

# **Derbyshire Wheelchair Service**

## Eligibility Criteria for the Provision of Wheelchairs

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## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The eligibility criteria for wheelchairs and associated equipment has been produced for the benefit of referrers and users of Derbyshire Wheelchair Service, to ensure a fair and transparent service offer.

1.2 Wheelchairs and associated equipment will be prescribed according to a written instruction, which has been defined following an assessment of clinical need.

1.3 Equipment will be prescribed from a core range used within the service. The service will only investigate equipment and suppliers outside of this range if the essential needs of the service user cannot be met from within it.

1.4 Individual solutions will be provided based on assessed clinical need, and equipment is prescribed and issued for the sole use of the individual service user for whom it was assessed.

1.5 The Wheelchair Service has a responsibility to meet clinical needs in the most cost-effective way.

## **2.0 General Conditions**

2.1 People may be assessed for, and issued with a wheelchair by the Wheelchair Service if they:

- Are registered with a General Practitioner (GP) who is a member Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board and;
- Require a wheelchair for a permanent or long-term need (in excess of 6 months), based upon an assessment of their mobility, and;
- They can self-propel a manual wheelchair, or;
- They can control either an indoor and/or an indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair, and/or;
- They require specialist bespoke seating to interface with a manual or powered wheelchair due to postural requirements.

A wheelchair is required a minimum of 3 times a week. Wheelchairs for occasional use are not supplied. Short term wheelchairs can be accessed via Dial a wheelchair.

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/hire-a-wheelchair>

**PLEASE NOTE we do not provide outdoor only wheelchairs**

2.2 It is sometimes not possible to meet all needs through the provision of one chair – for example, a chair might be the appropriate size for the home environment but not be compatible with the user’s car. Wheelchair Service clinicians will work with service users to prioritise requirements and ensure that priority needs are met.

2.3 The Wheelchair Service does not issue chairs for short term use (less than 6 months). The Community Equipment Services (Derby and Derbyshire) will provide these wheelchairs. Service users cannot self-refer to the Community Equipment Services. An NHS equipment prescriber will need to assess the patient’s needs, and prescribe a short-term wheelchair, if indicated. Alternatively short-term wheelchairs can be accessed via Dial a wheelchair.

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/hire-a-wheelchair>

### **3.0 Manual Wheelchairs**

3.1 The criteria for the provision of a standard non-powered wheelchair are:

- The service user has a permanent or long-term disability (in excess of 6 months), which will affect their ability to walk.
- The wheelchair is needed as an aid to mobility indoors and/ or indoor AND outdoors (manual only, not powered wheelchair provision). We do not provide wheelchairs for outdoor use ONLY. The wheelchair will be required a minimum of 3 times a week
- The service user agrees to and complies with the terms and conditions of use, as supplied by the Wheelchair Service.

3.2 Low need wheelchairs are provided from a core range supplied by the Wheelchair Service. These will be supplied following an assessment by a trained referrer who has completed and returned a referral form.

3.3 Medium, high and specialist need wheelchairs will only be supplied following an assessment by a Wheelchair Services clinician (an Occupational Therapist (OT), physiotherapist, Clinical Scientist or Rehabilitation Engineer (RE)).

3.4 Accessories are generally ‘off the shelf’ parts, or readily available (e.g. belts, headrest) from the manufacturer. These will be supplied following an assessment by a trained referrer who has completed and identified the need for accessories on the referral form. The service user may be subject to further assessment by the

Wheelchair Service if needed. Accessories include, but are not limited to, headrests, belts, harnesses, lateral supports and hub brakes.

3.5 The wheelchair service does not provide cosy toes, rain canopies, waterproof covers, wheelchair bags and gloves. Wheelchair service to support/signpost families to voluntary services for funding if required.

3.6 Trays will only be provided when required for postural reasons as assessed by the Wheelchair Service. If a tray is required for education or work etc. the referrer should approach the appropriate authority for funding or alternatively the wheelchair service can support signposting to voluntary resources.

3.6 Standard modifications may be requested by a trained referrer or recommended and supplied following an assessment by a Wheelchair Service clinician. This includes out rigging.

#### **4.0 Criteria for the Supply of More Than One Wheelchair**

4.1 Provision of more than one wheelchair is dependent upon clinical need.

4.2 Requests for more than one wheelchair will be considered under special circumstances. For example, a second wheelchair may be issued to allow the service user to access the upstairs of their property. Where a powered wheelchair has been issued, a manual wheelchair can also be issued to the Service user. The second wheelchair will not necessarily be the same model as the primary wheelchair. A back up manual wheelchair will not be provided in care home settings,

#### **5.0 Criteria for the Issue of a Wheelchair that is lighter than a Standard Wheelchair**

5.1 Following assessment, supply would only be made to meet the user's/carer's clinical and individual lifestyle needs to promote and maintain independent mobility.

A standard lightweight wheelchair will be considered where:

- The service user will be unable to self-propel a standard wheelchair, because to do so would exacerbate an existing clinical condition.
- The service user is an independent driver who cannot load the wheelchair into the car.
- The carer is unable to load the wheelchair into a car.

5.2 This category of wheelchair will only be issued when the Wheelchair Service has agreed that a standard wheelchair, less all accessories and removable parts, cannot be safely lifted by the carer/service user.

5.3 It should be noted that even a lightweight wheelchair may be difficult to either self-propel or push, depending upon the weight of the occupant.

5.4 If needed, the corrective seating system or modifications for postural support will be compatible with the lighter standard wheelchair that has been selected.

## **6.0 Active User Wheelchairs**

6.1 Following assessment, supply would only be made to meet the user's clinical and individual lifestyle needs to promote and maintain independent mobility.

6.2 Assessment for this type of equipment will always be undertaken by a Wheelchair Service OT, PT or RE (as appropriate).

6.3 Referrals for equipment of this category will be considered for issue when a service user is unable to function or self-propel in a standard wheelchair.

6.4 Person must be a full-time wheelchair user with a medical condition which results in reduced strength and /or excessive activity would result in deterioration of their medical condition. Assessed to have a clinical need for a specification only available on a more configurable chair.

6.5 If needed, the corrective seating system, or modifications for postural support, will be compatible with the active user wheelchair that has been selected.

## **7.0 Guidelines for the Supply of Heavy-Duty Wheelchairs**

7.1 Heavy duty wheelchairs are issued to service users exceeding the weight limit of the standard range of wheelchairs (18 - 21 stones for most models).

7.2 It is essential to have the service user accurately weighed, and the weight documented. An estimate is not safe or acceptable.

7.3 Consideration of the environment in which the wheelchair will be used is essential for service users needing heavy duty wheelchairs, especially where the service user needs a wheelchair with a seat width of over 20" ensuring there is no problem with access/doorways

7.4 The assessing clinician to assess service users' ability to safely self-propel and that it is safe and appropriate for the carer to lift/push this load/size of wheelchair.

7.5 In order for these service users to be supplied with an EPIC or an EPIOC they must meet the criteria set out in Sections 12 and 13 respectively.

### **8.0 Criteria for the provision of Pressure Relieving Cushions**

8.1 The Service holds a range of cushions for all levels of risk/pressure relieving qualities. The cushion can be used in an NHS provided or privately purchased wheelchair, as long as the person meets the Derbyshire wheelchair service criteria for a wheelchair. Cushions will not be issued for use in an armchair.

8.2 A pressure-relieving cushion can be issued for use within the wheelchair, and it is used as part of an overall pressure management routine.

### **9.0 Criteria for the provision of Special Seating Systems**

9.1 Special seating can be divided into two types:

- Off the shelf postural support or modifications
- Individual bespoke seating systems that are fitted to a wheelchair chassis.

9.2 Special Seating Systems are only provided where the service user has specific postural needs which can only be met by the issue of the specialist or bespoke seating systems or accessories.

9.3 Care will be taken in selecting the system which best meets the health and postural needs of the service user on a long-term basis, taking into account cost effectiveness.

9.4 This type of seating system will only be prescribed and supplied following assessment by a Wheelchair Service clinician.

9.5 Only one system will be supplied.

9.6 The Wheelchair Service will assess on an individual basis the appropriateness of fitting NHS special seating systems into private wheelchairs. This should be documented in the service users notes and permission sought from the team leader or manager of the service.

### **10.0 Criteria for Paediatric Provision**

**Pushchairs and Buggies:** The minimum age for referral is 36 months. Exceptions are made in the case of younger children requiring postural support or independent mobility

10.1 Assessment for provision will be carried out in the presence of the parent/guardian or designated other (e.g. school). The referrer will be invited to attend.

10.2 Special pushchairs and special seating systems are issued to children who have significant postural problems, following an assessment by a Wheelchair Service clinician.

10.3 Wheelchairs will only be supplied following an assessment by a Wheelchair Service clinician.

10.4 Double (twin) buggies will be supplied only where there is a second child (or twin), who is close in age, who also has a disability.

10.5 The model of double (twin) buggy chosen and any necessary postural support within it will be provided to meet the needs of both children. These will be sourced on a case by case basis due to the limitations in range of product.

10.6 Indoor powered wheelchairs will be issued to children who are unable to walk or self-propel, and are able to independently control a powered wheelchair safely indoors.

10.7 Indoor powered wheelchairs must only be used indoors at home. They must not be used outdoors, except in a private garden.

10.8 Derbyshire Wheelchair Service does not provide wheelchairs for sole use in the educational or social care setting. However, if the equipment provided by Derbyshire Wheelchair Service for use at home/in the community also meets the needs of the child at school/college, the wheelchair may be used.

10.9 If a child user is required to travel with their wheelchair, it is recommended that the child sits in a standard child car seat where possible and appropriate. The wheelchair should be folded and transported in the boot of the vehicle. Any other arrangements are the responsibility of the carrier or the Local Transport Authority

10.10 Indoor/outdoor powered wheelchairs will be issued to children who are unable to walk or self-propel and are able to independently control a powered wheelchair safely (please refer to section 17.1 for further information on exclusions).

The child will need to use the powered wheelchair constantly, indoors, and outdoors as a form of mobility and meeting the safe driving requirements in Section 13.

### **11.0 Criteria for provision of Electrically Powered Indoor Wheelchairs (EPIC)**

11.1 This service provides occupant-controlled wheelchairs only.

11.2 These wheelchairs are intended for indoor use only. Limited use of the wheelchair outside will be defined and discussed with the service user and their carer following a risk assessment by the Wheelchair Service. A Wheelchair Service clinician will review the environment in which the user needs or intends to use the wheelchair at handover. They should not be used in any indoor public environment e.g. shopping centres.

11.3 In order to be eligible for the provision of an EPIC, the Service user must meet all of the following criteria:

- As a result of a medical condition, the service user must be severely and permanently restricted in mobility, and will need to use the powered wheelchair for all their mobility needs.
- The service user must be unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair sufficiently to successfully function indoors.
- The supply of the EPIC will significantly improve the service users' independence and quality of life indoors.
- The service user will have no visual, cognitive, perceptual problems, or medical problem (e.g. recurring loss of consciousness) that would affect the safe use of an EPIC within the last 12 months.
- The service user is able to demonstrate the ability to use an indoor powered wheelchair safely and independently without endangering themselves and other people.
- The service user must have a suitable home environment including adequate space to drive the wheelchair (including the footplates) in the home and suitable space with a power supply for charging the batteries.
- The service user must ensure that the wheelchair will be adequately cared for and charged either personally or by a carer.

11.4 This equipment will not be issued for use solely in the school, college or day centre environment.

11.5 An OT, PT, RE or designated prescriber will carry out an assessment for this type of equipment in two stages:

- A review of the home environment either by eConsultation or if appropriate in person to ensure it is suitable for using this type of

wheelchair, including access to rooms, arrangements for storage and charging of the wheelchair and ability to use the wheelchair indoors.

- A clinical assessment will be undertaken to assess driving abilities as well as to identify the make and model of wheelchair which meets the individual needs of the service user.

The OT / RE can then determine if the service user meets all of the eligibility criteria, and the priority needs of the service user can be determined.

11.6 If subsequently the service user fails to meet any one of these criteria, deteriorates medically, or their driving skills are deemed to be dangerous, the wheelchair may need to be withdrawn. This will be determined by regular reviews.

11.7 The assessors may need to seek further medical advice about individual service users from their referrers, carers, other health or social care professionals involved in their care, their GP or consultant if appropriate.

## **12.0 Electrically Powered Indoor/Outdoor Wheelchairs (EPIOC)**

12.1 In order to be eligible for the provision of an EPIOC, the service user must meet all of the following criteria:

- As a result of a medical condition, the service user must be unable to walk at all, and be unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair at all.

- The service user will need to use the powered wheelchair constantly, indoors and outdoors.

- The supply of the EPIOC will significantly improve the service user's independence and quality of life, indoors and outdoors.

- The service user will have no visual, cognitive, perceptual problems, or other medical conditions that would endanger themselves, pedestrians or other road users.

12.2 A service user should report any medical condition to the Wheelchair Service which involves situations where they could lose consciousness. Referrals which indicate the service user has one of these conditions will mean that they will not be considered for a powered indoor/outdoor wheelchair.

12.3 Driving a powered wheelchair involves a complex and rapidly repeating cycle that requires a level of skill and the ability to interact with both the powered chair and the external environment. In order to be considered as safe to drive an EPIOC, the service user will need to demonstrate the following skills:

- vision
- visuo-spatial perception
- hearing
- attention and concentration
- memory
- insight and understanding.
- judgement
- adaptive strategies
- good reaction time
- planning and organisation
- self-monitoring skills
- sensation
- muscle power
- control and coordination.

12.4 If a service user has a significant skill deficit in any of these areas the referring professional should consider carefully if they will meet the eligibility criteria and a referral should not be made.

12.5 Given these requirements, it follows that many body systems need to be functional for safe driving and injury or disease may affect any one or more of these abilities for safe driving.

12.6 With reference to conditions which involve the loss of consciousness, the Wheelchair Service adopts the Motor Vehicle (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 (as amended) that govern the way in which epilepsy is prescribed as a relevant

disability for group 1 drivers.

12.7 If a service user who has a diagnosis of a significant medical condition that affects consciousness, including epilepsy, has had 1 or more episodes in the last 12 months they would not be considered for assessment of an indoor outdoor powered wheelchair. The only time that this would be considered is if the service user experiences a loss of consciousness or seizure that is related to an adjustment of medication.

12.8 The Service may seek assurance from the service user's Consultant (or General Practitioner if they are not registered to a consultant-based service) to provide assurance that the service user meets the eligibility criteria.

12.9 The service user will have a visual acuity of at least 6/24 (i.e. can read a car number plate from at least 40 feet). Service users must also have a field of vision of 120 degrees in a horizontal plane, and 20 degrees above and below this plane. This is equivalent to class 3 vehicle visual standards.

12.9 The service user will have a visual acuity of at least 6/24 (i.e. can read a car number plate from at least 40 feet). Service users must also have a field of vision of 120 degrees in a horizontal plane, and 20 degrees above and below this plane. This is equivalent to class 3 vehicle visual standards.

12.10 The service user will need to demonstrate by a driving test conducted by the Wheelchair Service all the skills required to independently operate an EPIOC safely and responsibly without endangering themselves and/or other people.

12.11 The service user will need to have a residential environment that is appropriate for the use of an indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair, and have suitable facilities to enable independent access to the outdoor environment (e.g. a permanent floor fixed ramped access, this does not include portable ramps). The local outside environment must be accessible in an EPIOC and must be compatible with its use. For any referrals that do not have the required residential environment service users will be discharged. To minimise delays, please refer service users for indoor outdoor powered wheelchair when home adaptations are in place. If you have any concerns please discuss with the Duty Team relating to the wider eligibility criteria or consider referral for indoor chair only.

12.12 The service user must ensure that the wheelchair will be adequately cared for and maintained and charged either personally or by a carer.

12.13 The service user must agree to the terms and conditions of supply.

12.14 An OT, PT / or RE will carry out assessment for this type of equipment in two stages:

- Home assessment either by eConsultation or in person to ensure that the domestic environment is suitable for using this type of wheelchair, including access to rooms, arrangements for storage and charging of the wheelchair and ability to use the wheelchair indoors as well as outdoors.
- A clinical assessment will be undertaken to assess driving abilities as well as to identify the make and model of wheelchair, which meets the individual needs of the service user.

The OT / RE can then determine if the service user meets all of the eligibility criteria, and the priority needs of the service user can be determined.

12.15 If subsequently the service user fails to meet any one of these criteria, deteriorates medically, or their driving skills are deemed to be dangerous, the wheelchair may need to be withdrawn. This will be determined by regular reviews, and on an individual basis, dependent upon their presenting needs and their diagnosis / prognosis.

12.16 The assessors may need to seek further medical advice about individual service users from their referrers, carers, other health or social care professionals involved in their care, their GP or consultant if appropriate.

### **13.0 Guidelines Regarding Attendant Controlled Powered Assisted Wheelchairs**

13.1 The Wheelchair Service does not supply attendant controlled powered wheelchairs, nor does it supply add-on power-pack units.

13.2 The Wheelchair Service may allow privately purchased power pack units and powered add ons to be fitted to wheelchairs supplied by the Wheelchair Service. However, permission must be gained from the wheelchair service prior to fitting and the fitting must be arranged privately.

13.3 The Wheelchair Service reserves the right to take appropriate action should it become apparent that a privately fitted power pack had contributed to a fault in the wheelchair or its unsafe use. This action may include withdrawal of the wheelchair or a charge for incurred repair cost.

#### **14.0 Issue of Equipment to Nursing / Care Homes**

14.1 Newly referred service users living in nursing / care homes may be assessed for and issued with a manual wheelchair by the Wheelchair Service if:

- They can self-propel, and they have a long-term or permanent need for a wheelchair
- The service user has significant postural needs and requires special postural seating to enable them to move safely and effectively within the care home setting. E.g. moulded seating.

14.2 The Service cannot provide attendant propelled wheelchairs which are for occasional use, outings, or are used by the nursing / care home to transport service users.

14.3 Service users living in nursing / care homes may be referred and assessed for a powered wheelchair if they are unable to self-propel and are able to control a powered wheelchair to enable them to be independently mobile. As with all referrals for powered mobility, the service user must also meet all the criteria for an EPIC or EPIOC, as listed in Sections 12 and 13.

14.4 Service users living in nursing / care homes who are existing wheelchair users, who have been using their wheelchairs as their main form of seating, and who wish to continue to do so, may keep their wheelchairs even if, due to deterioration in their medical condition, they are no longer able to propel themselves totally independently. However, if the wheelchair is unable to be repaired and is deemed to be beyond economical repair, we would be unable to replace the wheelchair as service user would no longer be eligible

14.5 The service will not provide pressure relieving cushions for use in armchairs.

14.6 Repair or collection of wheelchairs on behalf of the service user will be carried out when it has been established that the service user is recorded as being the user of the prescribed wheelchair.

14.7 Equipment issued by the Wheelchair Service may only be used by the

named resident to whom it was issued.

14.8 If during a visit by the approved repairer, equipment is identified which belongs to the Wheelchair Service which is not in use by the service user to whom it was issued, or is being used inappropriately, it will be retrieved and returned to the Service.

14.9 It is the responsibility of the nursing home to notify the approved repairers when a wheelchair needs repairing or collecting.

14.10 The Wheelchair Service cannot be held responsible for any accidents or injuries sustained if a wheelchair is used by anyone other than the named resident for whom it was supplied.

### **15.0 Meetings Carer Needs**

15.1 We recognise the important role that carers play in the lives of disabled people, and will strive to prescribe a wheelchair which can take account of carer needs, provided that this is from the standard range of equipment available.

### **16.0 Repair/Recovery of Equipment**

16.1 The Wheelchair Service provides a repair service for the equipment that it owns and loans to service users.

16.2 The Wheelchair Service will not maintain accessories fitted to the wheelchair by users or other agencies.

16.3 However, the Wheelchair Service does not provide an emergency recovery service. It is the responsibility of the service user to have a plan in place to return to their home with their wheelchair if it breaks down while out of their usual place of residence.

16.4 Replacement of any lost or stolen items will not be financed by the Wheelchair Service therefore users are advised to take out the appropriate insurance cover. The Wheelchair Service reserves the right to make a claim against the user for lost or stolen equipment

16.3 For service users who are resident outside of Derbyshire, it may not be practical either for a home visit to take place to repair the chair/equipment, or for the service user to bring the chair/equipment to the Wheelchair Service's premises. In

this situation, a company local to the service user may be used to carry out the repairs.

## **17.0 Exclusions**

17.1 In order to be eligible for the provision of a powered wheelchair, the service user must meet all of the criteria set out in Sections 12 / 13. Service users with some medical conditions will be considered even if they can walk and are able to self-propel a manual wheelchair, but this is entirely dependent upon the presenting needs of the service user, and their diagnosis / prognosis. For example service users with motor neurone disease In this case, the service user must still meet the rest of the criteria and demonstrate safe driving skills.

17.2 The Wheelchair Service does not supply wheelchairs for the rehabilitation process; this is the responsibility of the rehabilitation provider. The service will provide a chair to meet the service user's long term needs only when the long term need has been identified following the rehabilitation process.

17.3 The Wheelchair Service does not assess for, or provide, wheelchairs for sports, recreation or leisure.

17.4 The Wheelchair Service does not provide the following features:

- Attendant controls or dual controls
- Risers
- Power Assisted Wheels
- Power Packs
- Powered Elevating Leg rests;
- Full Recline (horizontal)
- Blue Tooth
- Lights and indicators

## **18.0 Personal Wheelchair Budgets PWB's**

18.1 The PWB was introduced by the government to support choice when considering suitable equipment, with the aim of enabling a service user to purchase accessories or wheelchairs outside of the wheelchair service equipment matrix range. PWB's are available for manual or

powered wheelchairs in line with specification below.

18.2 Service Users need to meet the basic service criteria to be eligible for a PWB. Equipment has to be approved by the Wheelchair Service as suitable before purchase. Assessment is required for provision of PWB.

18.3 There are three types of personal wheelchair budget:

A. Notional: Personal Wheelchair Budget (Standard NHS provision). The provision of an NHS wheelchair from Derbyshire wheelchair service equipment matrix that meets service users assessed needs.

B. Notional Plus: Personal Wheelchair Budget with contribution. This option allows service users or a partner agency e.g. Health & Social Care, Education or a voluntary/charitable organisation to contribute to service users PWB to either have a higher specification NHS wheelchair or add additional features to the NHS wheelchair. Once issued, the equipment remains the property of the wheelchair service. The wheelchair service remains only responsible for the repair and maintenance of the equipment that was purchased by the service and not equipment purchased by the service user.

C. Third Party: Personal Wheelchair Budget. If it is clinically appropriate, then the service user can choose a PWB as a contribution to buying a wheelchair from an independent retailer outside of the NHS. The service user remains the owner of the equipment and is all responsible for all repairs and maintenance.

18.4 Please be aware that:

- By choosing a Third party PWB then you are effectively opting out of NHS wheelchair service for a period of 5 years for adults or 3 years for children and young people.
- Specification of equipment must meet your assessed clinical needs as identified by the wheelchair service at the assessment.

The Third party PWB is provided directly to the equipment supplier. Money is never paid directly to the service users.

Personal Wheelchair Budgets are available to:

- All children and young people
- All adults with medium, high and specialist needs.

Abbreviations

OT Occupational Therapist

PT Physiotherapist

RE Rehabilitation Engineer

EPIC Electrically Powered Indoor Wheelchair

EPIOC Electrically Powered Indoor Outdoor Wheelchair

[Appendices: assessing fitness to drive - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)