



Personal Wheelchair Budgets Your questions answered

ROS129

Information and guidance for service users

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

What does this mean?

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.



The aim of this booklet is to provide information about the options available. If you have any questions that have not been answered here, please contact the Wheelchair Service with your query.

Remember that a referral to the Wheelchair Service may not always result in provision of a wheelchair but the Wheelchair Service can suggest other agencies or support networks that might be able to assist instead.

Eligibility

Who can apply for a PWB?

Any individual who meets the eligibility criteria for provision of an NHS wheelchair and who qualifies for a new or replacement wheelchair may apply for a PWB. A PWB may not always be the right choice for you. Your individual needs will be discussed with you at your assessment.

What if I already have an NHS wheelchair on loan?

If you have been using an NHS wheelchair and your clinical needs have changed, you can request a reassessment and a PWB may be considered if your current wheelchair is not meeting your clinical needs.

What are the eligibility criteria for provision of an NHS wheelchair?

In order to be eligible for an NHS wheelchair you must have a permanent impairment or medical condition that seriously affects your ability to walk, lasting more than 6 months. The full service criteria can be found on the Wheelchair Service website.

I am acting on behalf of a relative who is unable to make an informed choice. Would they be eligible for a PWB?

Yes, as long as they meet the other eligibility criteria. If you are acting on someone's behalf, you will be included in the process.

What can a PWB be used for?

The PWB can only be used towards the purchase of a wheelchair (including accessories) that meets your clinical needs. It cannot be exchanged for money.

Can a PWB be used for either a manual or a powered wheelchair?

There are additional eligibility criteria for powered wheelchair provision. Unless you meet these additional criteria you will be assessed for a manual wheelchair and the PWB will be based on the manual wheelchair that would meet your mobility needs.

Can I purchase a wheelchair and claim back my PWB retrospectively?

No, you will need to be assessed by the Wheelchair Service first. If you are eligible and offered a Third Party PWB, we will need to check the prescription of the wheelchair you have chosen and authorise it before you can place an order.

Is the PWB payment made to me?

No, the PWB value is not paid directly to an individual. If you choose the Third Party option, your chosen supplier will send a request for payment of the PWB value to the Wheelchair Service when you have received your wheelchair.

Considering your needs

Do I have to be assessed by the Wheelchair Service?

Yes. The only exception is if you have been assessed by one of our approved external prescribers, for example if you have been seen by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Physiotherapist (PT) while you were a hospital inpatient. In this case, we will issue the NHS wheelchair prescribed by the hospital therapist directly to you.

At all other times, you will be assessed by one of the Wheelchair Service clinicians: an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist, a Therapy Assistant, a Rehabilitation Engineer, or a Rehabilitation Engineering Technician. All are trained to be able to assess your needs.

We may ask your permission to contact other healthcare professionals about ways of meeting your needs.

What information should I bring to my assessment appointment?

Please bring any information that may be relevant, including details of any other equipment you use in daily life and of recent/planned medical interventions. If you have recently been seen by other healthcare professionals, it is helpful to bring their contact details. If you use a hoist to transfer, please bring your sling with you to your appointment.

Before your assessment in the Wheelchair Service clinic, you will be sent a questionnaire, known as the **WATCh Outcome tool**, to complete. The questionnaire asks you to consider 16 areas of your life where your wheelchair might be of help. Of these, you select the 5 most important to you and score your satisfaction with each. Whichever areas you choose, you will be asked the same questions again after you have been provided with your wheelchair.

There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will form the basis of a discussion with your Wheelchair Service clinician about your health and wellbeing outcomes, not all of which may be met by an NHS wheelchair, and this is where your PWB options might help.

What happens during my clinic appointment?

You will be asked more questions about your medical condition and how this affects your mobility and posture. Measurements will be taken and you will have a physical examination to establish any postural support you may require

Your clinician will work with you on a personalised care and support plan that summarises your needs and identifies what type of wheelchair and which features you need to meet your mobility needs. With this detailed specification, the most suitable model from the Wheelchair Service range can be selected and this is your free NHS provision.

At this stage your PWB options will be discussed fully and you may be provided with information about other services that could be helpful in supporting your wider needs.

Personal Wheelchair Budget options

Wheelchair services are commissioned by the NHS to provide you with a wheelchair that meets your mobility needs, including the postural support and pressure care you require when using your wheelchair.

In most instances the wheelchair that is offered free by the NHS will meet these needs and you will be happy to accept it, however, there may be additional features that would help you achieve your wider health and wellbeing outcomes or different wheelchair models. The Wheelchair Services aim to meet your clinical needs but not every "want".

The four options available are:

1. Notional NHS PWB

You will be shown the free NHS wheelchair that would be prescribed to meet your individual clinical needs. This will be from a range that has already been agreed with service commissioners. 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 (also known as Notional Plus)

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 (also known as Notional Plus)

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. Again, 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 different model of 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. 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 a Class 2 powered vehicle to purchase a Class 3 vehicle.

Personal Wheelchair Budget options

Example Scenarios

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I want to be able to raise the seat on my powered wheelchair so that I can be at the same level as my friends. 55

This is not a mobility need but a lifestyle need. The Wheelchair Service is not commissioned to provide seat risers on powered wheelchairs, but, under this scheme, you could have this feature added to the wheelchair provided by the NHS.



The cost of adding this feature has to be met by you or another agency.



Are there PWB options that might not be suitable for my personal circumstances?



It is not always appropriate to offer all Personal Wheelchair Budget options. If you have rapidly changing, or very complex needs, it may not be clinically appropriate to use your PWB budget outside of NHS-commissioned services (Third Party option) as your wheelchair may need regular adaptions and changes to suit your changing needs.



What if I need specialist cushions or postural supports, including custom seating?



These items will be provided by the Wheelchair Service directly from their agreed equipment range. If such equipment is required, you still have PWB options for the wheelchair or wheelbase to which the equipment will be fitted for mobility purposes. The chosen wheelchair or wheelbase must be compatible with the equipment provided by the Wheelchair Service. Your wheelchair clinician will be able to give you some guidance on this.



I want to choose a wheelchair that I have seen in a shop but the Wheelchair Service does not provide this model.



You can use the value of the wheelchair that would have been provided by the NHS towards a wheelchair of your choice as long as it meets your clinical needs and is crash worthy (safe for traveling in a vehicle).

Personal Wheelchair Budget options

Comparing the options

Notional PWB options			Third Party PWB
NHS provision	Тор-Uр	Alternative	
You can have a clinically-appropriate model from the NHS Wheelchair Service range	You can have additional features fitted to the wheelchair provided by the NHS	You can upgrade to an Alternative model within the NHS Wheelchair Service range	You can choose a model of wheelchair outside of the NHS range, provided it meets your clinical needs
The wheelchair is owned by the Wheelchair Service			You own the wheelchair
The Wheelchair Service is responsible for all maintenance & repair costs			You pay all repair costs
No cost to you	You pay the cost of the additional features PLUS The cost of any replacement Top-Up parts	You pay the difference between NHS provision and your chosen wheelchair	You pay the difference between NHS provision and your chosen wheelchair

If you decide to pursue a PWB we also have a Next Steps guide available to offer you further guidance and information.



Contacting the service

How to get in touch

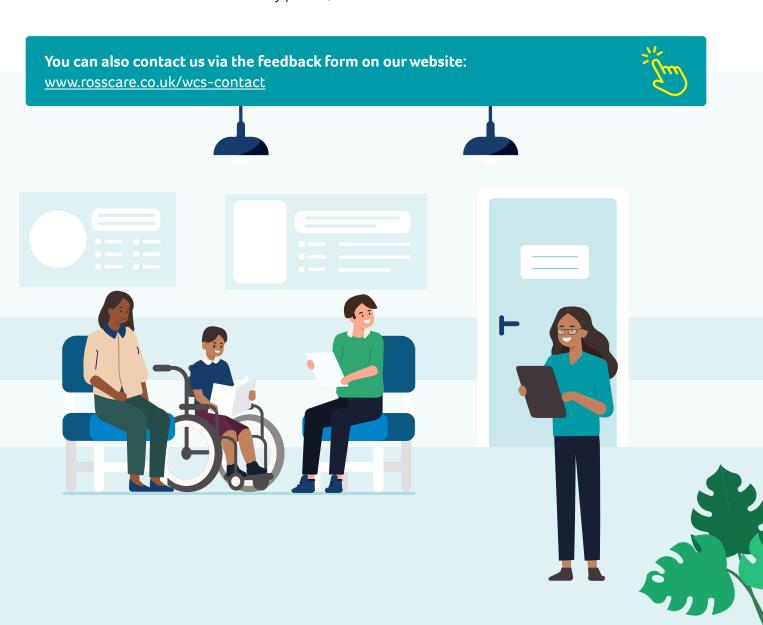
You can get in touch with us by email, phone or post. Please check our website for further details and for customer services opening times.

Raising disputes and complaints

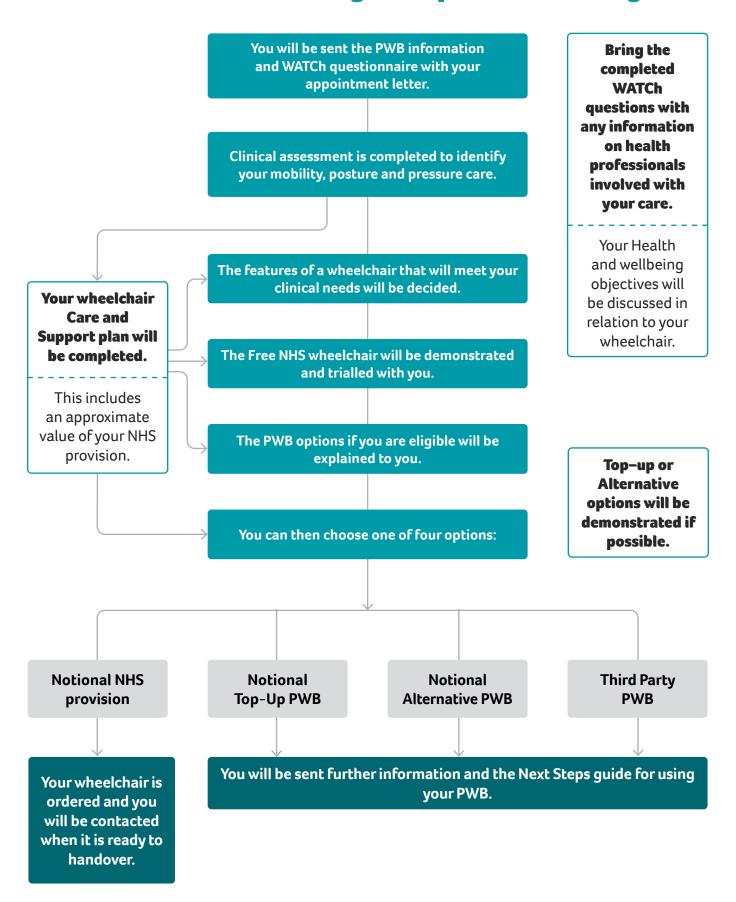
If you, or a service user you represent, have not received the level of service you expect from us, then we want you to tell us as soon as possible. We encourage you to raise any concerns you have with the Wheelchair Service manager in the first instance, as they may be able to resolve any problems straight away.

We take complaints very seriously and all complaints are treated in the strictest of confidence.

Please do not hesitate to contact us by phone, email or via the feedback form on our website.



Personal Wheelchair Budgets: options flow diagram



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