

Information on the Wheelchair Voucher Scheme

If you need a wheelchair you can have one that meets your mobility needs, free of charge, from the NHS. However, if you prefer a different wheelchair that the NHS cannot provide, you may be able to have a voucher towards its cost instead. The wheelchair service will still need to ensure that the chair you choose is safe for you and meets all your clinical needs.

This leaflet explains how the voucher scheme works, the options available to you and aims to answer any queries you may have.

If you have any more questions, please contact the wheelchair service team for your area:

Brighton & Hove:	01273 242156 / 7
Bognor:	01243 623650
Worthing:	01273 265850
Horsham:	01403 227000 ext.7160

How much is the voucher worth? What does it look like?

The value of the voucher equals the cost of the NHS wheelchair that would have been provided by the wheelchair service to meet your mobility needs.

The voucher is not a token which you can exchange for cash. It forms part of a letter to the supplier containing details of the wheelchair you have chosen.

You also need to agree to the terms and conditions of the voucher scheme which will be sent out to you in writing.

How does the voucher scheme work?

Vouchers are issued for manual wheelchairs only. The scheme has two options to choose from:

1. The Partnership Option

You can choose a wheelchair from the standard range offered by the wheelchair service, who then order the chair for you. You pay any additional cost (above the value of the voucher) to the wheelchair service. The wheelchair service owns the wheelchair and is responsible for its maintenance and repair. You may keep the chair for as long as you need to use it.

2. The Independent Option

You can choose from a wider range of wheelchairs available on the private market but will need to purchase the chair from a reputable supplier. The wheelchair service can supply a list of local suppliers on request and you would arrange a demonstration of the wheelchair directly with them. Your supplier needs to provide a copy of the wheelchair specification to the wheelchair service so that the service can confirm that the proposed specification is suitable for your needs before the purchase is made.

The voucher value will be slightly higher as the wheelchair service adds a contribution towards maintenance.

The private supplier will invoice the wheelchair service for the voucher and will invoice you for the balance.

You own the wheelchair but are also responsible for its maintenance.



How much extra will I have to pay?

Additional purchase costs for a chair could range from about £100 (eg, for a lighter weight version of the standard NHS self-propelled wheelchair) to more than £1,000 (eg, if you choose a top-range active-user wheelchair).

Accessories can also significantly increase the wheelchair cost.

Under the independent option, you will have to pay for maintenance costs. Please consider these costs carefully before making your decision.

On rare occasions, the voucher may cover the full cost of the wheelchair you choose. If this is the case, you are not entitled to any balance in cash.

Can I keep my existing NHS wheelchair and still have a voucher?

No - the voucher is intended to replace the NHS wheelchair.

If I have a voucher, can I apply to a charity to fund the additional costs?

Yes you can. The decision to offer you funding rests with the individual charity, although the fact that you will only be asking for part of the cost of the wheelchair may help in your application.

If I have recently bought a wheelchair privately, can I have some money towards its cost?

No - you cannot apply for a voucher retrospectively.

If I no longer require the wheelchair I bought under the voucher scheme, will I be entitled to a refund?

The wheelchair service cannot reimburse any part of your contribution.

When can I reapply for a voucher?

The voucher period is 5 years for adults and 3 years for children. You can apply for a new voucher at the end of the voucher period if your wheelchair is worn out or your clinical needs have changed.

The wheelchair service will look at the condition of your wheelchair and discuss possible options with you at the end of the voucher period.

What if my needs change before the end of the voucher period?

If your clinical needs change before the end of the voucher period to the extent that you can no longer use the wheelchair, you may be able to apply for another voucher or an NHS chair which would be prescribed at no cost to you.

What if my needs don't change and I want to keep my wheelchair after the voucher period has expired?

If you purchased your wheelchair using an independent voucher and the chair is still meeting your clinical needs, you may retain it. The wheelchair service can discuss further maintenance costs with you at this time.

If no changes have occurred and you purchased your wheelchair via the partnership option, we will continue to maintain your voucher wheelchair.

What should I do if I move home to another area?

You should inform the wheelchair service about your new address.

If you have a chair under the voucher scheme's partnership option, the wheelchair service in your new area will take over the responsibility for its maintenance and repair.

Under the scheme's independent option, you own the wheelchair and are responsible for looking after it, although the wheelchair service in your new area may be able to inform you about local suppliers with repair facilities.

How do I apply for a voucher?

If you have never had a wheelchair before, you must first ask your GP or another health or social care professional (eg Occupational Therapist) to refer you to the wheelchair service. If you are already registered with the service, you can contact us direct to discuss the voucher scheme.

What will happen next?

The Wheelchair Therapist or Rehabilitation Engineer at the wheelchair service can discuss the voucher scheme options with you and progress the voucher. They will also advise you about the suitability of your chosen wheelchair.