

SOECIC experience of the first 6 months of Advanced Bionics Partnering Support Programme

Background

In May 2009, SOECIC joined the AB Partnering Support Programme. This means that patients now contact Advanced Bionics directly when any of their equipment becomes faulty and needs to be replaced or when they need any spares for their processor. A review of the service was carried out with the aim of quantifying any financial gains that can be made by joining this programme.

Previous repairs system set-up

The previous set up involved both an audiologist and a clinical support assistant (CSA). The daily responsibilities were as follows:

Audiologist

- Sending replacement processors to patients
 - Troubleshooting when CSA not able to solve problem
- (Audiologist only timetabled in for 2 hours but time used for other work too)*

CSA

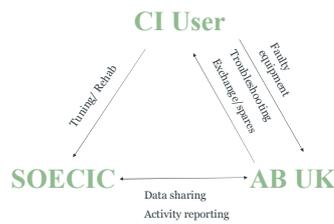
- Troubleshooting
- Sending spares /repairs to patients
- Sending repairs to company
- Sending holiday loaner paperwork to patients
- Stock taking
- Receiving stock

AB Partnering Support Programme

The potential advantages of this programme are as follows:

- Patient contacts AB directly – SOECIC staff use time for other tasks
- No delivery charges
- Reduced loaner stock in clinic
- FOC holiday loaner per patient per ear
- Paying for processor upgrades in instalments
- Website reporting for red flags (list of patients needing increased number of replacements)

How does it work



Review

- (1) An audit of the time an audiologist and the clinical support assistant spent dealing with any repairs and troubleshooting.
- (2) A survey of patients' experience of the AB Partnering Support Programme via a questionnaire. Patients were asked to rate the service they got from AB and we compared this to how they rated the service they previously got from SOECIC.

SOECIC repairs costs for the 6 months prior to joining partnering programme*

Task	Cost
Staff costs to deal with faulty processors	£9.04
Staff costs to deal with faulty items (not processors)	£21.78
Staff costs for stock taking/ordering	£21.60
Stock purchased	£16,369
Total	£16,421.42

AB Partnering Support Programme costs for first 6 months

43 patients were enrolled on the partnership and another 26 joined during the first 6 months.

Cost of repairs for these patients was £3,225 and cost of spares was £13,720**, which makes a total of £16, 945

Had we not joined the AB Partnering Support Programme, the costs for SOECIC during these 6 months would have been as follows*:

Task	Cost
Staff costs to deal with faulty processors	£11.30
Staff costs to deal with faulty items (not processors)	£33.00
Staff costs to send spare items	£11.52
Lost processor x1	£4,509.00
Cost of repairs not under warranty	£378.00
Staff costs for stock taking/ordering	£21.60
Stock issued as spares	£13,720.00**
Total	£18,684.42

* The time spent on various activities was audited and costed according to pay scales.

** This amount has decreased since the first 6 months – there was a need to buy some stock initially as a starter. The only items now purchased are magnets and radio aid related items.

Conclusions

This means that the financial savings for SOECIC were £1739.42 over these first 6 months.

It also means that SOECIC staff can dedicate the time otherwise used for AB repairs on other tasks such as patient appointments. As the number of patients who have an AB device is increasing, this means that we are saving more time on these repairs over time.

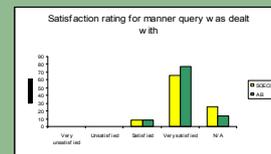
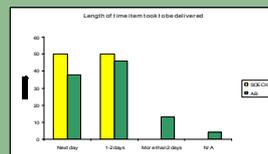
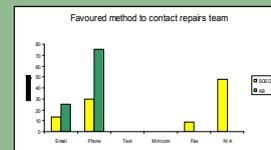
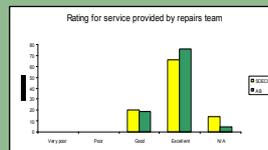
Patient experience

Patients were asked to rate the service they got from the AB Partnering Support Programme and this was compared to how they rated the service they previously got from SOECIC.

All of the patients were happy with both services. Some patients commented that the staff dealing with the queries at AB were very friendly and competent.

One patient commented that she used to come directly to the clinic for repairs since she lives locally whereas now she is not able to do this.

We experienced some teething problems with postage since all the items were initially sent via a courier which meant that patients had to wait for the delivery. This was solved by using Royal Mail.



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