

Plymouth, West Devon and South Hams Wheelchair Service

Eligibility Criteria

CONTENTS

Section 1	Introduction	
Section 2	General criteria information	
Section 3	Manual wheelchairs and buggies	
	3.0	Standard wheelchairs and buggies
	3.1	Wheelchairs and Buggies requiring further assessment
	a	Self- propelling configurable wheelchairs
	b	High Specification energy efficient manual wheelchairs
	c	Manual wheelchairs and buggies with a tilt in space and/or recline facility
	d	Manual one arm propelled wheelchairs
	e	Double buggies
	f	Bariatrics wheelchairs
Section 4	Powered wheelchairs	
	4.0	Electrically powered indoor powered wheelchair (EPIC)
	a	Criteria
	b	Assessment
	c	Contra-indications to supply
	d	Additional information
	e	EPIC's for children
	f	EPIC's for nursing homes
	4.1	Electrically powered indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair (EPIOC)
	a	Criteria
	b	Assessment
	c	Contra-indications to supply
	d	Powered tilt in space wheelchairs & wheelchairs with dual control
	4.2	Electrical assistance for carers
Section 5	Accessories	

Section 6	Special seating
Section 7	Nursing and residential homes
Section 8	Additional information related to provision for children

Section 1 – Introduction

1.0 Prescription criteria and procedural guide:

This document has been produced for the benefit of wheelchair service users and Health Care Professionals. It gives details of the criteria that equipment is issued against and how it is applied. It also outlines general information about the services that are provided.

Our commitment to patients:

- We wish to provide a service that is person centred and responds to people's needs - in terms of responsiveness, good customer care and providing equipment that is fit for purpose.
- We wish to provide a service that helps people take care of themselves, helps them to be as independent as possible and tries to overcome the environmental impact of being disabled, i.e. we work on the basis that we should be doing everything possible to reduce the impact of the environment on the disabled person's ability to be independent.

In return we request that:

- You be as open as you can with us about the impact of your disability on your life, hopes and aspirations.
- Understand and acknowledge any limitations that may sometimes occur because of the design of the equipment provided.
- You look after the equipment that is loaned to you.
- Be prepared to feed back to us the experience you have had, in order that we can continually improve the Service.

Provision includes:

- Wheelchairs to meet basic mobility, postural and pressure care needs, some of which may be prescribed by appropriate professionals in the community.
- Complex and custom-built wheelchairs, special seating and pressure relieving cushions, powered chairs for both indoor and outdoor use and support

The criteria for the provision of all equipment supplied by the Service have been agreed by Devon Clinical Commissioning Group who is the lead commissioner

Please note If an incomplete or inappropriate referral is received three times by an individual accredited referrer, their accreditation will be suspended until further training has been completed.

The Wheelchair Service is always happy to receive queries and comments on any of the information given in this guide.

SECTION 2- General criteria information

2.0 Wheelchair service provision

The specific detail of the criteria and consideration for provision for different types of equipment is contained within this document, however, the general criteria applies in all cases.

Provision of equipment will be considered where the person:

- has limited mobility, with a long term restriction of walking ability (over 6 months);
- has a permanent need for a wheelchair and will expect to use the equipment on a regular basis, at least 4 days a week;
- is registered to a GP in the area covered by the Wheelchair Service;
- is able to self-propel with no medical contra indications to this activity;
- Is unable to self-propel but has a regular carer who can push the wheelchair safely to meet the criteria of 4 days a week.
- is able to drive a powered chair
- Modifications and accessories may be provided to address clinical and mobility needs i.e. postural support, pressure care, safety and maintenance of other functional activities, while in chair.
- Can demonstrate or have the potential to safely use the equipment in the intended environment. This will be established at assessment. The safety assessment will be undertaken jointly between the Clinician, you and your Carer to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how to use the chair within your environment, bearing in mind the capabilities of the chair.

There is no age restriction for provision, however, equipment will not be provided for babies and very young children whose postural and mobility needs can be met by commercially available buggies.

The Wheelchair Service does not issue:

- chairs for occasional use;
- More than one wheelchair, unless the client is in receipt of a powered chair in which case a manual back up chair will be supplied or if there are exceptional

circumstances.

- chairs for less than 6 months' use;
- when wheelchair provision has contra-indications to the client's medical condition;
- When the provision of the wheelchair contra-indicates client's safety.
- sit to standing wheelchairs
- High/low wheelchairs
- Mobility scooters
- E-motion assisted hand-rim systems
- Rain covers, sunshades, or comfort items, unless there is a clinical recommendation
- Wheelchairs / buggies where they could be used as a restraint or a static chair
- Wheelchairs /buggies for transit use only (e.g. portering within nursing homes)
- Specialist sporting equipment
- Equipment where the home environment is not suitable for wheelchair use (adaptations may be required to ensure your safety and to maximise accessibility e.g. doorway widening.

Equipment provision in exceptional circumstances:

Existing clients already in receipt of equipment from the Wheelchair Service who have a short term need for additional equipment e.g. following surgery, fracture etc., may be assisted on a good will basis, if appropriate equipment is in stock at the time of the request. Equipment will not normally be ordered specifically for short term loan for an existing user.

SECTION 3- Manual wheelchairs and buggies

3.0 Standard wheelchairs and buggies

Basic wheelchairs, pushchairs and buggies will be supplied following an assessment by an accredited therapist. Equipment will be ordered and delivered direct to the client where:

- the referral detail indicates that the criteria has been met;

- the request is for standard, basic equipment; and
- There is no indication of a need for wheelchair service clinical input and assessment.

3.1 Wheelchairs and buggies requiring further assessment

This range of equipment will only be supplied where there are clear clinical, functional and mobility management reasons for provision.

Equipment will be supplied, if appropriate, following an assessment by a specialist Wheelchair Rehabilitation Engineer and/or Therapist.

Types of wheelchair and buggy equipment requiring further assessment:

(a) Self propelling configurable wheelchairs

This range of wheelchairs offers more adjustability and range of size options than available in the standard wheelchair range.

(b) High specification energy efficient manual wheelchairs

Referrals for this type of equipment will be considered for provision when:

- the client's clinical and mobility needs cannot be met by another wheelchair of lower specification within the Wheelchair Service range;
- The client is a full time wheelchair user and lifestyle needs and ability is such that maximum independence and mobility will be gained by provision of an energy efficient wheelchair.
- The wheelchair user has demonstrated adequate control of static and dynamic stability of the wheelchair necessary for their likely environment and planned usage.

(c) Manual wheelchairs and buggies with a tilt in space and/or recline facility

These will be supplied where the client requires postural support and regular changes in positioning within their wheelchair and their needs cannot be accommodated in any other wheelchair type with the addition of accessories.

(d) One arm lever or dual rim self- propelling chairs

These will only be issued to clients who can demonstrate the ability to be able to use this type of wheelchair.

(e) Double buggies

The main responsibility of the Wheelchair Service is the provision of appropriate seating and mobility within a single buggy/wheelchair required by the child meeting the criteria. Provision of a double buggy will only be considered where both children meet the main criteria for the provision of Wheelchair Service equipment.

Where only one child meets the criteria, other options within the PWB can be considered.

The buggy chosen by the family must meet the postural needs of the disabled child requiring wheelchair provision and accommodate the weight of both children. Detailed information of the buggy of choice will need to be seen by the Wheelchair Service staff to confirm that the basic requirements are met. If additional postural support is required in the chosen buggy, the Wheelchair Service Therapist will offer advice and assistance, if this is feasible within the equipment purchased.

(f) Bariatrics wheelchairs

All wheelchairs have a weight limit established by the manufacturer. Chairs to address a greater weight limit will be assessed on an individual basis and will usually need to be ordered specifically. There may be delays in supply for this range of equipment. These wheelchairs have a more durable heavy-duty frame and therefore have a heavier frame than the standard wheelchair.

Referrals for this type of equipment require full investigation and risk assessment of proposed method of propulsion, medical fitness of client (if planned to self-propel), suitability of home for manoeuvrability and management of chair, carer management issues and risk assessment for use, in home and local environment.

SECTION 4- Powered wheelchairs

4. Electrically powered indoor wheelchair (EPIC)

Assessment for this type of equipment will be assessed by wheelchair service clinical staff and most cases will involve a full clinical and functional assessment.

(a) EPIC Criteria

An EPIC may be supplied under the following circumstances:

- the person meets the Wheelchair Service general criteria for the provision of equipment;
- the person is unable to walk, or the walking is not functional within the home environment;
- The person has a minimal ability to walk or self-propel around the home but there are medical and/or functional contra-indications to them continuing to do so e.g.

breathing difficulties, high risk of fall etc.

- the person is unable to self-propel a wheelchair or there are medical issues that limit the consistent ability to self-propel or provide a significant risk of injury to the person;
- the person has a residential environment that is compatible with the use of an EPIC:
- have adequate space for the movement of the EPIC including leg rests/foot plates within the home; and
- Have a suitable area with power supply for charging the batteries.
- The person can demonstrate an ability or reasonable potential, with further training, to safely control the EPIC independently within the home.
- The person can demonstrate that the EPIC will be used on a daily basis to increase mobility and independence around the home, contributing to an improved quality of life.
- The child is able to self-propel or has limited walking ability at home but needs a power chair to be independent over larger distances at school. On an individual basis the Wheelchair Service will consider provision of an EPIC for school use only. This chair can be used in playgrounds and between classrooms if the gradients and surfaces are compatible with the chair. It cannot be used outside the school campus other than to be transported to and from home.
- The person is willing to accept and agree to the conditions of supply of the EPIC. These will be fully discussed at the initial assessment stage.
- The provision of an EPIC must enable the user to obtain a level of independence within the home which would otherwise not be achieved.

(b) EPIC Assessment

The client's home environment and their ability to manage the chair safely within this setting will be assessed by a Wheelchair Service Rehabilitation Engineer and/or Therapist.

An EPIC is not intended for outdoor use. However, the chair may be suitable for use within the confines of a private garden and this will be investigated at the time of assessment by the Wheelchair Service staff.

Some chair types issued will be chairs that are capable of use in the outside environment. If this model of chair is issued it will be detuned to EPIC speed and is issued only for use within the home areas.

EPIOC provision may be considered at a future date but will require prioritisation onto

the waiting list for a full assessment.

(c) Contra-indications to supply

The Wheelchair Service will seek advice from GP or other healthcare professionals if, prior to or at assessment, actual or potential risks to the health and safety of the client and others are identified. This will be done with the consent of the client.

(d) Additional information

EPIC provision is not considered to allow mobility solely for use within workplace: for this usage the client should contact the Department of Employment, Access to Work for advice.

A standard manual transit wheelchair will be provided as a backup and for outdoor mobility use when an EPIC is supplied.

An annual service check (planned preventative maintenance check) will be carried out by the Approved Repairer.

(e) Indoor power chairs (EPICS) for use by children

These will be issued to children who are unable to walk or self-propel functionally but are capable of independently controlling a powered wheelchair safely.

(f) Indoor power chairs (EPIC) used by nursing and residential home residents

See section 6 – Nursing and Residential Homes.

4.1 Electrically powered indoor/outdoor wheelchair (EPIOC)

EPIOC provision is only considered where the client is dependent on a powered wheelchair for all mobility within their residential environment initially. EPIOCS have a maximum speed of 4 mph and are for pavement use only.

(a) EPIOC Criteria

EPIOC applicants must meet all the following criteria before they can be considered eligible for further assessment for the provision of an EPIOC:

The person should:

- Have a medical reason for severely and permanently restricted mobility, requiring the permanent need for an EPIOC.
- Be able to demonstrate that they have the potential to benefit from an EPIOC and will derive significant benefit to an improved quality of life through increased independent mobility.

- Be medically fit to independently control a powered wheelchair both indoors and outdoors.
- Pass a visual and perception test
- Be free from conditions causing loss of consciousness and/or epileptic seizures within the last 12 months, in line with the DVLA requirements for motor vehicle drivers. See www.dvla.gov.uk for more information on medical requirements.
- Be free from any combination of medical conditions and treatments likely to make independent powered wheelchair control unsafe for themselves, pedestrians or other road users with whom they will come into contact in the public domain.
- Have an adequate field and acuity of vision to be safely aware of the outdoor environment including:-a visual acuity of at least 6/60 (can read a number plate at 27 feet); and - a visual field of 120 degrees in a horizontal plane and 20 degrees above and below this plane (equivalent to class 3 vehicle user standards). See www.dvla.gov.uk for more information on visual requirements.
- Be able to demonstrate during a driving/chair management assessment on a specified indoor and outdoor route that they have the insight, intellectual capacity and dexterity to operate an EPIOC both safely and responsibly on their own, without assistance (consideration is given to age appropriate skills).
- Have a suitable home/residential environment which is compatible with the use of an EPIOC including:
 - adequate space for storage with an accessible power supply for battery charging;
 - adequate space for movement of the chair within the home; and
 - Have safe and easy access to the outdoors, with ramps is required.
- Have a local environment which is accessible and compatible with safe EPIOC use.
- Be able to ensure that the EPIOC will be maintained either personally or by a carer.
- Agree to Wheelchair Service conditions of loan, including consideration of:
 - undertake insurance;

(b) Assessment

Assessment will involve a review of current power chair use within the home, a visit to the client's home to review environment suitability for EPIOC use if this is appropriate and a drive/chair management appointment at the Wheelchair Centre.

Home/environmental assessment

This will involve a visit to the home to review current power chair use and to ensure that the environment is proving suitable for current equipment on issue or whether there are any implications for any change of equipment that may be required.

This will include access; manoeuvrability around the home, storage, charging and any other relevant factors to ensure the criteria is met.

The assessor is required to identify the make and model of chair which most suits the individual's needs and any accessories or modifications that are required

Drive and wheelchair management assessment

This assessment is usually carried out at the Wheelchair Service Centre:

- To assess the client's abilities to safely drive and manage the wheelchair both indoors and outdoors. Consideration is given to age appropriate skills;
- to offer training within a public environment;
- Where appropriate, to retune a chair currently on issue so that it can be used for indoor and outdoor use.

At this appointment eyesight, cognitive and perceptual issues will also be reviewed.

(c) Contra-indications to supply

There may be medical, visual or management issues that will contra-indicate assessment and/or provision of an EPIOC. Further advice and information may be sought, if appropriate, with the consent of the client and reasons for non-provision will be fully explained.

(d) Powered tilt in space wheelchairs and wheelchairs with dual control

- Powered tilt in space wheelchair will be supplied to clients who have difficulty maintaining their posture or need to change their position for pressure relief.
- Powered tilt in space wheelchair will also be supplied to aid stability when an EPIOC is being used in an outdoor environment with gradients in excess of 1in12.
- Dual controls will be supplied for clients who meet the criteria for the supply of an EPIOC and are able to drive safely, but a likely to suffer fatigue when out for long periods allowing a carer to take over the driving of the EPIOC.

4.2 Electrical assistance for carers

A power pack will be supplied to users who meet the following criteria:

- The client's weight exceeds the attendant's weight by a significant amount, making the attendant unable to push the client

- The attendant is disabled, resulting in an inability to push the client
- The area where the client lives is unduly hilly, making it impossible for the attendant to push the client safely
- A suitable charging point must already exist in the client's accommodation, together with an appropriate place to securely store the wheelchair. Client should have a need to use the chair a minimum of 4 times per week.

An attendant controlled electric powered outdoor chair will be supplied for clients where a power pack could fail due to the following reasons:

- The user's weight exceeds the performance of the power pack
- The gradient of the immediate external environment is too steep for the capabilities of the power pack

Please note:

This service does not provide powered wheelchairs for use outdoors only; this includes scooters.

SECTION 5 - Accessories

Accessories are generally off the shelf parts that are readily available from the manufacturer.

These will be supplied following an assessment and recommendation from a Therapist, Accredited Referrer, or Rehabilitation Engineer.

Applications for accessories must be supported with clear clinical reasoning for provision. There is a wide range of accessories available, some of which can be ordered for direct issue by accredited referrers.

Criteria for issue of the following accessories:

Headrests

- The Wheelchair Service provides headrests for clients sitting in wheelchairs or seating systems where it is a clinical need e.g. to meet postural needs;
- To meet transport needs;

Trays

The supply of trays to fit wheelchair service supplied equipment will be considered in the following situations:

- To assist postural support management (i.e. to support client's arms, to encourage trunk extension or to facilitate fitting of anterior trunk support)
- To allow mounting of power chair controls to facilitate independent management of the power chair.

It is advised that the tray should be removed from the wheelchair and stored for transit if the client is transported in a vehicle (refer to wheelchair manufacturers guidelines on transporting the wheelchair and occupant).

Trays are not supplied:

- Where school tables are neither accessible nor suitable, it is the responsibility of the school to provide suitable working surfaces to meet education needs within the school environment.

If the tray is privately purchased, fitting and its use are the responsibility of the client or their advocate.

Postural Belts and Harnesses

- Will be supplied to aid postural support
- For Safety when seated in the wheelchair

Postural belt and harnesses are not supplied as a form of restraint and are not suitable as a vehicle seatbelt when being transported in a vehicle.

Pressure relieving cushions

Provision of a pressure relieving cushion is considered where:

- the client meets the Wheelchair Services criteria for provision of equipment;
- the client is a full time wheelchair user, with either a manual wheelchair or a powered wheelchair as their main means of mobility;
- Provision in privately purchased wheelchairs will be considered on an individual basis. The client must still meet the Wheelchair Service criteria for issue of equipment to receive a pressure cushion.

Pressure relieving cushions will be selected according to the cushion's performance and an assessment of the patient's Waterlow score. In this case the Waterlow Risk Assessment part of the Wheelchair Application Form should be completed by the Accredited therapist or Health Professional and forwarded to the Wheelchair Service.

Wheelchair Vouchers are not available for pressure relieving cushions as the wheelchair service is considered to have an ongoing responsibility to make adequate provision free of charge.

Exclusions:

Pressure relieving cushions will not be provided:

- for use in armchairs or any other form of seating;
- for use in a privately-owned wheelchair where it is assessed that the addition of the cushion compromises safety

SECTION 6- Special seating

6. CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL SEATING

Special seating may be in the form of either off the shelf/bespoke equipment or individual moulded systems that are fitted to a wheelchair chassis e.g. Matrix and carved foam seating units.

Assessment will be carried out by the Wheelchair Therapist and Rehabilitation Engineers and may involve contractors from manufacturers of the equipment used. The provision of special seating will be considered where the client meets all the general service criteria and has a postural positioning need that cannot be addressed through the provision of standard equipment.

Please Note:

Special seating is provided for use within a wheelchair to meet mobility needs and is not supplied to replace armchair provision or purely to provide school seating or a transport system.

SECTION 7- Nursing and residential homes

7. ISSUE OF EQUIPMENT TO NURSING AND RESIDENTIAL HOMES

The resident must meet the general wheelchair service criteria for the provision of equipment.

(a) Self propelling wheelchair provision to nursing and residential home residents:

Self -propelling wheelchairs and accessories, including pressure relieving cushions, may be issued to meet criteria to any resident who:

- Has a permanent disability, which prevents him/her from mobilising independently within the home?
- Is physically fit and able to self -propel a wheelchair
- Is motivated to use the equipment for independent mobility

(b) Transit, attendant controlled wheelchair provision to nursing and residential home residents:

This type of wheelchair will only be issued for the purposes of taking a resident out of the nursing/residential home (including the grounds) on a regular basis (at least 4 days a week) by a relative or friend or care staff:

- The wheelchair service is not responsible for provision of transit chairs within the Nursing home / residential home setting. It is the responsibility of the nursing / residential home, to supply equipment to transfer residents around the home in order to socialise, access meal facilities, access the immediate care home environment, garden, etc.
- The wheelchair service is not responsible for seating within the Nursing / residential home setting. It is a nursing / residential home responsibility to ensure that the client has a suitable armchair or dining room chair to manage their comfort, postural and pressure care requirements.
- Residents wishing to go on outings or to the shops by staff, relatives or friends on an occasional basis should use the Red Cross or short- term loan provider to hire a wheelchair.
- Residents, who prior to admission have a wheelchair on issue, will be able to retain the equipment for their own personal use within the care setting. It is the responsibility of the care home staff to inform the wheelchair service if the equipment is no longer required by the named individual.
- If the user requires a reassessment of their wheelchair needs within the care setting, general service conditions apply.
- Pressure relieving cushions are not issued for use in armchairs or non-NHS supplied wheelchairs. Nursing and residential homes are expected to provide this equipment.

Please note:

Hospital stock currently held for direct issue (appendix 2) to patients to facilitate discharge cannot be issued to patients already resident in or awaiting placement in a nursing/residential home. If it is felt that the client will meet the criteria for issue, contact should be made with the wheelchair service to discuss the detail.

Supply of wheelchairs in exceptional circumstances:

Where it is felt that there are exceptional circumstances that indicate provision of a wheelchair the referrer should complete the referral form and discuss the detail with the wheelchair service before agreement will be given for supply. Example of where supply may be considered:

- Where the wheelchair is the mobility base for a special seating unit (Ottobock and Matrix specialist equipment)

(c) Indoor power chair (EPIC) provision to nursing and residential home residents:

An EPIC may be supplied if the person is:

- Unable to self -propel
- Would be able to control a powered wheelchair to enable them to be independently mobile
- Would be able to operate the chair with regard to their safety and the safety of other residents.

The resident must meet the general wheelchair service criteria for provision of equipment and the main EPIC criteria.

(d) Electrically powered indoor/outdoor wheelchair (EPIOC) provision to nursing and residential home residents:

The main criteria for EPIOC provision applies in this case (see EPIOC criteria)

SECTION 8 - Additional information related to provision for children

8. The general criteria apply in equipment provision for children.

Equipment provision related to school attendance:

Wheelchair and buggies supplied to children are for school and home use (see manual and power chair equipment provision).

Where a child is able to self- propel or walk at home but needs a powered wheelchair to be independent over the larger distances in the school environment, the wheelchair service will consider provision of an indoor electric wheelchair (EPIC) for school use only.

This wheelchair can be used in playgrounds and between classrooms providing the gradient and surfaces are compatible with the chair, it cannot be taken off the school campus (other than in transport home).

If the wheelchair service is made aware that the chair will be transported to school in their equipment, efforts will be made to ensure, where possible, that the equipment on issue or to be supplied is declared as being transportable by the manufacturers.

However, it should be noted that transport to school is not the responsibility of the wheelchair service.

School clinics:

Children will be seen at clinic at the wheelchair centre, at home, school or hospital. When appropriate parents/guardians are welcome to be present.

Assessment for more complex equipment may require a longer appointment than is available at the school clinic. In these cases, a clinic appointment at the wheelchair service centre will be arranged.

Joint funding initiatives:

Joint funding can be considered with other organisations and provided through the Personal Wheelchair Budget.

