

Eligibility Criteria For Wheelchairs & Associated Equipment Provided By Bedfordshire and Luton Wheelchair Service

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1: Introduction

The eligibility criteria for wheelchairs and associated equipment is produced for the benefit of professionals and users of the Wheelchair Service (WCS) within Bedfordshire and Luton.

Currently the WCS is hosted by East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) (April 2018) and operates from: Steppingley Hospital, Steppingley, Bedford, MK45 1AB. Tel: 01525 631349

- 1.1 All equipment purchased by the NHS and issued to service users remains the property of the NHS. Bedfordshire and Luton WCS will maintain and repair free of charge. Currently the contract for delivery, collection, repair, maintenance, and refurbishment of equipment is awarded to: Millbrook Healthcare, Unit J, City Park, Swiftfields, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 1LT. Tel: 0333 234 0303 – Option 2.
- 1.2 Equipment purchased using a Third-Party Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB) (see section 4) is the property of the service user and maintenance monies are provided at the start of the Third Party PWB.

2: WCS Structure

The WCS will provide the framework to clinically **assess**, and then **provide** appropriate wheelchairs with associated equipment to clients with long-term mobility impairment. Reviews will be offered to service users who are in receipt of a Personal Wheelchair Budget in line with the legal Right to have Guidance on Personal Health Budgets. Once provision is established, the WCS will **maintain (through subcontractors)** the equipment provided and will offer reassessment as required

- 2.1 Clients who require a **specialist** wheelchair for **all** their mobility (indoors and outdoors) are assessed by the specialist WCS team based at Steppingley. Clients with complex postural needs, pressure care issues and rapidly deteriorating conditions are seen by the specialist team.
- 2.2 Clients who require a **manual** wheelchair for **outdoor only or occasional use** are assessed by Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists from the adult community and paediatric services. They are trained to provide basic wheelchairs and pressure cushions from the Community Equipment Store (CES)
- 2.3 In general terms this means that in accordance with statutory requirements the WCS within Bedfordshire and Luton offers a service whereby:
 - 2.3.1 **Assessment:**

Clients are assessed by Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) led team, working within wheelchair or community services and have undertaken WCS Prescriber or specialist training. Staff members working within the WCS and community services are committed to service development, evaluation, and continual improvement of both the service and equipment provided. Assessments may be undertaken in a variety of locations including all environments where a wheelchair will be used by the client.

Personal, social and health information will be gathered with consent for each client referred to the service.

Following assessment, a personalised care or support plan will be completed with the client to meet their individual clinical need.

Every client issued with equipment from the WCS and community services is able to request a review and reassessment.

Each client issued with a new wheelchair will be offered a regular review.

Users taking up the PWB third party option will be reviewed at the end of the budget term.

Any contact with the WCS on behalf of the client will be documented to ensure accuracy and continuity of care.

2.3.2 Provision:

Equipment will be discussed with service users as part of their personalisation plan. Provision of equipment is subject to meeting eligibility criteria for client's assessed clinical need. Wherever possible, recommended equipment will be chosen from a regularly reviewed list of equipment. Use of a personal wheelchair budget will enable more choice and access for those who do not wish to use equipment from the reviewed list. The equipment on the list will have been chosen specifically to ensure that clinical need is met whilst providing value for money and compliance with the provider's controls assurance procurement strategy.

Prescribed equipment will be issued in accordance with a handover procedure, with clients provided with information on the safe use of their equipment

2.3.3 Maintenance:

Maintenance to NHS wheelchairs will be carried out by WCS approved repairer. It is the responsibility of the client or their carer to ensure that faults are reported to the approved repairer as soon as possible.

The WCS will not maintain accessories fitted to the wheelchair by users, such as power packs or attendant brakes.

The WCS is unable to offer any financial assistance towards maintaining privately purchased wheelchairs i.e. those not purchased as part of the PWB schemes

The WCS reserves the right to take appropriate action should it be apparent that privately fitted accessories have contributed to a fault in the wheelchair or its safe use. This action may include withdrawal of the wheelchair or a charge for incurred repair costs.

Where an onsite repair is not possible and the wheelchair is taken away for an extended period, the WCS will attempt to provide a temporary loan chair. This may not be identical to the original wheelchair on issue, and powered wheelchair users are expected to use their manual backup wheelchair if they have been provided with one.

The WCS reserves the right to take appropriate action should it become apparent that the client has not complied with the Conditions of Loan issued with the wheelchair. This action may include withdrawal of the wheelchair or a charge for incurred repair costs.

For further information on the structure within which the WCS works, please see:

April 2018: Healthcare standards for NHS commissioned WCS.

July 2012: Rehabilitation engineering for wheelchairs and special seating.

Feb 2012: Rehabilitation engineering standards of practice.

April 2011: Safety of wheelchair occupants in road passenger vehicles.

Dec 2012: Who Pays? Determining responsibility for payments to providers.

Dec 2012: Eastern Region guide for equipment in care homes.

These documents are available from: www.wheelchairmanagers.org.uk

Health and Social Care Act 2008 and Regulations 2010.

Mental Health Act 1983.

3: General Criteria

- 3.1 Bedfordshire and Luton WCS and will assess referred clients for equipment to meet **their clinical mobility needs** following a personalised conversation providing that the following criteria are met:
- 3.1.1** Referred client is registering with a GP within Bedfordshire or Luton.
- 3.1.2** Referred client has a permanent impairment or medical condition that results in them having complete or substantial impairment to independent mobility.
- 3.1.3** Clients will either require specialist wheelchair and associated equipment for all their functional mobility or a standard manual wheelchair for regular outdoor use for a period in excess of six months.
- 3.1.4** Clients require the support of a wheelchair for mobility on a regular and frequent basis defined as: greater than 4 times per week and over 3 hours each day.
- 3.1.5** The referral, prescription or reassessment request is received by the WCS on the WCS referral form (appendix 1). Copies of the current forms being used are available to qualified health care professionals from the WCS administrators.
As IT services change it is planned that this will be done paperless in the future.
- 3.1.6** All initial referrals must be endorsed by a qualified healthcare professional or accredited wheelchair prescriber (PIN number to be quoted).
- 3.1.7** The minimum age for referral is 36 months. There is no upper age limit.
Requests for assessment of a child younger than 36 months must be made by a qualified health professional with supporting documentation (photographs and assessments) that demonstrates that a standard high street buggy is clinically unsuitable. The child would need to have significant postural control issues, be at risk of developing a postural deformity, complex medical needs and meet the criteria for specialist postural seating (section 14) before provision could be made.
- 3.1.8** Equipment will be provided solely as an aid to mobility. Other sources of funding including use of Personal Budgets should be explored where elements of the wheelchair's features are required for education, social interaction/play, leisure pursuits, development, activities of daily living, work.
- 3.1.9** Modifications and accessories may be issued for use in the wheelchair to address clinical and mobility needs, i.e. postural support, pressure care, and client safety. Equipment that could be used to restrain a service user will not be considered.
- 3.1.10** Provision of equipment is subject to the current Conditions of Loan and withdrawing the equipment will be considered if the conditions of loan are breached.
Equipment will only be replaced if when reviewed it ceases to meet the assessed clinical needs of the client or following receipt of a report from Approved Repairer field service engineer or a Rehabilitation Engineer stating equipment is beyond economical repair or is obsolete.
If equipment is stolen a crime number is required before it is replaced. Equipment damaged outside of normal wear and tear should be covered with the user's home, specialist or travel insurance as specified in the conditions of loan.
- 3.1.11** The client or their primary carer needs to demonstrate safe and appropriate use of the equipment in the intended environment.
- 3.1.12** Adaptations to the client's place of residence may be needed to ensure the service user's safety and to maximize accessibility (e.g. widening of doorways, provision of ramping or re-arranging furniture).
It is not the responsibility of the Wheelchair to facilitate adaptations/alterations. As the home environment is integral to the prescription of a wheelchair, the clinical pathway cannot be taken to conclusion until adaptations are completed.
The referral will not be processed or prescription of a wheelchair made until the service user or their representative contact the Wheelchair Service to advise that adaptations are complete, at which point an environmental assessment will be undertaken.
It may be necessary to repeat previous elements of the assessment (e.g. driving assessment, information from the GP); especially where medical conditions are known to deteriorate or medication may have changed.
- 3.1.13** All wheelchairs and seating bases comply with crash testing regulations and could safely be used in transport, unless this has been discussed, a risk assessment completed and agreed with the

client (e.g. where a highly active user requests a lower back rest height or a specific postural headrest is deemed to be more appropriate).

Stability testing is available at the WCS clinic to 12°.

- 3.1.14** Independent Funding Request (IFR) policy BCCG (due for review in Oct 2019) equipment requests will only be considered via the IFR process if the request has been rejected by the Bedfordshire and Luton Specialists Equipment panel.

3.2 Exclusions from NHS wheelchair provision:

3.2.1 Add on power packs and power assisted wheels.

3.2.2 Scooters and EPOCs (Electrically Powered Outdoor Chairs).

3.2.3 Equipment for sole use within educational establishments, work environments, leisure facilities. Equipment for the sole use of accessing transport; e.g. school transport and day care transport.

3.2.4 Wheelchairs which have seat risers, standers, or have facilities which enhance functional ability, as opposed to mobility. These items may be arranged as part of a wider personal health budget package

3.2.5 Clients who are able to walk but for various reasons but refuse to do so. We are not able to provide equipment for behavioural or restraint issues. Any equipment which could be used to restrain a service user is subject to a DOLS assessment

Diagnosis such as epilepsy or autism unless there are underlying chronic mobility issues.

3.2.6 Accessories and modifications over and above those that have been clinically prescribed by other services which cannot be easily removed or operated independently from the wheelchair. (e.g. mobile arm supports and communication devices)

3.2.7 Tricycles or bicycles

Trike attachment: Bedfordshire and Luton WCS doesn't permit the attachment of a trike unit to any wheelchair issued by the service.

3.2.8 Attendant (transit) wheelchairs will not be provided to residential or nursing care homes. Clients living in a care home environment who require use of an attendant propelled (transit) wheelchair for mobility solely within the home or its grounds, should have this need met by the care home or family.

Individual residents with a complex postural need which cannot be managed in a standard wheelchair can be assessed by the WCS but equipment provision is excluded from NHS WCS provision

See section 3.1.4 for those accessing the wider community and section 21 for care home specific information

4. Personal Wheelchair Budgets (PWB).

PWBs were introduced by the Government to give people greater choice in the selection of manual and powered wheelchairs. They replace the existing voucher scheme and all clients will have a right to be offered a PWB.

They offer the client the option of staying within the standard NHS provision, or purchasing accessories or a different wheelchair with the NHS range or receiving a Third Party PWB towards the cost of a different wheelchair. In effect, this means that there are four choices open to the client

4.1 Existing NHS provision (Notional PWB)

The client is assessed and prescribed the wheelchair from the list in Appendix 2 which best meets their clinical need. This wheelchair is maintained and repaired free of charge.

4.2 Notional Top up PWB

Existing NHS provision, with the client (or other external agency) making a financial contribution for accessories.

The client is assessed and prescribed the wheelchair from the list in Appendix 2 which best meets their clinical need. This wheelchair is maintained and repaired free of charge. The client purchases the non-prescribed accessories; these are fitted to the NHS owned wheelchair but not

maintained by the NHS. The NHS is not required to return the accessories when the wheelchair is returned to the NHS, either because it not required by the user the wheelchair or is beyond economical repair.

4.3 Notional Alternative PWB

Existing provision with the client (or other external agency) making a financial contribution for an alternative NHS wheelchair.

The client is assessed and offered the wheelchair from the list in Appendix 2 which best meets their clinical need. The client (or external agency) opts to pay the additional cost to obtain a different wheelchair from within the NHS range (e.g. have a mid-wheel EPIC rather than a rear-drive EPIC or a lighter manual chair or a different style of special seating base). This wheelchair remains the property of the NHS and it is maintained and repaired free of charge. The client is not able to keep the chair once it is beyond economical repair.

4.4 Third Party PWB Option

Following an assessment at the WCS, the client can approach approved non-NHS wheelchair suppliers, and choose to buy a wheelchair from a range not supplied by the NHS. The wheelchair selected by the user requires approval from the WCS to ensure that it meets the client's mobility requirements. A PWB is then issued at the base price of the wheelchair that would have been prescribed – any difference in cost between that of the prescribed wheelchair and the one selected by the client is paid for by the client. A calculated percentage of additional funding is added to the PWB for maintenance and repair costs. A PWB is considered to be the client's NHS wheelchair provision for an agreed amount of time: 5 years for adults and 2.5 years for children

4.5 General terms of the PWB:

- 4.5.1** The client must meet the WCS criteria for the provision of a new wheelchair and any associated equipment
- 4.5.2** The Third party PWB will only be reassessed before the end of its term if the equipment ceases to meet the clinical needs of the client (this will be established at a review of clinical need)
- 4.5.3** At the end of the PWB period a wheelchair purchased via the Third Party PWB will only be replaced if the equipment is beyond economical repair or is obsolete. This is established following an assessment by a Rehab Engineer. Additional maintenance monies may be offered as required if the wheelchair still meets clinical needs
- 4.5.4** The client must be assessed by a therapist or assistant practitioner employed by Bedfordshire and Luton WCS, and a personal support and care plan agreed
- 4.5.6** The WCS is unable to reimburse the costs involved in the private purchase of a wheelchair or accessories.
PWBs are not issued retrospectively. Equipment purchased via the PWB scheme must be new and not refurbished.

5: Types of equipment provided

The approved range of equipment is detailed in appendix 2. The list gives details of all equipment, which can be prescribed by therapists in Bedfordshire and Luton to clients who meet the general criteria (section 3) and the specific criteria for each category of equipment as discussed in sections 6 to 20 of this document.

- 5.1** Equipment for clients who require a standard manual wheelchair for **outdoor only or occasional use** (section 2.2) is provided via the Community Equipment Store (CES: Millbrook healthcare, Bedford). Covered in section 6 & 7.
- 5.2** Equipment for clients with **specialist mobility, posture and pressure needs** (section 2.1) are provided via Bedfordshire and Luton WCS and sub-contracted to Millbrook Healthcare, Welwyn Garden City.

The WCS regularly reviews the equipment available to the NHS and have an internal training sessions with key third party providers to ensure staff are aware of equipment changes.
Covered in section 8 to 20

6: Criteria for the supply of standard steel transit (attendant propelled) wheelchairs

(Approx. wheelchair weight 19kg)

- 6.1 Client is within the weight limit of the standard wheelchair (20 stone/127kg) and has a carer who is able and willing to push the wheelchair
- 6.2 Wheelchair is only used as an aid to mobility; **it must not be used in place of an armchair or static seating system in the home or at day care.**
- 6.3 The client intends to use the wheelchair **to aid mobility** on a regular basis defined as greater than 4 times per week and to access the wider community.

7: Criteria for the supply of standard steel self-propelling wheelchairs

(Approx. wheelchair weight 19kg)

- 7.1 Client is assessed as being medically fit to self-propel and self-propulsion is not detrimental to their medical condition. In some instances, the client will be assessed as able to self-propel in an indoor environment only in order to give a limited increase in function and independent mobility. When the wheelchair needs to be pushed outdoors, the client has a carer who is able and willing to push the wheelchair outdoors.
- 7.2 Client is within the weight limit of the standard wheelchair (20 stone/127kg).
- 7.3 The client intends to use the wheelchair **to aid mobility** on a regular basis defined as greater than 4 times per week and to access the wider community.
Wheelchair is only used as an aid to mobility; **it must not be used in place of an armchair or static seating system in the home or at day care.**
- 7.4 Where a client is dependent on a self-propelled wheelchair for the majority of their independent indoor and outdoor mobility a referral to the specialist WCS should be considered. The standard steel wheelchairs from CES are configured to facilitate efficient self-propelling.

8: Criteria for the supply of lighter wheelchairs:

(Approx. wheelchair weight 13-15kg)

- 8.1 Where the client's use of a standard self-propelling steel wheelchair (section 7) reduces their independence or exacerbates their existing condition.
- 8.2 These wheelchairs are considered because they have a more flexible set up and multiple axle positions for the user to achieve greater independent self-propelling mobility.
- 8.3 Provision of this type of self-propelling wheelchair is based on the clinical need of user; not the needs of their carer who might be required to lift a wheelchair into a car or assist with pushing the client over longer distances.
- 8.4 The WCS does not provide transit wheelchairs in this lighter configuration except where the specific clinical needs of the client can only be met by this type of wheelchair or If a carer can provide written medical evidence to support their clinical need to have access to a lighter transit wheelchair
- 8.5 The client can request a Notional Alternate PWB or Third party PWB (section 4) to upgrade a standard wheelchair to lighter wheelchair to meet the needs of carers.

9: Criteria for the supply of energy efficient self-propelling wheelchairs:

(Approx. wheelchair weight approx. 10-12kg)

- 9.1** Client has been assessed as being an active full time user whose level of functional independence would significantly increase with the issue of wheelchair configured for active use and with specialist features (e.g. increased rigidity of the frame and specialist features) and whose needs are not met through the issue of a lighter self-propelling wheelchair.
- 9.2** WCS is unable to issue highly active user wheelchairs solely to meet users' sporting, work, education, or leisure needs. Use of Third party PWB and shared funding routes should be considered in these situations.

10: Criteria for the supply of high specification energy efficient self-propelling wheelchairs:

(Approx. weight 10-8kg)

- 10.1** Where a client is an independent car user (i.e. transfers, loads, and unloads the wheelchair and drives) or has complex clinical needs (e.g. high level spinal cord injury or respiratory complications) higher specification wheelchairs from the approved range would be considered.
- 10.2** Client requires a wheelchair with increased personal configuration such as:
- adjustable camber for ease of self- propelling
 - improved configuration of the rear wheels to aid back wheel balancing for kerbs
 - reduced rolling resistance with user weight distributed over wheels
 - Cushioning and suspension which can help to reduce body spasms.
- 10.3** To reduce the impact of long term health conditions which may result from significant full time active use.

11: Criteria for the supply of paediatric equipment

- 11.1** Bedfordshire and Luton WCS will assess and provide equipment for children from the paediatric range of manual and powered wheelchairs, special seating, cushions and accessories where the both general and individual criteria for prescription are met
- 11.2** The minimum age for referral is usually 36 months. Younger children will be assessed where it has been clinically demonstrated that there are complex postural needs.
- 11.3** The WCS is not commissioned to provide "buggies" that do not have postural support and, therefore, they are not on the approved list of equipment. All children are initially assessed for provision of a standard NHS children's wheelchair.
- 11.4** Where postural seating is required, or there are complex clinical needs, special seating mounted on buggy bases are available for the youngest children. At 5 years old we would consider seating mounted on wheelchair to be more age appropriate than a buggy, therefore we advise families to purchase a wheelchair adapted vehicle (WAV) to support this.
The WCS will not issue buggy bases for children over 5 years but they could be requested as an alternate or Third Party PWB
- 11.5** Provision is to meet mobility and associated postural needs of the child
- 11.6** Self-propelling children and young people using wheelchair for all their mobility are assessed to see that physical and cognitive abilities demonstrate independence and safety.
- 11.7** Energy efficient self-propelling paediatric wheelchairs with a seat size of less than 30cm x 32cm will only be considered as part of a Notional Alternate or Third Party PWB
- 11.8** A risk assessment may be necessary if a wheelchair is used at school to check safety within a busy environment.
- 11.9** The WCS is unable to meet the needs of children who require provision for behavioural or restraint issues. We recommend that these children are included in behavioural programmes that facilitate their safety and independence.
- 11.10** Wheelchairs are not provided to meet educational or transport needs only. It is expected that the child will require their wheelchair at home and to access the wider environment.

- 11.12 Wheelchairs must not be stored in the school overnight or during school holidays
- 11.13 Requests for Third Party PWB for transit use will be based on the cost of a standard steel transit wheelchair used by adult occasional user but the duration is reduced to 2.5 years.

12: Criteria for the supply of heavy duty and bariatric manual wheelchairs

- 12.1 Clients who weigh **in excess of 20 stone/127kg**:
 - 12.1.1 A heavy duty wheelchair for occasional indoor and outdoor mobility will be assessed and provided by Bedfordshire and Luton WCS as appropriate. These are available as self-propelling or transit wheelchairs
 - 12.1.2 The client needs to have a carer who is able and willing to push the wheelchair, or the client is able to self-propel without detrimentally affecting their health
- 12.2 Clients who weight **in excess of 25stone/160kg**:
 - 12.2.1 There is no NHS provision for clients who are not wheelchair dependant for all their mobility.
 - 12.2.2 There are no NHS transit wheelchairs for clients over 25 stone due to the manual handling issues of the carer
 - 12.2.3 If a client in excess of 25stone/160kg is able to self-propel independently for **all** their indoor and outdoor mobility they will be assessed for an appropriate bariatric wheelchair by Bedfordshire and Luton WCS.
- 12.3 Provision of powered wheelchairs for bariatric clients will be considered with guidance from the Rehabilitation Engineer
- 12.4 All areas of the client's home should have suitable access for the increased seat widths of the heavy duty and bariatric wheelchairs (door widths and ramping). A home assessment must be completed by the assessing therapist prior to the prescription and supply of the wheelchair

13: Criteria for the supply of a tilt-in-space or reclining back wheelchair

Definition and eligibility of equipment

- 13.1.1 **Tilt-in-space** function gives the ability to adjust the angle of the seat whilst maintaining the seat to back angle at the optimum position.
Can be prescribed for clients with complex postural needs to reduce the impact of gravity on clients who are totally wheelchair dependent. This will include reduced muscle tone, fixed deformity, and degenerative conditions.
To be considered where other postural seating accessories are no longer meeting clinical needs.
- 13.1.2 **Recline** – adjustment of the back support which changes the seat to back angle.
Client is a full time user with a clinical diagnosis or need for a wheelchair with recline, e.g. accommodating fixed hip angles, feeding and swallowing, fatigue post-seizures/medical treatment.
- 13.2 Clients must travel in a vehicle with the wheelchair in an upright position due to crash testing restrictions. A risk assessment needs to be completed by the transport provider if an upright position is contra indicated.
- 13.3 Tilt-in-space (TIS) and reclining wheelchairs are not prescribed to replace a postural armchair or static seating system. The WCS will need evidence that an armchair or seating system is also available for the clients use before a complex wheelchair is provided.
- 13.4 Reclining and tilting wheelchairs will only be prescribed when the client has reached the optimum point of rehabilitation and the client is able to tolerate sitting in static seating for approximately 2 hours. If the client is an inpatient in a hospital or rehabilitation unit, the assessment and prescription of a TIS wheelchair will not be completed until a final discharge destination is known. The Wheelchair service does not provide this equipment into care homes as an alternative to static seating. Or where the client is not accessing the wider community (Section 3)

- 13.5 The WCS is unable to provide this type of wheelchair to overcome problems or issues with moving and handling, hoisting, or indoor mobility within a care home environment.
- 13.6 DOLs assessment is advised before use of these features.

14: Criteria for the supply of specialist postural seating.

Definition of the equipment:

14.1 Off the shelf postural equipment – Replacement back rests or accessories, e.g. Jay backrest, Chailey footplates, posture belts. This equipment would be issued to clients who have been assessed by a member of the WCS team, and are deemed to have mild to moderate postural needs which can be addressed by this type of equipment. This equipment can be fitted into a range of wheelchair bases.

14.2 Custom made postural equipment (also known as special seating) manufactured by a specialist seating company – Moulded seat inserts (MSI), carved foam seating, and modular seating. This equipment would be issued to clients who have been assessed by a member of the WCS team, and are deemed to have complex postural needs which cannot be addressed by off the shelf equipment.

Moulded seating is designed to be extremely close fitting to help hold the clients' posture up against gravity in the least destructive pattern which may make it difficult for some clients to tolerate.

Seating Clinics are run under the direction of the assessing therapist, working with the clinical seating engineer or company representatives. Bedfordshire and Luton WCS work with a number of specialist seating companies.

14.2.1 Client meets both the general and specific criteria for equipment, uses a wheelchair for a significant part of the day, and requires special seating as part of a 24-hour postural management programme

14.2.2 Client is unable to maintain a safe sitting posture in a standard wheelchair, even with a reclining backrest, tilt in space facility, or off the shelf equipment.

14.2.3 Client has a home environment able to accommodate the seating required, and carers who can operate the system safely.

Client's need to be hoisted into the seating to achieve optimum positioning and this may require the care package for the client to be increased.

14.2.4 The client's access to Wheelchair adapted vehicle (WAV) needs to be considered with this type of equipment as it is too heavy to lift. Not having access to a WAV may limit the optimum equipment being provided

14.2.5 Seating assessments will be led by a therapist from Bedfordshire and Luton WCS, even when held in conjunction with centres such as Putney, Stanmore, and Oxford. They are held in consultation with the client's family, carers, and key therapists/professionals

14.2.6 Seating systems will be mounted onto the most NHS appropriate wheelchair or buggy base that complies with crash testing regulations and stability testing.

14.3 If required postural equipment can be issued for use in wheelchairs that have been purchased by a client privately or via Third Party PWB. The WCS will not meet any costs involved in the modification of wheelchairs to enable their use with the prescribed equipment.

14.4 Specialist seating is supplied to meet the postural and mobility needs of the client. Where possible, consideration will be given to other demands placed on the seating system. It is not possible to meet all of the client's specific needs, especially in terms of education and feeding requirements. Use of PWB to facilitate shared funding streams and support patient choice is encouraged.

- 14.5** Specialist seating will not be provided where it is felt by the assessing therapist that the clinical needs and comfort of the client would be better served by the provision of a supportive commercially available armchair, or where the provision of such equipment is mainly required in order to overcome moving and handling/hoisting issues.

15: General Criteria for provision of electrically powered wheelchairs

The NHS provides clients with 2 configurations of electrically powered wheelchair:

Electrically Powered Indoor chair (EPIC).

Electrically Powered Indoor/Outdoor Chair (EPIOC).

It should be noted that although EPIOCs can be used outdoors, their primary use must be indoors.

NHS provision is strictly regulated in terms of speed, weight of the equipment and usage.

The NHS does not provide powered wheelchairs (EPOC) or scooters that will be used outdoor only.

- 15.1** Driving a powered wheelchair involves a complex and rapidly repeating cycle that requires a level of skill and the ability to interact with both the powered chair and the external environment. In order to be considered as safe to drive a powered wheelchair, the service user will need to demonstrate the following skills at the wheelchair assessment:
- adequate vision
 - visuospatial perception
 - adequate hearing
 - attention and concentration for the whole time the powered wheelchair is to be used
 - memory
 - insight and understanding of the risks
 - good judgement
 - ability to use adaptive strategies
 - good reaction time relevant to the intended use (e.g. other pavement users if outdoors, animals) and be able to cope with the unexpected
 - planning and organisation
 - self-monitoring skills
 - sensation
 - muscle power
 - control and coordination
- 15.2** Given these requirements, it follows that many body systems need to be functional for safe driving, and injury or disease may affect any one or more of these abilities for safe driving. A service user must report any medical condition to the Wheelchair Service which involves situations where they could lose consciousness (e.g. seizures, including petit mals, narcolepsy). Where a referral indicates the service user has one of these conditions, the service user may not be considered for a powered wheelchair until medical advice has been obtained.
- 15.3** With reference to conditions which involve the loss of consciousness, the WCS adopts the Motor Vehicle (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 (as amended) that govern the way in which epilepsy is prescribed as a relevant disability for group 1 drivers, but applies to any condition which may affect driving ability, including the use of medication
- 15.4** If a service user has a diagnosis of a significant medical condition that affects consciousness, including epilepsy, and has had 1 or more episodes in the last 12 months they will not be considered for assessment for a powered wheelchair. The only time that this would be considered is if the service user experiences a loss of consciousness or seizure that is related to an adjustment of medication, and this occurred more than 3 months previously (i.e. must be 3 months free of loss of consciousness when resulting from medication change only).

- 15.5** In addition to the above, in line with DVLA notification requirements, the service user is required to notify the service of any other conditions that may affect their ability to drive. These include; strokes, other neurological and mental health conditions, physical disabilities and visual impairments.
- 15.6** The assessors will seek further medical advice about individual service users from their referrers, carers, other health or social care professionals, GP or consultant if appropriate. If consent is not given for further medical advice to be sought, the referral cannot be processed. If a powered wheelchair has already been issued and changes occur to the service user's condition, such that medical eligibility is in question, the Wheelchair Service will apply the same decision making.
- 15.7** As a result of a medical condition, the service user must be severely and permanently restricted in mobility, and will need to use the powered wheelchair for **all** their mobility needs. Client must be unable to walk functionally and unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair within their home environment or have written confirmation from their G.P. that these activities are detrimental to their medical condition.
The client will need to relinquish any self-propelling manual wheelchairs before powered provision is made.
- 15.8** The service user must ensure that the wheelchair will be adequately cared for and maintained, and charged either personally or by a carer
- 15.8** The service user must agree to the terms and conditions of loan; including limitations of use, frequency of use, having insurance and reporting changes in health. Failure to do so may result in the powered wheelchair being withdrawn.
- 15.9** If the service user fails to meet any one of these criteria, deteriorates medically, or their driving skills are deemed to be dangerous, the powered wheelchair may need to be withdrawn, and a transit manual wheelchair utilised. This will be determined by reviews set on an individual basis, dependent upon their presenting needs and their diagnosis / prognosis
- 15.10** Safe use of a powered wheelchair issued by the NHS must be independent. No powered wheelchair will be issued with the intention that the service user be supervised or assisted during use, except for example, age appropriate supervision of children, such as crossing the road. Unsafe use of a powered wheelchair may result in its withdrawal. Attendant controls are not provided by the NHS.
- 15.11** Complex/specialist powered controls are available and would be assessed for by a Rehabilitation Engineer appointed by WCS.

16: Criteria for provision of Electrically Powered Indoor Wheelchairs (EPIC)

- 16.1** These wheelchairs are intended for indoor use only (i.e. behind the service user's own front door). Limited use of the wheelchair outside, such as in the garden will be defined and discussed with the service user and their carer following a risk assessment by the Wheelchair Service. Any EPIC used beyond the threshold of the home must be suitable for the environment (e.g. stability). A Wheelchair Service clinician will review the environment in which the user needs or intends to use the wheelchair at handover. They must not be used in any indoor public environment e.g. shopping centres.
- 16.2** The client need to have the potential to benefit significantly from increased mobility and independence in activities of daily living within their home by provision of an EPIC.
- 16.3** The service user must require an EPIC to enable movement within an indoor environment (i.e. inside their own home) in excess of one individual room and be unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair to do so. The supply of the EPIC needs to significantly improve the service users' independence and quality of life indoors (e.g. access to the toilet).
- 16.4** The client is required to demonstrate the ability to use an indoor powered wheelchair safely and independently, without endangering themselves and other people.

- 16.5 They must have a suitable home environment including adequate space to drive the wheelchair (including the footplates) in the home, wheelchair access in and out of the home and a suitable space with a power supply for charging the batteries
- 16.6 The service user will need to demonstrate by a driving test conducted by the Wheelchair Service all the skills required to independently operate an EPIC safely and responsibly, without endangering themselves and/or other people.
- 16.7 This equipment will not be issued for use solely in the school, college, work or day centre environment. The wheelchair service may be able to provide information as to sources of funding and appropriate equipment which may be eligible for PBW shared funding.
- 16.8 All service users that meet the criteria for provision are provided with an EPIC for 6 months. This is issued with speeds limiting to indoor use. Clients can apply for an upgrade after 6 months of EPIC use; subject to usage and passing a further outdoor driving test users will be considered for consent to drive outdoors.
- 16.9 Rear-wheel drive powered wheelchairs are the standard NHS EPIC wheelchair; they will be used for assessment and provision. The service will only supply mid-wheel drive wheelchairs if environment in home setting cannot be adapted for improved access. Notional Alternate PWB could be used to up-grade to MWD if the client does not meet the criteria for provision.
- 16.10 EPICs are NOT suitable to be driven outdoors. They may be transported to be used indoors in a day centre if the wheelchair complies with the transport regulations, and the client has been assessed to safely use that EPIC within that environment

17: Criteria for the supply of Electrically Powered Indoor & Outdoor Chairs (EPIOC)

- 17.1 Client complies with the general powered wheelchair criteria, criteria for issue of an EPIC and has been safely using an EPIC for a period of 6 months. .
- 17.2 Client has demonstrated, in an outdoor driving test and by other means, that they have the insight, intellectual capacity, and dexterity to operate an EPIOC safely and responsibly on their own without assistance
- 17.3 Provision of powered chairs is subject to periodic review of the client's driving ability and usage. Where this is considered to be unsafe, or no longer meets the criteria, the provision of the powered wheelchair will be withdrawn.
- 17.4 They have a local outside environment that is accessible by an EPIOC and compatible with its use

18: Criteria for the supply of postural & pressure relieving cushions

- 18.1 Cushions are only supplied for use within a wheelchair and are provided to achieve satisfactory posture, increased stability, and as an aid to pressure ulcer prevention and management
- 18.2. All wheelchairs prescribed by the NHS should have an appropriate cushion supplied with them. Clients will only be provided with one cushion by the NHS. All old cushions should be returned to the WCS.
- 18.3 Cushions with higher pressure relieving properties will not be provided in order to facilitate a service user sitting out for longer periods than are safe or to reduce care packages.
- 18.3 High Risk Pressure relieving cushions, or those offering postural control, will be issued to full time users following assessment by either a therapist or assistant practitioner working within Bedfordshire and Luton WCS.
- 18.4 Provision of high risk pressure relieving cushions will only be supplied after all other pressure management techniques have been considered. They should be part of a 24-hour pressure care prevention plan which includes correct positioning, transfer techniques and spending time out of the wheelchair during the day.
- 18.5 Where the cushion or seating provided has a removable cover, only one cover will be provided. Clients with specific ongoing continence issues may be referred on to the Continence Service

- 18.6** Following assessment, postural and pressure relieving cushions can be issued for use in wheelchairs that have been purchased by a client privately or through the Third Party PWB. The WCS will not meet any costs involved in the modification of wheelchairs to enable their use with the prescribed cushions.
- 18.7** The WCS may require the service user to attend clinic to be pressure mapped as an aid to complex cushion prescription or demonstrate pressure relieving techniques. Where the client reports a history of sores and redness, skin may need to be checked and any concerns reported to the Tissue Viability Team. The WCS team will do complete this assessment respecting the client's privacy and dignity.

19: Criteria for the supply of accessories and modifications

Definition of terms:

- 19.1.1 Accessories** – items added to the chair which enhance its use, but do not change the manufacturer's specification of the chair.
- 19.1.2** Accessories will only be provided by the NHS WCS following an assessment of clinical need and at the discretion of the WCS.
- 19.1.3** Accessories that are required by the client to address issues other than mobility can be purchased by the client or other an external agency when a new wheelchair is prescribed via the Top-up PWB and are part of the personalised plan of care
- 19.2.1 Modifications** – alterations to the wheelchair which change the manufacturer's specifications, but do not change the original intended use.
- 19.2.2** Modifications will only be undertaken following a risk assessment and in accordance with manufacturer's guidance and C.E. marking legislation. This would be in consultation with a Rehabilitation Engineer.
- 19.2.3** Modifications must **not** be undertaken by clients or other agencies without consultation with the WCS.
- 19.3** The following list of accessories and modifications is not exhaustive; it is intended as a guide for those items most frequently requested:
- **Trays:** these are only supplied to facilitate postural control.
 - **Head rests:** these are supplied for postural need. However, where a client is known to be using transport services, the WCS will provide a backrest extension so the wheelchair meets transport regulations.
 - **Extended footrest/footboard:** these are supplied for postural need
 - **Manual Elevating leg supports:** these are supplied if there is a clinical need to vary the leg position or accommodate limited range of movement.
 - **Harnesses, postural belts and ankle huggers:** these are supplied for postural need. They are not supplied for transportation or restraint.
 - **Stump boards:** these are provided following amputation of a lower limb.
 - **Anti-tippers/castor outriggers:** these are provided to enhance the stability of the issued wheelchair.
 - **Armrest raisers/outriggers/modified arm pads:** these are supplied for postural or pressure care needs.
 - **Extended brake levers:** these are supplied if they enable the wheelchair user to independently apply brakes to a self-propelling wheelchair.
 - **O2 & ventilator carriers:** these are supplied to full time users where clinically required. An assessment of both the wheelchair's suitability and any risks involved will have been completed.

- **Lateral supports:** For postural support of the upper body

19.4 Clients need to seek the advice of the WCS and Rehabilitation Engineer when considering fitting power packs, power-assist wheels, mobile arm supports and communication devices to the NHS wheelchairs.

19.5 The fitting of trikes units to NHS wheelchairs is not permitted. Clients will be liable for the additional wear and tear or damage caused by use of trikes and powered front wheels if fitted without permission to NHS equipment.”

19.6 Top-Up PWB could be used to purchase a range of prescription accessories e.g. Height adjustable panhandles, trays for social use, frame colours, seat risers, powered elevating leg rests, powered recline or TIS (where not met by criteria), rain covers, baskets, upgraded tyres and castors.

These need to be agreed when a new wheelchair is prescribed as they cannot be added retrospectively.

20: Criteria for the supply of more than one wheelchair.

Bedfordshire and Luton WCS will give consideration to the supply of a second wheelchair to clients with specific needs, for example where:

20.1.1 A stair lift is in use and a wheelchair is required for both upstairs and downstairs use. In this instance, the wheelchair provided for upstairs use will be a standard steel wheelchair with a standard cushion (i.e. it will not be the same model and specification as the primary wheelchair).

20.1.2 A client is using an EPIC wheelchair for indoor mobility but requires a manual transit wheelchair for assisted outdoor mobility. This would be a standard steel transit wheelchair.

20.1.3 A manual back up transit wheelchair is no longer issued for all powered wheelchair users. It will be provided on a case by case basis based on clinical need.

20.2 The approved repairer contractor will respond to emergency call breakdowns within 4 hours and will endeavour to provide a manual transit wheelchair to support basic mobility as soon as possible once provision specification agreed with WCS team.

20.3 Services users must consider how they would make a journey home with their equipment in the event of a break down. The approved repairer contractor is not responsible for the recovery of a broken down equipment away from the client’s home.

20.4 The WCS will respond as quickly as possible when accessories and seating is damaged. A wheelchair of different specification may be provided on a short term basis as required.

20.5 WCS is currently unable to supply second wheelchairs for use within educational establishments, to satisfy work related requirements, or to be used solely for leisure or transportation purposes.

21: Criteria for the supply of wheelchairs to residents within care homes

21.1 Residents within care home environments are entitled to be assessed in the same way that clients residing in their own homes are. If the client doesn’t meet the eligibility criteria for provision from the WCS the therapist will send information on potential static seating and wheelchairs that could be purchased by the care home or family.

21.2 Referrals will only be accepted if made by an Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist or the clients GP.

21.3 Self-propelling and EPIC wheelchairs are provided where they facilitate the independent mobility of the client.

Wheelchairs that are pushed by a carer (attended propelled / transit) are not provided as it is the responsibility of the home to provide appropriate wheelchairs for general portering and use within the home and its grounds.

- 21.4** It is expected that there will be a named family member or carer who will be present at the assessment and handover who will comply with the conditions of loan.
It needs to be demonstrated that the wheelchair is for regular mobility outside of the care home and that the client has alternative static/mobile seating within the home. (see section 3.1.4 & 3.2.8)
Regular and frequent basis defined as: greater than 4 times per week and over 3 hours each day away from the care home.
- 21.5** It is expected that the home will provide appropriate static seating (which can have wheels) for the comfort and safety of their residents who need to have alternative seating to a wheelchair. Bedfordshire and Luton WCS does not condone the use of wheelchairs in place of static seating (armchairs). Therefore, a wheelchair will not be provided where the provision of a postural supportive commercially available armchair would meet the client's clinical need.
- 21.6** WCS will not provide equipment where provision of such equipment is mainly required in order to overcome moving and handling/hoisting issues or for a-b mobility in the care home or its grounds.

22: Criteria for the fitting of privately purchased add-on power packs and power assist wheels

- 22.1** Clients who wish to fit power packs or power assisted wheels should ensure that they obtain advice from the supplier with regard to the suitability of fitting the unit to their wheelchair. They should also ensure that a suitably qualified individual, preferably the supplier, fits the unit.
- 22.2** Permission to fit power packs and power assist wheels on NHS equipment should be obtained from the wheelchair service or the contracted rehabilitation engineer.
- 22.3** Where a power pack or power assisted wheels have been fitted to a wheelchair issued by the WCS, any additional repair and call out costs for the approved repairer will be monitored. Where it has been noted that extra-ordinary costs have been incurred due to the use of either a power pack or power assisted wheels, the WCS reserves the right to withdraw prescribed equipment from issue or consider charging the client for repair costs. If wheelchair provision is changed, WCS will not be responsible for refitting of this equipment.
- 22.4** PWB (notional options or third party) cannot be used to provide this equipment

23: Guidelines for the movement of wheelchairs and associated equipment within the UK

If the client permanently moves out of Bedfordshire and Luton, they must inform the Bedfordshire and Luton WCS prior to their move. In most cases, the client will be able to take all equipment in use issued by the Bedfordshire and Luton WCS with them.

When informed of the new GP, the WCS will inform the client of contact details of the new local NHS WCS. The Bedfordshire and Luton WCS will gain consent to forward a copy of clinical records to the new service.

When moving out of area for social care or education needs, the client must inform and seek advice from the WCS about who continues to maintain the wheelchair and assess future needs. Clients who take holidays within the United Kingdom and who require repairs to their NHS issued equipment whilst on holiday should establish the contact name and number of the local approved repairer

We advise all service users to insure the wheelchair, covering it for loss or damage.

24: Guidelines for the movement of wheelchairs and associated equipment outside of the UK

Wheelchairs may be taken abroad for holidays. However, it is essential that the client insures the wheelchair, covering it for loss or damage whilst abroad or in transit. There will be no reimbursement for repairs incurred.

If the client is to emigrate, then the client MUST contact the WCS to arrange for the return of the NHS wheelchair and all associated equipment

25: General conditions of loan for wheelchairs and associated equipment

- 25.1 The wheelchair service recommends the purchase of third party insurance with the provision of any wheelchair or associated equipment, insuring the wheelchair and equipment against loss and to protect the client in case of them causing any damage to another individual or their property.
In certain situations, an insurance claim will be need to be made to replace equipment.
- 25.2 If equipment is lost, damaged or stolen, it is the client's responsibility to have it replaced or, where appropriate, the client will be invoiced for the replacement of the equipment.
Where items have been stolen, it needs to be reported to the police and a crime number must be given to the WCS. The client will then be reassessed and appropriate replacement equipment issued if this is indicated
- 25.3 Alcohol should not be consumed when using any wheelchair; the wheelchair will be removed should alcohol consumption place the client or public at risk.
- 25.4 Should the wheelchair be subjected to repeated misuse by the client and/or carer, and regular repairs are required due to this misuse, then the wheelchair may be removed
- 25.5 During the handover of the chair, the client will agree to the conditions of loan with a signature. The conditions of loan for wheelchairs issued by the wheelchair service are (this excludes wheelchairs issued under the Third Part PWB):
- The equipment belongs to the NHS
 - The wheelchair is kept in a good, clean condition and manufacturers' guidelines detailed in the handbook are followed.
 - The client will contact the service in case of any concerns/equipment faults.
 - The wheelchair must be stored in a safe place whilst not in use, and protected from damage at all times. The equipment must not be left unattended in a public place or in any location.
 - The wheelchair must not be disposed of, or passed on to another person. The client is responsible for letting the wheelchair service know immediately if the equipment is no longer required.
 - The wheelchair must not be used for sports activities or track events without prior agreement by the wheelchair service.
 - The wheelchair must not be altered or have any attachment fitted to it without agreement by the wheelchair service.
 - If the wheelchair is taken abroad for any period, the client must pay the cost of any damage, loss or repair incurred during travel and whilst outside of the United Kingdom. The wheelchair service advises that clients should have appropriate insurance cover prior to travel.
 - Powered wheelchairs will have an annual maintenance service and the client must permit access to the chair at an agreed date/time.
 - Posture/safety belts and/or harnesses fitted to the wheelchair must be fastened safely, correctly and appropriately.
 - The equipment must be given up for repair, when requested by the wheelchair service.
- 25.6 The equipment must be returned to the Wheelchair Service when it is no longer required by the service user it was issued to.