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
  - Sending holiday loaner paperwork to patients
  - Stock taking
  - Receiving stock

- **CSA**
  - Troubleshooting
  - Sending spares/repairs to patients
  - Sending repairs to company
  - Sending holiday loaner paperwork to patients
  - Location of spares
  - Website reporting for red flags (list of patients needing increased number of replacements)

**AB Partnering Support Programme**

The potential advantages of this programme are as follows:

- Potential cost savings
- No delivery charges
- Reduced repair back in clinic
- Incorporate holiday loaners as per patient
- Paying for processor upgrades in instalments
- Website reporting for red flags (list of patients needing increased number of replacements)

**How does it work**

**SOECIC**

- Data sharing
- Activity reporting

**AB UK**

- CI User
- CI Care

**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.

**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.

- **SOECIC**
  - Length of time item took to be delivered
  - Rating for manner query was dealt with
  - Satisfaction rating for manner query was dealt with

- **AB Partnering Support Programme**
  - Length of time item took to be delivered
  - Rating for manner query was dealt with
  - Satisfaction rating for manner query was dealt with

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£21,684.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AB Partnering Support Programme costs for first 6 months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£13,909.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

Robert Buhagiar MSc CS
Julie Brinton MSc
Email: rb@isvr.soton.ac.uk