting, investigation timescales and shared improvement actions.
- Expanded structured engagement activity with patients, carers and partners, including collaboration with Healthwatch and national charities, enabling deeper understanding of lived experience. We further developed our structured engagement approach through dedicated community engagement leadership, enabling more regular involvement of patients, carers and stakeholders in shaping service improvements and operational change.
- Enhanced communication with patients, including clearer messaging around delays, shared journeys and expectations, helping to reduce anxiety and improve overall experience. We published a patient information video on our website to improve understanding of eligibility criteria, transport processes and how patients can best prepare for their journey.
- Continued to develop workforce stability and support, including improved onboarding, training and monitoring of key workforce indicators such as turnover and sickness.
- Strengthened governance and oversight processes, ensuring that learning from incidents, complaints and audits is consistently reviewed and acted upon. We reviewed and strengthened our governance structures to improve oversight of key areas including patient safety and health and safety, alongside providing additional coaching and support for operational managers to strengthen local governance and escalation processes.
- Increased focus on accessibility and inclusion, including ongoing improvements aligned to the Accessible Information Standard and wider equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

These improvements have helped strengthen EMED's approach to quality, patient safety and patient experience, while supporting more consistent learning and governance across the organisation.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT 2026–27

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, EMED has identified a number of key priorities for 2026–27. These priorities are informed by patient feedback, operational insight, incident learning and engagement with stakeholders across the health and care system.

Strengthen communication with patients during delays

Patient feedback continues to highlight the importance of clear, timely communication, particularly when delays occur. During 2026–27, EMED will further enhance how information is shared with patients, including the use of digital tools, improved contact processes and clearer messaging at the point of booking. The aim is to reduce uncertainty and improve the overall patient experience.

Embed learning from patient safety incidents

Building on the implementation of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), EMED will continue to strengthen how learning from incidents is embedded across the organisation. This includes updating of our PSIRF plan to acknowledge the importance of inward delays, cancellations and long waits following treatment on patient safety and experience. This includes a continued focus on key risk areas such as wheelchair safety and driving standards, alongside improving how learning is shared and applied in practice.

Improve patient understanding of transport services

Feedback indicates that patients do not always have a clear understanding of how non-emergency patient transport operates, particularly in relation to shared journeys and travel times. During 2026–27, EMED will enhance patient information materials and communication processes to support better understanding and more realistic expectations.

Expand patient engagement and co-production

EMED will continue to develop its structured approach to engagement, working with patients, carers, Healthwatch and national charities to better understand lived experience. This insight will be used to inform service design, operational improvements and staff training, ensuring that patient voice is embedded within decision-making.

Strengthen accessibility and inclusion

We will continue to improve how services are accessed and experienced by all patients, including those with additional communication or accessibility needs. This includes ongoing work aligned to the Accessible Information Standard, as well as broader initiatives to support inclusion and reduce barriers to care.

Support workforce stability and development

Recognising the impact of workforce stability on service quality, EMED will continue to focus on staff retention, wellbeing and development. This includes strengthening onboarding, training and support processes, and using feedback from colleagues to inform improvements.

Enhance data-driven quality improvement

EMED will continue to develop its use of data to support quality improvement, including strengthening audit processes, data quality and availability, improving the use of performance data and sharing best practice across its contracts. This will in turn support more targeted interventions and improved consistency of service delivery.

These priorities reflect EMED's ongoing commitment to delivering safe, effective and patient-centred services, while continuing to learn and improve in response to the needs of patients, colleagues and the wider health and care system.

EXTERNAL STATEMENTS AND ASSURANCE

In accordance with the National Health Service (Quality Accounts) Regulations, EMED has shared its draft Quality Account with relevant commissioning organisations to support external review and assurance.

Given EMED's national footprint and the range of Integrated Care Boards and local authorities that commission services, EMED engages with commissioning partners through established quality and contract review processes throughout the year.

EMED Group Ltd Quality Account 2025/26 Commissioner statement from NHS Surrey and Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB)

NHS Surrey and Sussex Integrated Care Board welcomes the opportunity to comment on EMED Group Quality Account for 2025/26. The ICB appreciates the openness with which the organisation has presented its performance, achievements and areas for continued improvement. The Quality Account provides a clear and balanced overview of quality across a complex national patient transport portfolio.

During 2025/26, significant operational pressures continued across the health and care system, including sustained demand across urgent and planned care pathways, discharge delays, and wider workforce and capacity challenges. Within this context, EMED has continued to play an important role in supporting patient flow, access to treatment, and the safe and timely movement of patients across multiple care settings. The scale of EMED's operations, delivering over 2 million patient journeys annually through a workforce of more than 3,600 colleagues and a fleet exceeding 1,400 vehicles, is recognised.

Implementation and embedding of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), alongside strengthened governance arrangements, safeguarding oversight and structured organisational learning, reflects a positive shift towards a more open and learning-focused safety culture. The reported reduction in wheelchair-related incidents following implementation of a targeted improvement plan demonstrates measurable progress in a key area of

operational risk. It also highlights the importance of focused quality improvement activity and sustained organisational learning.

EMED has demonstrated a growing emphasis on patient experience, engagement and co production. The use of multiple feedback mechanisms, including the Friends and Family Test (FFT), complaints, compliments and structured engagement activity, reflects a commitment to understanding patient experience in a more meaningful and holistic way. Collaboration with Healthwatch and national charities, including those supporting renal, dementia and neurodiverse patient cohorts, is a positive development.

Communication and delays continue to be recurring themes within patient feedback. Actions taken to strengthen communication with patients, including clearer messaging at booking, improvements to delay communication and the development of patient information materials, are welcomed and reflect an understanding of the impact these issues can have on patient experience.

Workforce pressures remain a challenge across the wider healthcare sector, and this is reflected within the Quality Account through reported turnover and sickness levels. The organisation's continued focus on recruitment, onboarding, training, wellbeing and workforce development is acknowledged, alongside ongoing monitoring of staff safety indicators and wider staff engagement initiatives.

The ICB recognises the continued growth within the Safe Care division, including a significant increase in journey activity, supported by ongoing focus on least restrictive practice, trauma informed care and strengthened operational processes. Developments including structured risk assessment tools, regionalised dispatch arrangements and lived experience engagement demonstrate continued progress in embedding patient voice into service development and operational improvement within this specialist service area.

The organisation's continued development of governance, audit and assurance systems is welcomed, alongside the use of digital platforms and data systems to strengthen operational oversight. The integration of systems such as Radar Healthcare, Cleric, Fleet telematics and HR compliance tools demonstrates a mature approach to organisational governance and quality assurance.

Areas where further assurance would be welcomed for 2026/27 NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB would welcome further assurance and continued focus in the following areas:

- Continued strengthening of communication with patients during delays, including clearer real-time updates and consistency across regions and services
- Further embedding of PSIRF learning into frontline practice, including evidence of sustained behavioural change and staff experience of the framework
- Greater clarity on how patient experience metrics are triangulated with operational performance and safety data to drive improvement
- Continued development of workforce retention strategies, particularly in relation to turnover reduction and long-term workforce stability
- Further insight into accessibility improvements, particularly how the Accessible Information Standard is being consistently applied across services
- Ongoing evidence of how lived experience and co-production are influencing measurable service redesign and operational decision-making

Overall NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB consider this to be a comprehensive, transparent and well-structured Quality Account. It reflects both the breadth and complexity of EMED's national service delivery and demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement, patient safety and partnership working. We would like to thank EMED and its colleagues for their continued contribution to system flow and patient care across the NHS.

We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with EMED Group throughout 2026/27 to further strengthen service quality, patient experience and system integration.

Allison Cannon Chief Nursing Officer – NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB, 29 May 2026

Healthwatch organisations and Overview and Scrutiny Committees were not approached for individual statements due to the national scale of EMED's commissioned services.

PUBLICATION

This Quality Account will be published on the EMED Group website and made available in accordance with national guidance. The document will be shared with relevant commissioning organisations and submitted in line with required national and local timescales.