

NHS Wheelchair and Repair Service West Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight HAI166

Information for residential and nursing homes

Issue 3: 24/11/2023



The aims of the Wheelchair Service

The service provides wheelchairs to people who have permanently impaired mobility to enable them to become independently mobile within their home, and outdoors where possible. Attendant-pushed or transit wheelchairs may be provided for service users in their own homes to enable assisted mobility between rooms and for frequent outings. Provision is subject to criteria that have been decided by local NHS service commissioners.

What do staff in nursing and residential homes need to know about the Wheelchair Service?

Care homes have their own responsibility for providing attendant-pushed wheelchairs for residents to use between rooms or in the grounds of the care home so our service will not provide wheelchairs for this purpose. Care homes also have a responsibility to provide suitable postural support for those who need it whether in their transit chairs or in armchairs. There are other circumstances where it is appropriate for us to provide a wheelchair and we hope you find this document helpful in deciding when to refer one of your residents.

If you have any further questions or concerns then please feel free to contact us.

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Wheelchair provision

General criteria

In order to be eligible for assessment and prescription of a wheelchair, individuals must need the wheelchair:

- For permanent use, defined as longer than six months, although shorter loan periods may be considered for people with a prognosis of less than six months' life expectancy.
- For frequent use, defined as:
 - more than four times per week AND;
 - over four hours each day.

Criteria for provision into care homes

Provision will be considered for those individuals within residential and nursing care homes who meet the general criteria and for whom the wheelchair will provide a means of independent mobility.

Individuals who are unable to independently self propel may be considered for a powered wheelchair for their independent mobility. Or an attendant propelled wheelchair only if they need substantial postural support.

Individuals must also be registered with a general practitioner (GP) in an area covered by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Alternatively, if they are not registered with any GP nationally, they must be a resident within the area covered by this ICB.

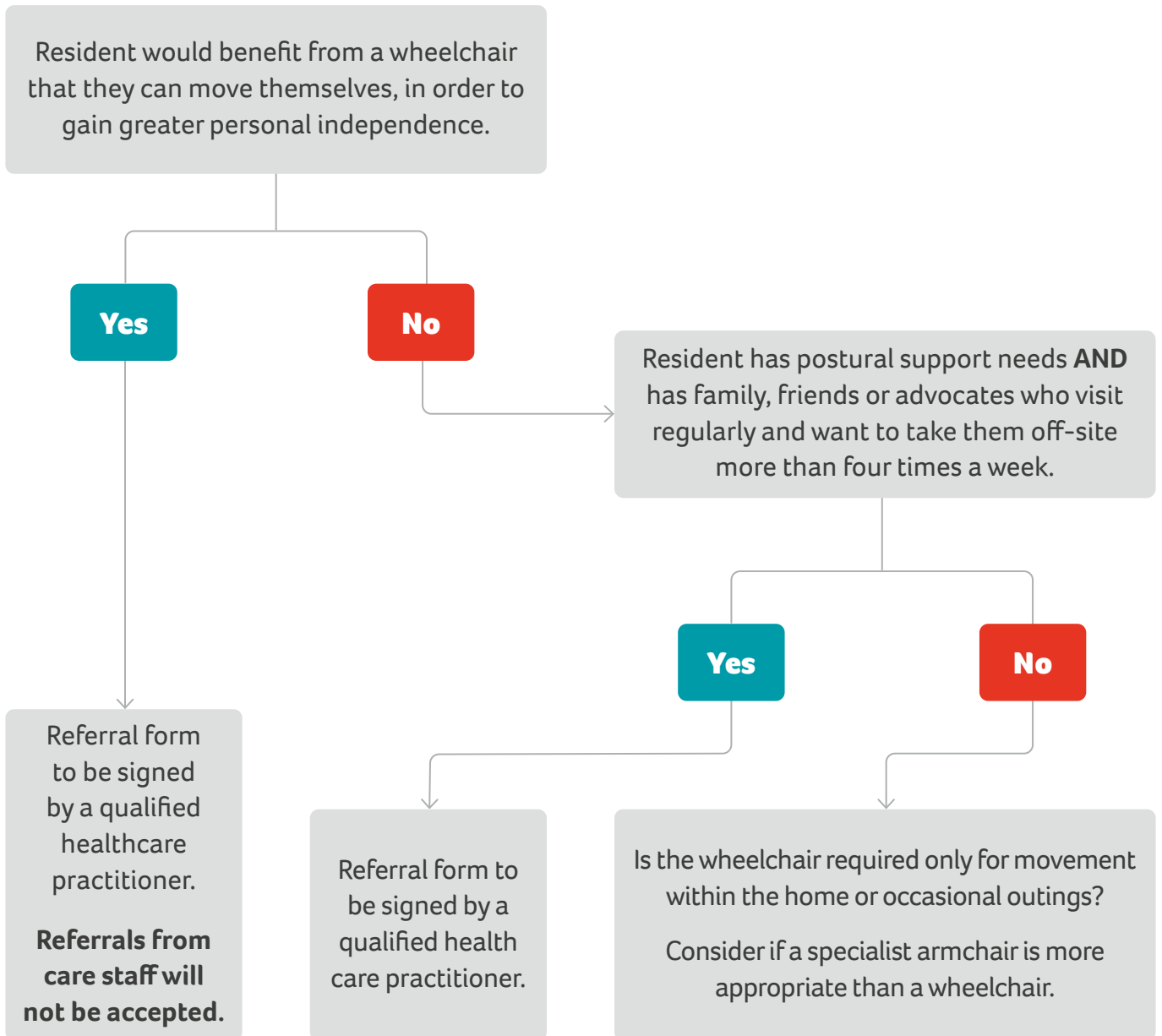
Where a resident's place is funded by an authority other than one of the ICBs listed above, it may be the responsibility of the funding authority to provide the assessment and a wheelchair. For more information please refer to NHS England's 'Who Pays?' guidance, which determines responsibility for payments to providers and can be viewed online at:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/who-pays.pdf



Eligibility flow diagram

For residents who do not have an existing wheelchair:



Eligible for provision

An appointment will be offered for a clinic with the Wheelchair Service.



Not eligible for provision

Equipment for this type of use is to be provided by the care home.

Referrals to the Wheelchair Service

Who can make a referral?

Referrals will only be accepted from a qualified healthcare practitioner.

Using the referral form

Referrals should be made on the designated referral form (this must include the section on who will be assisting the service user who is applying if the service user is applying for a posturally-supportive transit chair to be used off-site more than 4 times a week).

It is vital that the form is completed as fully and comprehensively as possible. Please contact us to discuss the referral if you are unsure.

What happens next?

Following referral, the application is triaged by a member of the clinical team. If the service user meets the criteria, the request will be prioritised and placed on a waiting list for assessment by a member of the Wheelchair Service clinical team. Assessments are arranged only after a service user is discharged to a care facility, and not while they are still in hospital or an inpatient in a rehabilitation unit.

Attending assessments

Assessments take place at one of the Wheelchair Service clinical sites. If transport to the assessment is required, ambulance transport can be arranged via the individual's GP.

Where relatives, friends or advocates have applied for a posturally-supportive transit wheelchair on a resident's behalf, for use in the community, they will be expected to attend the assessment and take responsibility for any wheelchair that is issued.

At the end of the assessment, the Wheelchair Service clinician will prescribe a wheelchair, if appropriate.

Note that equipment is issued on a loan basis to a specific named service user and must be used only by them. It remains the property of the providing Wheelchair Service at all times.



If, following triage or assessment, the referred individual is found to be ineligible for provision, they will be notified and signposting information will be provided.

Existing wheelchair users







If a resident already has a wheelchair on issue from the Wheelchair Service they can be re-referred to the service if the wheelchair no longer meets their needs, however this does not guarantee re-provision.

Provision to residents in care homes

What can we provide?

-  Manual wheelchairs and powered wheelchairs that are propelled or operated by the service user, with postural support if necessary. For these types of wheelchair, the service user must meet the relevant service criteria and the aim is to enable them to become independently mobile. Note that there are different criteria for manual and powered chair provision.
-  Attendant pushed wheelchairs with substantial postural support that will be used on at least four occasions a week by family members or friends to take the service user on outings into the wider community.

What are we unable to provide?

-  Wheelchairs that are pushed by care staff indoors within the care home to move individuals between equipment, between rooms or in the grounds. It is the responsibility of the home to provide wheelchairs, or other moving and handling equipment, as necessary, for transfers, general portering and nursing use within the home.
-  Wheelchairs in place of an armchair. For their own comfort and safety, residents who cannot mobilise independently using a wheelchair should transfer/be transferred into a supportive armchair for any long periods of sitting.
-  Specialist armchairs that can be pushed within the home and outside in paved areas of the garden.
-  Wheelchairs whose primary purpose is to assist in overcoming behavioural issues.
-  Wheelchairs that will be used by a number of residents. We provide each wheelchair to a specific person for their exclusive use, following an individual assessment. The equipment has been prescribed to meet that person's needs and may be totally unsuitable for someone else, putting them, carers and other residents at risk.
-  Assessments to advise on equipment where a resident does not meet the eligibility criteria.

If one of our wheelchairs is used for someone other than the person for whom it was prescribed, we will arrange for it to be collected and a replacement will not be issued.

Checklist to use prior to referring back to the Wheelchair Service

For service users who already have a wheelchair on issue from the Wheelchair Service

The wheelchair has been prescribed for the individual's mobility and postural needs. The wheelchair therapist will have provided any specific advice to the person at the time of the wheelchair being issued. However, there may be times when you notice changes and feel that the person may need re-assessment.

Please always consider first the length of time the person is sitting in their wheelchair and whether they need to relax in other seating for a while. A wheelchair is a mobility aid and is not designed to be used continuously for long periods of time. It is not a substitute for an armchair or a bed.

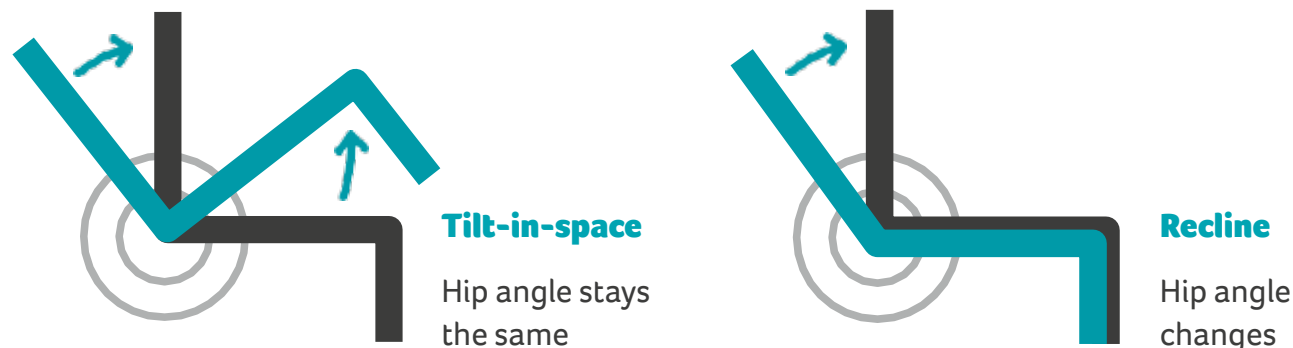
Here are some check points that you can consider yourself before contacting us:

Redness of the skin that does not fade after one hour of being out of the wheelchair

- Check if clothing or a hoist sling is bunched up. Note whether the redness appears with only specific types of clothing.
- Check the fit of the wheelchair or postural supports to ensure that a hand can just fit between the person's body and the wheelchair or supports. Check if the red area of skin is in contact with a particular part of the wheelchair.
- Check that the cushion has been positioned correctly within the seat and is the right way round.
- If the seat cushion has a soft gel section, knead the gel gently before each period of use so that the gel is evenly spread.
- Has the person's weight reduced or increased significantly? This may have an effect on pressure distribution and/or the person's posture in the seat.

Sliding forwards in the seat

- If the wheelchair has the option to tilt-in-space, ensure that the wheelchair is tilted before you hoist the person into the seat. This will ensure that their bottom is positioned at the back of the seat. Please check which feature is being used as some wheelchairs will recline as well as tilt.
- Check that the tilt-in-space facility is being used if required.



- Check that they are sitting correctly at the back of the seat. You can test this by leaning them forwards to see if their bottom is against the backrest.
- Check that the cushion has been positioned correctly within the seat and whether the cushion is sliding in the seat. This could be secured in place with Velcro.
- If there is a pelvic belt fitted, ensure it is firm and secure and not twisted or caught in another part of the chair. It should sit across the top of the thighs. A pelvic belt that is too loose will not support or maintain a good sitting position and this creates a risk to the person seated in the wheelchair. Pelvic belts are fitted for postural support.
- If the person is hoisted for transfers, the best seated position is achieved using the shortest strap of the hoist sling on their shoulders and the longest on their legs. There may be specific hoisting guidance for individuals. This should be recorded in their care plan.
- If the backrest recline is adjustable, check that the recline angle is correct for the person according to the positioning guidance provided when the wheelchair was issued. If the back angle is too open, this can increase the risk of the person sliding in the seat, particularly if the pelvic belt is not fitted/secured correctly.
- Check that the footplates are at the correct height. A general rule is that hips, knees and ankles should be at 90 degrees, although always check the positioning guidance as this can vary. Incorrect height can cause increased pressure or reduce the overall support in the wheelchair.

Maintenance and working order of parts

- When replacing straps (pelvic belts and harness) after washing, ensure they are fitted firmly and securely. The pelvic belt should sit across the top of the thighs.
- Check the clips and fastenings on any postural supports/harnesses to ensure they are secure and working properly.
- If the seat cushion has a soft gel section, knead the gel gently before each period of use so that it is spread out evenly.
- Daily checks of the wheelchair should include testing brake function and identification of any loose/missing parts. Refer to the wheelchair manual for more information on wheelchair maintenance checks.

When to contact us

- If you notice redness of the skin that does not fade within one hour of being out of the wheelchair and you have checked the points above.
- If there are any medical changes since the last assessment that affect the person's ability to use the wheelchair.
- If there is a significant weight gain or loss that is affecting the person's posture or pressure distribution when sitting in the wheelchair.
- If any parts of the equipment are broken or becoming worn (this can be reported as a repair not an assessment request unless you have identified any of the above).

Please contact the main telephone number to request a repair in the first instance.

Contacting the service

How to get in touch

You can get in touch with us by email, phone or post using the details below, our customer service opening hours are **08.00 – 17.00 Monday to Friday**.

If you need an urgent repair and it's outside of our normal working hours, please call the number below to be directed to one of our out-of-hours' engineers, who will be able to help you.

Chandlers Ford

Unit E1, Omega Enterprise Park, Chandlers Ford Business Park, Eastleigh, SO53 4SE

0333 003 8071

hants.iow.wcs@rosscare.co.uk

Isle of Wight

Unit 17, Barry Way, Newport Business Park, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5GY

0330 124 4489

You can also contact us via the feedback form on the dedicated service webpage: rosscare.co.uk/pages/hampshire-and-iow-wcs



Returning equipment

The wheelchair was prescribed for the individual only and should not be used by other residents. When a resident no longer requires a wheelchair that has been issued on loan from the Wheelchair Service, please contact the Wheelchair Service, and one of our customer service team will be happy to help you arrange a collection.

Useful links

Local providers

Consolor Ltd

Specialists in seating and mobility

www.consolor.co.uk

T: 01202 827650

E: admin@consolor.co.uk

Pressure Care Management

Specialist range of care seating,
mattresses and cushions

www.pressurecaremanagement.co.uk

T: 01264 366 330

E: info@pressurecaremanagement.com

Advanced Seating Solutions Ltd

Rehabilitation equipment

www.advancedseatingsolutions.com

T: 02392 006556

E: info@advancedseatingsolutions.com

Island Mobility

Range of mobility scooters, stairlifts,
power chairs and other aids

www.islandmobility.co.uk

T: 01983 530000

E: info@islandmobility.co.uk

NRS Healthcare

Community Housing and Adaptation
Occupational Therapy provider

www.nrshealthcare.com

T: 01983 215774

Specialist armchair providers

Ross Care do not recommend any particular specialist armchair company. The list below is for information only:

Kirton (Direct Healthcare Group)

www.directhealthcaregroup.com

Primacare

www.primacare.co.uk

Careflex

www.careflex.co.uk

Accora

www.accora.uk.com

Repose

www.reposefurniture.co.uk

Seating Matters

www.seatingmatters.com

Easy Chair Company

www.easychaircompany.co.uk

Information and advice

Disabled Living Foundation

www.dlf.org.uk

Independent Living

www.independentliving.co.uk



Specialist armchairs

Using specialist armchairs

A wheelchair should not be used as a substitute for a supportive armchair or a bed. Many parts of a wheelchair are metal and can pose a risk of injury in certain circumstances. The addition of straps or a harness to reduce this risk can be considered as restraint. Postural supports and pelvic belts or other harnesses are fitted for postural reasons only, following a comprehensive risk assessment which will include a Mental Capacity Assessment (MCA) and Deprivation Of Liberty Safeguarding (DOLS).

Specialist armchairs are strongly recommended for long periods of sitting as they can have inbuilt pressure relief, a pelvic belt for safety, if appropriate, (following risk assessment) and additional postural support which is usually well padded. Some are designed to be pushed within and between rooms, reducing the need for a transit wheelchair. It is recommended that any assessment for a specialist armchair is carried out by a trained clinical professional and it is advisable to find out if you can obtain a chair for a trial period before you buy. Please also refer to the Disabled Living Foundation guidelines for purchasing an armchair. NHS Wheelchair and Repair Service West Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight (IOW) is commissioned to provide wheelchairs primarily for an individual's mobility needs and is not commissioned to provide armchairs.

Examples of specialist armchairs

These are some examples of specialist armchairs that are designed for postural support and pressure relief. Some can be wheeled between rooms and within the grounds of the care home.

Disclaimer: NHS Wheelchair and Repair Service West Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight (IOW) does not recommend these chairs specifically but instead gives you options to consider.





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