

# East Sussex Wheelchair Service

## Newsletter

July 2023

### Introducing our new monthly newsletter

Hello and welcome to our brand-new newsletter! It is our pleasure to share with you the latest updates and news from the East Sussex Wheelchair Service. In this newsletter, you'll find useful information, upcoming events, community highlights, and ways to get involved with the service.

We are committed to keeping you informed and engaged to promote health and wellbeing among service users and the community. Thank you for your continued support.



### Message from the Service Centre Manager

Our wheelchair service has made significant strides despite the daunting challenges of the COVID pandemic. We are pleased to announce the launch of a quarterly newsletter, aimed at improving communication with our valued service users and carers. This publication will keep you up to date with important service announcements and offer opportunities for engagement.

Your feedback is highly valued as we continually strive to enhance our service and cater to your needs.



### Meet your CHEO

#### Jeev Gunasekera

Hi, I am Jeev, your new Community Health and Engagement Officer (CHEO) at East Sussex. I started working at the East Sussex Wheelchair Service three months ago. I am originally from the island nation of Sri Lanka and come from a public health background. My lived experience as a carer for a long-term wheelchair user was the inspiration to start this role as CHEO.

As the CHEO I am the liaison officer between the community and Ross Care. I take your concerns and feedback to the company in order to improve the quality of services we provide. I signpost service users to appropriate charities and other organisations when they need of extra funding. I also manage company communication channels such as the newsletter and social media platforms. You can reach me through

[EastSussexCHEO@RossCare.co.uk](mailto:EastSussexCHEO@RossCare.co.uk) for any queries.

Find us on social media for more information and service updates!



@ESWS\_RossCare



## A message from the Commissioner

I am delighted to introduce the first newsletter from the East Sussex Wheelchair and Specialist Seating Services.

Sussex NHS Integrated Care Board and East Sussex County Council are pleased to work in partnership with Ross Care to deliver these services. This newsletter will provide a helpful way for us to communicate any key developments about the service locally as well as any national updates on how wheelchair services are being delivered.

Communication and wider engagement with our communities have never been more vital as we see significant pressures across the NHS and Social Care meaning all services are working even harder to continue to deliver high-quality care to local people.

In response to these challenges, partners across Sussex have recently published a 5-year Shared Delivery Plan [Our-Plan-for-our-Population-a-summary-of-our-Shared-Delivery-Plan-1.pdf](#) (ics.nhs.uk). This plan sets out the agreed long-term improvement priorities we will be focusing on across health and care in Sussex that will bring the greatest benefits to local people and our workforce.



## Message from the Clinical Lead

I am excited to introduce the first issue of the newsletter of East Sussex Wheelchair Service to you. I am confident that this channel of communication will keep you informed about evolving NHS wheelchair service.

One of the greatest challenges we are facing right now is the increase in costs of equipment that is causing problems in the wheelchair provision. We wish to keep you informed and obtain valuable feedback through this newsletter.

Together, we can overcome obstacles and provide an exceptional wheelchair service experience.

## Service Updates



## We are now with Medequip

As of the 1st of May 2023, Ross Care, including Consolor, is under new ownership and joins forces with Medequip Assistive Technology. Medequip is a leading provider of community healthcare equipment and support services across the UK. This acquisition brings together two companies with a shared commitment to delivering exceptional service to our service users, trust partners and commissioners, forming a united partnership between the two businesses.

Our signage has been completed, along with the rebranding of all our vans. We continue to re-brand, with completion being at the end of July 2023.



# What is a PWB?

## Personal Wheelchair Budgets

A Personal Wheelchair Budget, or PWB, is available to support wider wheelchair choices within NHS-commissioned services. In December 2019, the offer of a PWB became a "right to have".

If you meet the Wheelchair Service eligibility criteria, and you qualify for a new or replacement wheelchair, you are eligible to be considered for a PWB.

The PWB scheme was introduced to broaden the scope of the mobility equipment that can be provided by taking advantage of other funding sources as well as Wheelchair Service funding. This could be via other statutory agencies or charitable organisations, or you may wish to make a financial contribution yourself.

This is not to reduce what is on offer but to consider how your wider care needs could be met with a joined-up approach and by pooling resources.

There are four options available for you

### 1. Notional NHS PWB

You will be shown the free NHS wheelchair that would be prescribed to meet your individual clinical needs from the Wheelchair Service range. The value of this wheelchair is the value of your PWB.

If you accept this wheelchair, there will be no cost to you.

This wheelchair remains the property of the Wheelchair Service and the Wheelchair Service will carry out all necessary maintenance and repairs, free of charge.

### 2. Notional Top-Up PWB

You can choose to have additional features fitted to the wheelchair prescribed by the Wheelchair Service but you will have to pay the extra cost of these.

The wheelchair remains the property of the Wheelchair Service, the maintenance and repairs will be carried out free of charge.

The only costs for which you will be liable will be the cost of any of the additional features if they have to be replaced.

A PWB cannot be used for some additional features such as power-assist devices for manual wheelchairs. Your wheelchair clinician will be able to give you some guidance on this.

### 3. Notional Alternative PWB

You can choose an Alternative wheelchair from within the Wheelchair Service range as long as you pay any cost over and above the cost of the NHS provision.

As with the previous two options, the Wheelchair Service will own the wheelchair and will be responsible for all maintenance and repairs.

The wheelchair must meet your clinical needs and your choice must be approved by the Wheelchair Service.

### 4. Third Party PWB

You can also choose a wheelchair that is not in the range offered by the Wheelchair Service. It must meet your clinical needs and your choice must be approved by the Wheelchair Service.

A Third Party PWB includes an additional sum to cover maintenance and repairs. The wheelchair will belong to you and you will be responsible for all the costs of its maintenance and repairs.

The PWB can only be used towards the purchase of a wheelchair of the same specification as the one prescribed by the Wheelchair Service. This means that you cannot use a PWB based on a manual wheelchair to purchase a powered wheelchair, nor can you use a PWB based on Class 2 powered vehicle to purchase a Class 3 vehicle.

## Your FAQ on PWB?



### Who can apply for a PWB?

You can apply for a PWB if you are eligible for an NHS wheelchair and have been referred for a new wheelchair. If you have an existing NHS wheelchair that is no longer meeting your clinical needs, you may be able to apply if your current wheelchair cannot be adapted to suit you.

In both instances, you will need to have a clinical assessment at the Wheelchair Service.

### How long do I have to access a PWB?

Following your assessment and agreement to access your PWB you have 6 months to redeem the budget against your chosen wheelchair. Any request to access your PWB after this time would require reassessment.

### Can I buy my own wheelchair and then apply for a PWB?

No, a PWB cannot be issued retrospectively, meaning that you cannot buy your own wheelchair first and then request a PWB.

### How long does a PWB last and what if I want a change of wheelchair?

Equipment is typically provided for at least 5 years. If there has been a significant change in your clinical needs, you can request a referral for re-assessment. Your Wheelchair Service clinician will discuss options with you.

## Friends & Family Feedback

### We are thankful for everyone who expressed their feedback through the NHS Friends and Family (FFT) form

We are delighted to see more than 95% of respondents have expressed that they are very happy with the services we provide. We took your concerns seriously and have taken several substantial measures to address them.

[Click here or scan the QR code to give your feedback](#)



### What you said...

**It is not fair to charge the PWB top-up money before the equipment is received**

**Sometimes the waiting time to connect to the correct person is too long**

**I need my voice to be heard and taken into account when designing services**

### What we did!

Now the PWB top-up amount is charged at the point of delivery of the equipment!

We recruited a new waiting list administrator to work closely with the clinical lead.

A Community Health and Engagement Officer (CHEO) was recruited and we are organizing a Service User Engagement Forum!



# Wheelchair Tennis Initiative

The Wheelchair Tennis Initiative is the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) Talent Attraction and Identification Programme designed to provide transformative experiences and support individuals to become future Wheelchair Tennis Champions. Each event is delivered by experienced Wheelchair Tennis Coaches who will have the knowledge to support your Wheelchair Tennis journey.

Each year, the Wheelchair Tennis Initiative engages with different age groups of people who have physical impairments and in 2023, will see the LTA look to engage with children aged 8 – 14 yrs. Players will have the opportunity to learn and develop new skills in a fun and exciting way, including: chair skills and movement, racket skills and fun competition. These days will play a pivotal role in inspiring the next generation and early-stage development of aspiring wheelchair players and the success of wheelchair tennis in the long-term.

We are aware that there may be people aged 15 yrs & older who aspire to become a Wheelchair Tennis Champion. If you are aged 15 yrs & over, please do contact us via email: [disabilitytennis@lta.org.uk](mailto:disabilitytennis@lta.org.uk).

For more information on the LTA's Wheelchair Initiative, which events are taking place and how to sign-up for FREE, please visit the LTA website:

<https://www.lta.org.uk/compete/performance/wheelchair-performance-pathway/wheelchair-tennis-initiative/>



Author:  
Matthew Grover - Wheelchair Talent Pathway Manager



“Our vision is Tennis Opened Up. We want to support as many people as possible, particularly those with physical impairments to access tennis in a fun, exciting and inclusive environment”

The LTA wants to nurture players who have the will to win so they can fulfil their potential. As part of our Wheelchair Performance Pathway and plan to create visible and seamless journeys up each age and stage, we would like to share insight into one player's Journey, Scarlett who is 12 years old:

“I attended a Wheelchair Initiative session in 2021 and was selected to be part of the Wheelchair Performance Pathway. Since then, I haven't looked back. I'm now on the National Age Group Programme and have won 3 National School Games medals, the Wheelchair Nationals and competed in my first ITF Junior tournament. All this has been achieved in under two years with the support of my coaches and the LTA. I've also made new friends, travelled overseas, and got to meet multiple grand slam winners. What more could I ask for. Playing tennis and being part of the Wheelchair Performance Pathway is an absolute blast. Anyone can give it a go.”

*Scarlett Walker, U14 National Age Group Programme*



## Service User Testimony

I was disabled from when I was a baby. My sister did a sponsored walk to raise the money to buy my first wheelchair. As a young patient in Great Ormond Street Hospital the nursing staff would occasionally take me out but often not trained in handling wheelchairs would drop me off London kerbs with a jolt! At school, I had my first NHS wheelchair and I was able to push myself for short distances.

Over the years technology has changed so much but the independence wheelchairs bring to children, young people and adults with mobility and other complex impairments is still as life-changing.

Recently when I was at the Ross care (formerly Millbrook Healthcare) NHS wheelchair services depot in Eastbourne I witnessed the joy and excitement of a young service user coming to pick up his new powered wheelchair. He could not wait to get into it and speed around for the first time!

Whilst exercise and muscle strengthening can be vital for all of us with mobility impairments, whatever our age, the correct wheelchair that meets our individual needs makes all the difference. It enables us to work, go to school/college, socialise, go out with family and do so much more. I still see many older people out and about in manual wheelchairs where their posture is not supported and there is no cushion. Often well-meaning family members purchase wheelchairs without an assessment of individual needs.

The Occupational therapists at the NHS wheelchair service are trained to assess the needs of children, young people and adults with more complex needs who meet the criteria for the provision of an NHS wheelchair. As young people grow, or our impairment or condition changes it is very important to have a further assessment of needs from time to time if there has been a change in posture or spinal degeneration for example.

There are now around 18,000 NHS wheelchair service users in East Sussex (children, young people and adults). A service user forum is starting for ALL NHS service users in East Sussex. The first meeting was held on 18 May on zoom. NHS Wheelchair Service users, parents and carers are invited to join the forum and give their views and feedback on the East Sussex wheelchair services.

Please email [Jeewaranga.Gunasekera@rosscare.co.uk](mailto:Jeewaranga.Gunasekera@rosscare.co.uk) who will be hosting the meetings. Jeev is the Community Health and Engagement Officer working for Ross Care (Millbrook Healthcare) for the NHS wheelchair services based in Eastbourne.

*Liz Trethewey, East Sussex NHS wheelchair service user*



## Local Service Spotlights

### St Wilfrid's Hospice

St Wilfrid's Hospice supports patients at the end of life across a large catchment area to include Eastbourne, Hailsham, Heathfield, Seaford and Uckfield and the villages in between.

We support those who are 18+ facing a variety of life-limiting illnesses such as Cancer, Lung Disease, Heart Disease, Parkinson's and others. We are a charity and all our care is provided free of charge. We provide care in the community and in our physical hospice building which is based at 1 Broadwater Way, Eastbourne, next to the big Sainsbury's.

Here we have a public café which is open to all, 7 days a week from 8.30 am-4 pm (with lunch served from 12 pm-1.30 pm). The public areas of the building including the café are all on one level and are fully wheelchair accessible. We also have a wheelchair-accessible toilet in our Living Well Hub based at the hospice. Our Education Rooms which are used for training sessions are accessible by a lift. Do feel free to come and visit our café to find out more about the hospice and our support.

For more information about our services contact Kathryn Sutter, Community Engagement Navigator – [kathryn.sutter@stwhospice.org](mailto:kathryn.sutter@stwhospice.org) or 01323 434279.



### East Sussex Health Watch

We tell it like it is, collecting feedback through surveys, one-to-one conversations and focus groups. Every voice counts, so we try to work with local community groups to make sure those who face more health inequalities can share their experiences.

We have an online feedback centre where residents can leave a review of any health or care service each time they use it:

<https://healthwatcheastsex.co.uk/services/>

If you ever have issues accessing your health or care services, you can also contact our Information and Signposting Service which can offer support and advice on where to get help.

Healthwatch East Sussex is an independent watchdog for health and social care services. We gather feedback from local residents about their experiences of health and care and turn this into recommendations to share with local decision-makers such as the NHS, Adult Social Care, and the local authority.



Would you like to get involved in shaping better services?

## Service User Engagement Forum (SUEF)



The first meeting of the Service User Engagement Forum was held on 18th May with the participation of service users and a range of other stakeholders. In this online meeting, service users expressed their concerns and suggested areas that the service needs to improve.

The forum discussed about the future actions and are in the process of developing an action plan. We are so grateful for the participants and hoping to hold the next meeting on the 6th of July 2023.

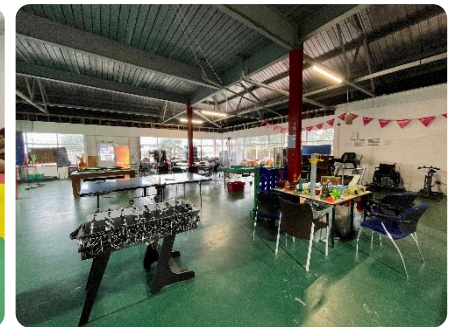
### Next meeting

Planned for a physical meeting to be held in October. Date and time will be informed.



[Click here or scan QR to join the forum](#)

## ACTIVITY GROUP



You are invited to our Wheelchair User's Activity Group!

Meet new friends and join in with sports, games, and craft activities in the session



August 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday

August 16<sup>th</sup> Wednesday



Up to 11 years 10.30 – 12.00

11 – 16 years 13.00 – 15.00



### Defiant Sports

Sovereign Retail Centre,  
Eastbourne BN23 6JH  
(Opposite Asda and Boots)

[Click the link to register](#)



@ESWS\_RossCare





## Apply for your carers card today!

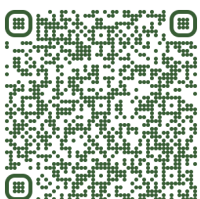


Many carers worry about what would happen to the person they care for if they were to have an accident themselves or were suddenly taken ill. The East Sussex Carers Card is designed to be kept with you, so that in an emergency anyone helping you is made aware that someone depends on you, should you ever be unable to communicate this yourself.

### The free East Sussex Carers Card does three things:

1. Identifies you as a carer, and that someone depends on you in an emergency
2. The option to connect to a back-up respite plan
3. A discount card, giving carers savings at businesses across East Sussex.

[Apply for a Carers Card here](#)



## Thanks for your donations...

We have received invaluable donations of usable wheelchair equipment from two generous citizens from East Sussex. We are coordinating with local charities to direct this much-needed equipment to other people in need of them. Please contact us if you wish to donate usable equipment that can be reconditioned and get a new life...



Mr David Johns



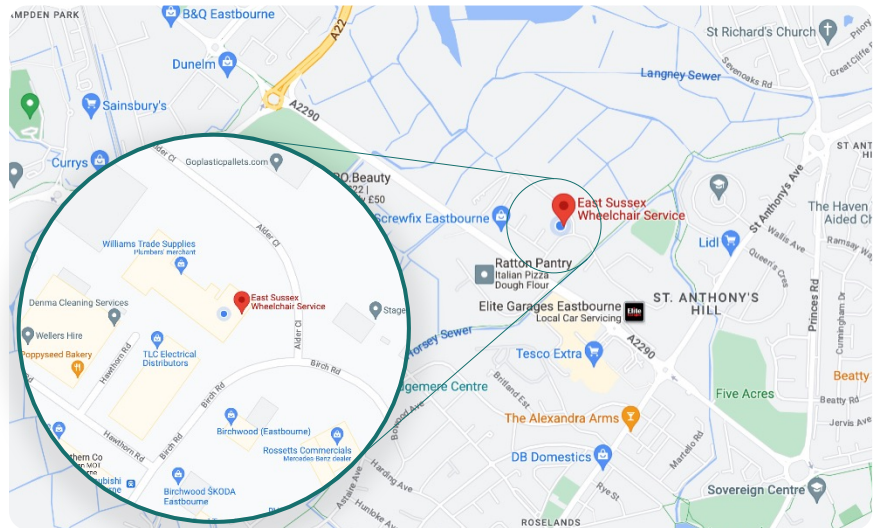
Mr Peter Ashworth

## How to reach us...

East Sussex Wheelchair Services, Unit 8 & 9 Alder Close, Eastbourne, BN23 6QF



Scan this QR code to get your navigation  
What3Wrods : [briskly.overjoyed.ages](https://www.briskly.overjoyed.ages)



## Contact us

You can contact your local service centre team on:

**0333 003 5619**

### Office in Eastbourne

East Sussex Wheelchair Services, Unit 8 & 9 Alder Close, Eastbourne, BN23 6QF

[EastSussexWheelchairService@RossCare.co.uk](mailto:EastSussexWheelchairService@RossCare.co.uk)

### Community Health and Engagement Officer - CHEO

[Jeewaranga.Gunasekera@RossCare.co.uk](mailto:Jeewaranga.Gunasekera@RossCare.co.uk)

Or

[EastSussexCHEO@RossCare.co.uk](mailto:EastSussexCHEO@RossCare.co.uk)

Mobile and WhatsApp

**07974 888 595**



Click the icons to reach us via our Social Media channels



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