

# Eligibility Criteria

## Wheelchair and Specialist Seating Service

October 2016

Version V4.0

*This document remains valid whilst under review*

| TARGET AUDIENCE (including temporary staff)                           |  |
|---|--|
| <b>People who need to know this document in detail</b>                | Staff working within the wheelchair service and wheelchair prescribers |
| <b>People who need to have a broad understanding of this document</b> | Staff who refer to the wheelchair service                              |
| <b>People who need to know that this document exists</b>              | Staff who refer to the wheelchair service                              |

Author: Service Manager – Rehabilitation, Wheelchairs and Community Equipment

Approved by: Wheelchair SMT

Date: 14/10/16

Date of next review: October 2018

*Did you print this? Please make sure you are accessing the most recent version.*  
Visit: <http://thepulse/our-trust/trustwide-policies-procedures/>

## VERSION CONTROL

| <b>Record of Changes</b> |                |   |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|
| <b>Date</b>              | <b>Version</b> | <b>Changes / Comments</b>   |
| 01/01/2016               | 1.0            | Documents combined across the Trust   |
| 08/10/2014               | 2.0            | Amendment to 6.1  |
| 04/09/2016               | 3.0            | Review – revised draft document sent out for consultation to the wheelchair teams |
| 6/10/2016                | 4.0            | Comments on the draft document incorporated for final version                     |

## CONTENTS

|   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| 1.0 Accessing the service                       | 4           |
| 2.0 Standard Attendant Pushed Wheelchairs       | 5           |
| 3.0 Standard Self Propelling Wheelchair         | 6           |
| 4.0 Lightweight / High Performance Wheelchairs  | 6           |
| 5.0 Children’s Buggies and Pushchairs           | 7           |
| 6.0 Electrically Powered Wheelchairs            | 8           |
| 7.0 Accessories and Modifications               | 10          |
| 8.0 Cushions                                    | 10          |
| 9.0 Special Seating Systems                     | 11          |
| 10.0 Tilt-in-Space Wheelchairs                  | 12          |
| 11.0 Loan of More Than One Wheelchair           | 12          |
| 12.0 Care Homes Criteria                        | 13          |
| 13.0 Attendant Controls for Powered Wheelchairs | 14          |
| 14.0 Power-packs                                | 15          |
| 15.0 Headrests                                  | 15          |
| 16.0 Hub-brakes                                 | 16          |
| 17.0 Wheelchair Voucher Scheme                  | 16          |
| 18.0 Appeals Process                            | 16          |

## 1.0 Accessing the service

- 1.1 The wheelchair service will loan a wheelchair to any person who lives within the service's catchment area and is registered with a General Practitioner (GP) within the area. They must have a long-term mobility problem (greater than 6 months) which impacts on their ability to walk.
- 1.2 The wheelchair service does not loan out equipment for temporary or short term use for less than 6 months, except in the case of palliative care.
- 1.3 The relevant wheelchair service referral forms should be completed if the person meets the criteria in 1.1. People from outside the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust area will be treated in accordance with '*Who Pays?: Establishing the Responsible Commissioner*' and other Department of Health guidance relating to patients entitled to NHS care.
- 1.4 Referral forms will be accepted from health and social care practitioners. The service may return referrals where there is insufficient information to process the referral.
- 1.5 Self-referrals can be accepted once a wheelchair user has been registered with the service.
- 1.6 The service does not loan out standard attendant pushed (transit) wheelchairs for residents in Care Homes. See section 12 for further information.
- 1.7 NHS wheelchairs are not provided for the following:
  - Work use only (funding can be sourced from the "Access to Work" scheme)
  - Rehabilitation purposes only – on wards or in the community
  - Sporting activities only
  - In place of suitable static seating
  - Transportation purposes only
  - Electrically Powered Wheelchairs for outdoor use only
  - Electrically Powered Attendant Controlled only wheelchairs
  - In Care Homes for general portering use only

- School use only

- 1.8 Referrals for the voucher scheme for non-powered wheelchairs and buggies should be received in the same way as 1.3 and 1.5.
- 1.9 All service users must abide by the Conditions of Loan set out by the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust Wheelchair Service. All service users will be given a copy of the Conditions of Loan and requested to sign that they abide by them. The Conditions of Loan are available on the website.
- 1.10 Wheelchair applicants whose level of functioning is not supported by their medical history may be referred to a Rehabilitation Consultant for a medical review. Following this review, the Consultant will decide, in collaboration with the wheelchair team, whether there is sufficient medical evidence to indicate the need for provision.

## **2.0 Standard Attendant Pushed Wheelchair**

- 2.1 Attendant pushed wheelchairs are loaned for indoor and outdoor use.
- 2.2 Referrals for standard attendant pushed wheelchairs are only accepted for individual use.
- 2.3 Attendant pushed wheelchairs are only supplied to Care Homes if an individual fulfils the criteria in section 12.
- 2.4 Attendant pushed wheelchairs will not be supplied for hospital use only.
- 2.5 Attendant pushed wheelchairs will not usually be loaned to those clients who exceed 18 stones, due to the risk posed to carers in pushing the combined weight of wheelchair and individual. However, this will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **3.0 Standard Manual Self-Propelling Wheelchair**

- 3.1 A standard manual self-propelling wheelchair is loaned to enable the occupant to move around independently or for ease of pushing the occupant.
- 3.2 Referrals for standard manual self-propelling wheelchairs are only accepted for individual use.
- 3.3 In some instances, medical approval may be sought before the provision of a self-propelling wheelchair is made. This may happen where there may be contra-indications to the service user self-propelling.
- 3.4 A standard self-propelling wheelchair will be provided if it is unlikely that it will need modification or reconfiguration (eg, 8L).
- 3.5 Where modification or reconfiguration is likely, a standard configurable wheelchair will be provided (eg, Action3).

### **4.0 Lightweight / High Performance Manual Wheelchairs**

A lightweight or high performance manual self-propelling wheelchair may be considered for the following reasons:

- 4.1 When a full-time wheelchair user is unable to maintain independent mobility in a standard manual wheelchair and can demonstrate an increase in their level of independence through this provision.
- 4.2 Wheelchair weight will be considered for individuals who drive and lift the wheelchair provided in and out of their car independently.
- 4.3 Requests will be considered on an individual basis.
- 4.4 Clinical assessments will be necessary and supply will be made from a specific range to fulfil the user's clinical and environmental needs.

- 4.5 The wheelchair service has a set range of high performance wheelchairs. Service users who wish to have a wheelchair outside of this range may opt for the wheelchair voucher scheme.

A list of local wheelchair dealers / suppliers is available from the wheelchair service on request.

## **5.0 Children's Buggies and Wheelchairs**

- 5.1 The wheelchair service will endeavour to meet the child's clinical needs when they have long term mobility impairment. It is reasonable to expect parents to provide a pushchair for their children up to the age of 2½. However, children with mobility impairment beyond this age may continue to need a buggy or wheelchair on clinical grounds.
- 5.2 Pushchairs / buggies (that do not provide postural assistance) will be provided for children over 2½ years of age who do not require postural support.
- 5.3 Buggies will be provided for children between 1 – 2 ½ years of age who cannot be accommodated in standard commercial buggies due to specific postural needs. The wheelchair service may request that such referrals are made by specialist paediatric services.
- 5.4 A wheelchair will be provided for children over 5 years old (as this is deemed more developmentally appropriate) and younger children whose needs can be better met by a wheelchair.
- 5.5 One buggy / wheelchair will be provided per child, to be used in all environments ie, home and school. Where an electric powered wheelchair is provided, a standard back-up manual wheelchair will be issued.
- 5.6 Double buggies will only be provided when both children have a specific clinical need and where appropriate equipment is available to suit.
- 5.7 Rain covers / sunshades and other accessories are not supplied for buggies or special pushchairs unless there is a specific clinical need.

- 5.8 Children with postural needs will be assessed by a therapist and may be referred to a specialist clinic for further assessment.
- 5.9 The provision of wheelchairs and buggies to children with behavioural issues will be carried out in line with the *'Procedure for the provision of buggies and wheelchairs for behavioural control.'*
- 5.10 If seating is requested specifically for school use, the wheelchair service may be approached for information, but not for funding. Joint funding from education should be considered if the wheelchair provided also meets the child's stated educational need.

## **6.0 Electrically Powered Wheelchairs**

Clients must meet the following criteria before they can be considered eligible for the provision of an electrically powered indoor only (EPIC) or indoor / outdoor (EPIOC) powerchair:

- 6.1 Be a full-time wheelchair user with a requirement to use the chair daily to increase mobility and independence, leading to improved quality of life and greater interaction with their environment. Clients who are undertaking or have the potential to undertake rehabilitation will be considered once they have reached their maximum potential in their mobility.
- 6.2 Be unable to walk indoors.
- 6.3 Be unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair indoors or their ability to self-propel is contra-indicated on medical grounds. Indoors means within a private home, it does not include communal areas.
- 6.4 Have a residential environment, which is compatible with the use of a powered wheelchair at the point of referral, including adequate space for the movement of the wheelchair including footplates and an appropriate area with a power supply to charge the wheelchair. EPIOCS must not be stored outside the home environment or where they impede emergency access.

- 6.5 Be medically fit to operate and adequately maintain / charge (or have a carer who will take on this role) a powered wheelchair. The opinion of the client's GP will be sought.
- 6.6 To be able to independently and safely control a powered wheelchair within their home environment and outdoors if applicable.

Where a wheelchair is to be used outdoors or in other public environments, the user must also:

- Have not had an epileptic fit, seizure or other loss of consciousness for one year.
  - Have no problems with visual, cognitive, visual-spatial or other higher cortical function or other medical conditions that would place themselves, others and / or road users at risk.
  - Be able to demonstrate during assessment the insight, capacity, competency and dexterity to operate a powered chair responsibly and independently.
  - Be able to pass a proficiency test to demonstrate ability to operate a powered wheelchair safely and independently in environments as identified and agreed between the therapist and client. As recommended by R.o.S.P.A (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)
  - Have a local environment which is accessible to the EPIOC and compatible with its use.
- 6.7 Only one powerchair per client will be issued in addition to a standard back-up non-powered chair.
- 6.8 Class 3 powerchairs are not provided by the service. Class 3 powered wheelchairs, are intended primarily for outdoor use and uneven terrain, and have a maximum speed of 12km/h. They have two speed settings for pavement or road use, have lights as standard, and a flashing yellow beacon for use on dual carriageway roads where permitted.
- 6.9 Young children may demonstrate competency by passing the driving proficiency test. The age of the child will be taken into account. Supervision by a responsible adult is still strongly recommended and attendant controls may be considered.

- 6.10 Some clients may be issued firstly with an indoor-only powerchair so that they can gain confidence and competency in driving. The therapist will discuss a timeframe for their outdoor driving assessment which may be subject to a waiting list.
- 6.11 New to area clients of powered indoor / outdoor wheelchairs may require new GP fitness to drive documentation.
- 6.12 The wheelchair service is not funded to provide seat risers but rare and genuine exceptions can be considered by the service.
- 6.13 Clients wishing to drive a vehicle from their powered wheelchair should speak to the wheelchair service for further details.

## **7.0 Accessories and Modifications**

- 7.1 Accessories and modifications are only supplied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- 7.2 Referrals for accessories or modifications are accepted from all parties and may be provided where there is a clear clinical or functional need.
- 7.3 Accessories and modifications can only be provided if they are compatible with the wheelchair / buggy.
- 7.4 Accessories and modifications are not provided for private wheelchairs or buggies unless there are exceptional circumstances which will need to be agreed.
- 7.5 Trays may be provided for postural needs.

## **8.0 Cushions**

- 8.1 Cushions will be supplied for comfort, postural support and pressure relieving requirements for **wheelchair use** only.
- 8.2 Cushions are supplied in accordance with the user's clinical need.
- 8.3 Cushions will still be provided by the service, where appropriate, if an individual chooses to opt for the Voucher Scheme.

8.4 Cushions will be provided for private wheelchairs, but the following conditions must be met:

- i) The user must be eligible for a wheelchair from the service.
- ii) The type of cushion issued will be determined by the therapist.
- iii) A second cushion will not be provided for a private wheelchair where a cushion has already been provided for the NHS wheelchair.

8.5 Where a cushion is issued, the user must follow the procedures on care, usage, maintenance and review procedures.

8.6 Cushions will not be provided for static seating (eg, armchairs).

## **9.0 Special Seating Systems**

The user must be eligible for a wheelchair for mobility purposes from the wheelchair service and this should be the primary reason for referral (ie, special seating for use within the wheelchair, not special seating to replace an armchair need, or purely to provide school seating or a transport system).

9.1 The user should require the wheelchair as part of their daily routine on a long term basis, and therefore be able to benefit from the positioning / postural control that the seating gives.

9.2 The user's environment should be able to accommodate the seating required.

9.3 Children attending the clinic should always be accompanied by their parents and / or carer, the referring therapist and any other relevant person closely involved with the child.

9.4 Only one seating system will be provided.

9.5 Special Seating can be provided for private wheelchairs providing the wheelchair is deemed appropriate by the Wheelchair Service.

9.6 The locality wheelchair service must consider and approve any recommendation from the external Special Seating Service prior to any action.

- 9.7 Special seating will not be provided as an alternative to appropriate static seating.

## **10.0 Tilt-In-Space Wheelchairs**

- 10.1 Manual tilt-in-space wheelchairs will only be provided where the user requires postural support and regular changes of position. The environmental constraints will be considered when prescribing this type of wheelchair. Hospitals and rehabilitation units including community rehabilitation in Care Homes are expected to supply their own tilt-in-space wheelchairs to be used during rehabilitation.
- 10.2 In Care Homes, the service will fully demonstrate and handover the tilt-in-space wheelchair to a named professional carer. Where repeated instruction in the use of the wheelchair is requested from private carers, the service may direct them to other providers for staff training.
- 10.3 The user must have significant postural needs which cannot be accommodated in any other wheelchair.
- 10.4 The user must be able to gain significant improvements in their posture and mobility from the provision of a tilt-in-space system.
- 10.5 A standard wheelchair which can be set up in a fixed tilted position should be considered as the first option where a user needs to sit in a tilted position.
- 10.6 A user is not eligible for a tilt-in-space system if a postural supportive armchair only is required to meet their needs and / or the user is continuing to make progress in their posture and ability.

## **11.0 Loan of more than one wheelchair**

The supply of more than one wheelchair will be agreed when:

- 11.1 A wheelchair is required both upstairs and downstairs and where there is no provision for a through floor lift or other appropriate equipment. If a through floor lift is subsequently fitted in the home, the second wheelchair should be returned.

- 11.2 If a lightweight / high performance wheelchair is on loan, a second standard wheelchair will only be provided to fulfil the above requirement.
- 11.3 If a powered wheelchair is on issue, a manual standard wheelchair only will be provided in addition.

## **12.0 Care Homes Criteria**

These criteria include all types of care homes.

- 12.1 Wheelchairs will be provided to clients in Care Homes to enable the client to become independently mobile and therefore increase their personal and functional ability.
- 12.2 Brighton and Hove: Attendant pushed (transit) wheelchairs will not be issued if a person can sit adequately supported in a standard attendant pushed wheelchair and an armchair and has no special seating needs.

West Sussex: Attendant pushed (transit) wheelchair will be issued to those living in Residential Care Homes provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

- 12.3 It is the responsibility of the Care Home in which the client resides to provide and maintain the following equipment:
- Attendant pushed type wheelchairs for general portering / nursing / toileting / grounds and community access.
  - Pressure relieving cushions to fit the above style wheelchairs.
  - Standard accessories, for example (but not limited to): ELRs, hemi-armrests, angle-adjustable footplates, stump boards, calf panels, unifits.
  - Non-customised special seating eg, riser armchairs, recliner armchairs and postural armchairs.
- 12.4 It is the responsibility of the Wheelchair Service to provide, following assessment:

- Self-propelled wheelchairs where there is significant and measurable increase in independence.
- Electrically powered wheelchairs where eligible.
- Customised special seating where clinically necessary.
- Pressure relieving cushions and accessories for the wheelchair provided by the wheelchair service.
- Wheelchairs with postural support when clinical assessment indicates there is a mobility need that cannot be met without additional support in the wheelchair.
- Wheelchairs will only be provided if the environment is appropriate for its use and where the client is accessing the community on a regular basis (ie, 2-3 times per week).
- It will be the responsibility of the Care Home / user / carer to ensure that all Conditions of Loan are adhered to, that the equipment is used in the manner prescribed and to request reassessment when required.
- Wheelchairs will not be provided as a replacement for armchairs.

For Brighton and Hove, refer to the *Policy for the Provision of Community Equipment in Care Homes*, 2013. For West Sussex, refer to the *Provision of Equipment for Adults in West Sussex Registered Care Homes*, April 2013.

### **13.0 Attendant Controls for Powered Wheelchairs**

- 13.1 The Wheelchair Service does not provide powered wheelchairs fitted with attendant controls other than under exceptional circumstances eg, where the client has a deteriorating condition.
- 13.2 The user must already be using a powerchair provided by the NHS and be eligible for its continued provision (an exception to this may be a young child).
- 13.3 The user should be able to use the main control box themselves and the attendant control is not the only control on the powerchair.
- 13.4 The dual control must enhance the safety and hence the scope of use (eg, a young child who would not be safe crossing the road).

## **14.0 Power-packs**

- 14.1 The wheelchair service does not issue power-packs.
- 14.2 The wheelchair service may agree to the fitting of certain privately purchased power-packs to an NHS wheelchair on loan. This is on the understanding that the wheelchair model is compatible with the fitting of the power pack according to the wheelchair manufacturer.
- 14.3 The power pack will be installed by the supplier.
- 14.4 The purchase of the power pack, maintenance and fitting costs are borne by the user.
- 14.5 Any additional parts that need adding to the wheelchair for reasons of safety will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **15.0 Headrests**

- 15.1 Headrests will be provided to a service user only when clinically necessary.
- 15.2 The wheelchair service does not supply head restraints for transport.
- 15.3 A wheelchair head restraint for transport is part of the Wheelchair Tie-down and Occupant Restraints System (also known as WTORS). The Wheelchair Service does not provide wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems and therefore does not provide head restraints for transport. Whoever provides the transportation wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraints systems should also provide wheelchair head restraints for transport, as required.
- 15.4 The wheelchair service will endeavour to provide wheelchairs that are compatible with wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraints systems if they are informed at the time of assessment that the service user will be using the wheelchair in transport.

## **16.0 Hub-brakes**

16.1 Hub-brakes are provided by the wheelchair service for non-powered wheelchair where there is a considerable risk to safety or the seating system is exceptionally heavy.

## **17.0 Wheelchair voucher scheme**

The wheelchair voucher scheme is intended to offer greater choice of wheelchairs to clients who meet the wheelchair service eligibility criteria. Manual wheelchairs can be upgraded through the voucher scheme following assessment.

Clients wishing to pursue the voucher scheme should contact the wheelchair service for more details.

## **18.0 Appeals process**

All appeals made to the wheelchair service will be presented to the exceptions panel or clinical director. The service user will be informed of the decision in a timely way.

## ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Helena Grace and Jane MacDonald, Commissioning and Partnerships Team, Adult Social Care, Brighton & Hove City Council, April 2014. *Final Policy for the Provision of Community Equipment in Care Homes.*



Policy for the  
Provision of Communi

West Sussex County Council and NHS, Nov 2013. *Provision of Equipment for Adults in West Sussex Registered Care Homes.*



Care Home Matrix  
Provision of Equipmer

Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, July 2016. *Procedure for the provision of buggies / wheelchairs for behavioural control for children/ young people aged 16 and under.*

*To be inserted once ratified.*