



**Newark and Sherwood
Clinical Commissioning Group**



**Mansfield and Ashfield
Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Mid Nottinghamshire Specialist Wheelchair Service
Eligibility Criteria for the Supply of Wheelchairs and Related Equipment
July 2018**

The purpose of this document is to articulate the detailed eligibility criteria for the assessment, supply and maintenance of wheelchairs and related equipment.

1. Service Users

- The Mid Nottinghamshire Specialist Wheelchair Service will assess and provide equipment to individuals who have long-term mobility problems.
- Service Users must be registered with a GP in Mansfield, Ashfield, Newark or Sherwood.

2. Referrals

- A service user with a long term mobility problem (someone who will require permanent use of a wheelchair) can be referred to any by any Health or Social Care Professional.
- All new referrals should be complete and include referrer contact details, should any queries arise.
- The referral must include the service users registered GP to ensure eligibility.
- Copies of referrals sent to a central and secure nhs.net email are acceptable to assist in accelerating the assessment process.
- Incomplete referrals will be returned to the referrer and therefore delay assessment and provision.
- Referrals will be screened by appropriately-trained staff and/or students/trainees under supervision, within 2 working days of receipt.
- Once in the system, clients can self-refer directly. If issues or problems arise Health or social care professionals can contact the service directly. This can be done by any means such as telephone, secure email or in writing. The wheelchair service may need to ask the client's GP or Health or social care professional for further information.

3. Residential and Nursing Home Provision

The Mid Nottinghamshire Specialist Wheelchair Service does not provide standard transit wheelchairs to clients in residential or nursing homes – this is the responsibility of the home (Dept of Health 2001 & 2004; Integrating Community Equipment Services 2003).

The following criteria apply:

- Self propelling wheelchairs may be provided for clinical need to allow service users to mobilise independently and safely.
- Powered wheelchairs may be provided for clinical need if residents are unable to self propel. Service users must undergo and pass the full assessment process outlined for powered wheelchairs and be able to use the equipment independently.
- Comfort wheelchairs and/or special seating may be provided for clinical need to enable mobility while maintaining postural deformity, facilitating feeding, etc.
- If mobility is not required then service users will not be prescribed special seating. This can be achieved via static seating which is not part of the service remit.

In all instances mobility and quality of life must be considerably enhanced by enabling clients to access local services and amenities, including day centres and adult education.

4. Assessment

- Clinical assessments will be carried out at the venue most relevant to the circumstances of each individual case.
- Such venues may include Mansfield Community Hospital, the client's home, place of education or work, in-patient setting, etc. Subject to demand, a clinic base at Newark Hospital will be considered.
- The assessment will be conducted by the member(s) of staff deemed most appropriate during the screening process – this may include students/trainees under supervision.
- Referring professionals may be requested to attend assessments where their input/advocacy is pertinent. If the referrer wishes to attend they can indicate this in the referral and the service will endeavour to coordinate this.

5. Equipment Provided by The Mid Nottinghamshire Specialist Wheelchair Service

- Wheelchairs are issued first and foremost to provide mobility for the individual.
- Clients who also present with needs such as postural support, pressure care, etc will only have these issues considered and addressed if they meet eligibility criteria for wheelchair provision.
- The service does not provide static seating therefore wheelchairs will not be issued for use in this way.
- All wheelchairs and related equipment will be issued on the basis of clinical need.
- Eligibility criteria will be applied consistently by the service staff to all individual cases.
- The varying presentation and range of conditions encountered within the service can result in difficulty establishing eligibility. In situations where eligibility is unclear, cases will be discussed at length in clinical team meetings (MDT) while further supporting information may be sought from Health and or social care Professionals who are involved in the individual's care subject to service user consent to do so.
- Ultimately the decision of the Service Manager is final.
- Documentation must reflect and justify the clinical reasoning and a letter outlining this should be sent to the client and copied to the referrer.
- Should a client wish to complain/appeal about such a decision, they should be given the opportunity to discuss their case with the Service Manager.
- If the matter is not resolved to the service users satisfaction then they will be directed to the service provider's complaints procedure.

6. Standard Wheelchairs

- Basic manual wheelchairs are issued to meet the clinical need for mobility.
- It must be demonstrated that an individual will benefit from frequent and regular use of such equipment in their home environment and to access local services and amenities.
- Clients must have a permanent or long term need of a wheelchair for 2 or more days per week. If required for occasional use, individuals will be advised to access free wheelchair loans by services such as shopping centres, supermarkets, theatres, etc.
- Standard off-the-shelf wheelchairs will be provided wherever suitable and delivered directly to the client if possible, to include all current standard, transit and self-propelling models, in a variety of sizes and weight limits.

- An assessment may be required to confirm the need for a wheelchair and to determine the most suitable type, size, etc for the service user.

7. Prescription Wheelchairs

- If a standard wheelchair is unsuitable, a clinical assessment will be carried out by a Wheelchair Therapist or Rehabilitation Engineer to enable provision of a prescription wheelchair.
- There are a number of prescription wheelchairs available on the NHS.
- The service will provide the most suitable model based on clinical need.

8. Powered Wheelchairs

Powered wheelchair provision is based primarily on the need for indoor mobility within the service user's home. Outdoor use can then be considered as an extension of this need.

- Powered wheelchairs will not be issued solely for outdoor use.
- The service user will be asked for additional environmental information
- The assessment will take place in the most appropriate location which could be the clinic or home

To qualify for the provision of a powered wheelchair a service user must:

- Meet the standard Mid Nottinghamshire Specialist Wheelchair Service criteria
- Be unable to mobilise or to use a self-propelling wheelchair to access their home environment due to the nature of the condition or disability
- Have adequate internal and external access to their home
- Be medically fit to use the equipment safely – this includes vision, cognition and perception.
- Service Users who have had fits or blackouts of any kind must be fit-free for one year prior to assessment. This will be established via a GP questionnaire and practical training/testing.
- Undergo training and pass all practical tests
- Failure to fulfil any part of this process will render the client ineligible.

Clients who are issued powered wheelchairs will be reviewed annually to ensure continued safe use. If their ability to do so deteriorates below the accepted standard then the powered wheelchair will be retrieved by the service.

The Mid Nottinghamshire Specialist Wheelchair Service will not consider powered wheelchair provision for:

- Service users in acute stages of illness.
- Service users undergoing active rehabilitation.
- Service Users whose prognosis is terminal, except MND clients.

9. Supply of Powered Wheelchairs to Children

Children will undergo the same assessment and testing procedure as adults. There is no lower age limit for supply but children must demonstrate independent control and awareness. If this cannot be achieved then an adult must accompany the child when using the wheelchair at all times. The child must achieve a safe and acceptable standard of use under adult supervision to enable provision.

The assessment will include discussions with all involved as to where the powered wheelchair will be used and additional environmental checks will be carried out accordingly

e.g. place of education.

Powered wheelchairs will not be provided to children solely for use in a place of education (including further/higher education).

10. Special Seating

Off-the-shelf and/or bespoke special seating can be issued to service users who require such postural support, assuming they meet the criteria for supply of mobility equipment.

Special seating equipment will not be supplied in cases where mobility is not required – such demand can be met by static seating which is not part of the service remit.

11. Buggies (Pushchairs)

The Service will assess all children and supply appropriate mobility equipment. This may be in the form of a buggy.

Equipment will not usually be issued to children under the age of 30 – 36 months unless referred by a Health Professional specialising in Paediatrics.

In such instances the professional in question should be involved in the assessment process to ensure adequate postural support and prevent over- seating, which can affect development.

12. Wheelchair Cushions

These shall be provided to meet clinical need and can be issued to provide comfort, postural support, pressure relief or any combination of these factors.

The wheelchair service will only provide the appropriate cushion to fit on the wheelchair issues by the service and not for any static seating system

13. Accessories

Accessories will be provided where deemed appropriate by the Wheelchair Therapist or Rehabilitation Engineer, according to clinical need.

14. Modifications

A Rehabilitation Engineer or competent Wheelchair Therapist must approve all modifications, ensuring that the design is in accordance with recommended guidelines. Such work can only be carried out by these individuals and/or contracted repair staff.

15. Second Wheelchairs

Second wheelchairs will only be issued to powered wheelchair users in the form of a standard manual wheelchair. This acts as a back-up for use in situations where powered wheelchairs are unsuitable, e.g. due to lack of access to buildings or transport, or if the powered wheelchair breaks down.

16. Short-term Loan Wheelchairs

There are two categories of short term loan wheelchairs:

1. Where there is a requirement for a short term and temporary use wheelchair– up to 12 weeks – and resulting from trauma or orthopaedic surgery, the Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service (ICELs) will provide this service. Should the need for a long-term wheelchair, become apparent, it will be the responsibility of the Authorised Prescriber to make a request for a wheelchair from the appropriate Long-term Wheelchair Service. Once a long-term wheelchair has been provided, the Authorised Prescriber will inform the Service Provider so that arrangements can be made for the collection and recycling of the short-term wheelchair.
2. Where there is a requirement for transit or self-propelling standard model wheelchairs- for a period of up to six months to those clients who are terminally ill and have mobility problems. These wheelchairs will be provided by the service.

These service users will be given priority to enable them to return home and as the requirement is urgent the following will apply:

Specific eligibility is as follows:

- Short-term loan wheelchair referrals must be completed by a Health Professional.
- Wheelchairs will be made available as soon as the referral has been authorised by service staff, subject to stock. Consequently these referrals will be processed without an assessment of the client.
- Once the wheelchair is available, it must be collected (by client, family, friend or carer) from the service.
- The wheelchair must be returned (by client, family, friend or carer) when it is no longer required.
- If the wheelchair is subsequently required for longer than six months then the service must be contacted to authorise the extended period. This is purely for administrative purposes.

17. Provision of Powered Wheelchairs and Related Equipment for Clients with End-stage Degenerative Conditions

As the standard criteria for the provision of indoor and/or outdoor powered wheelchairs virtually excludes this group from provision, special criteria have been drawn up in an attempt to meet some of these service users mobility needs.

The critical aspect for this group is a fast response to mobility needs for indoor and outdoor mobility. As a compromise, the provision of special controls may not be considered unless they are readily available i.e. reusable and/or off-the-shelf.

EPICs (electrically powered indoor chair) will be provided to clients who pass an abbreviated testing procedure, on the following basis:

- Referral by a Health Professional for consideration of a powered wheelchair
- Where the service users mobility is impacting on function and quality of life
- Where fatigue or the effort of walking or self propelling compromises function and the service user would benefit from the provision of a powered wheelchair
- The service user passes the indoor test to demonstrate adequate driving skills
- The home environment is suitably accessible, as assessed by the Rehabilitation Engineer or Wheelchair Therapist.

EPIOCs (electrically powered indoor & outdoor chair) may be provided quickly on completion of relevant testing. Additional features, such as tilt-in-space, head and postural supports, etc can also be considered as appropriate.

The provision of an EPIOC depends on the following;

- Written evidence from the service users Consultant or GP stating that they are medically safe to drive outdoors or
- The referring Health Professional and/or Wheelchair Therapist assess the service user as having competent visual perception and cognitive processing to control the wheelchair safely.
- Service users can demonstrate competent outdoor driving skills
- The home environment is suitably accessible, as assessed by the Rehabilitation Engineer or Wheelchair Therapist.
- Where a ramp is required to get into the house, this needs to be secure ramps of 50mm (1:12 slope) with kerb or edging along the edge for safety. A steeper slope will be considered if stability testing indicates the slope to be safe with the individual chair and person. The service is not responsible for fitting ramps

Service Users cannot be provided with outdoor powered wheelchairs if they have uncontrolled epilepsy (need to be fit free for 12 months) or are taking medication that impacts on cognition or response speed.

Provision of equipment under this policy is subject to stock availability.