

Derbyshire Wheelchair Service

Mobility | Posture | Independence

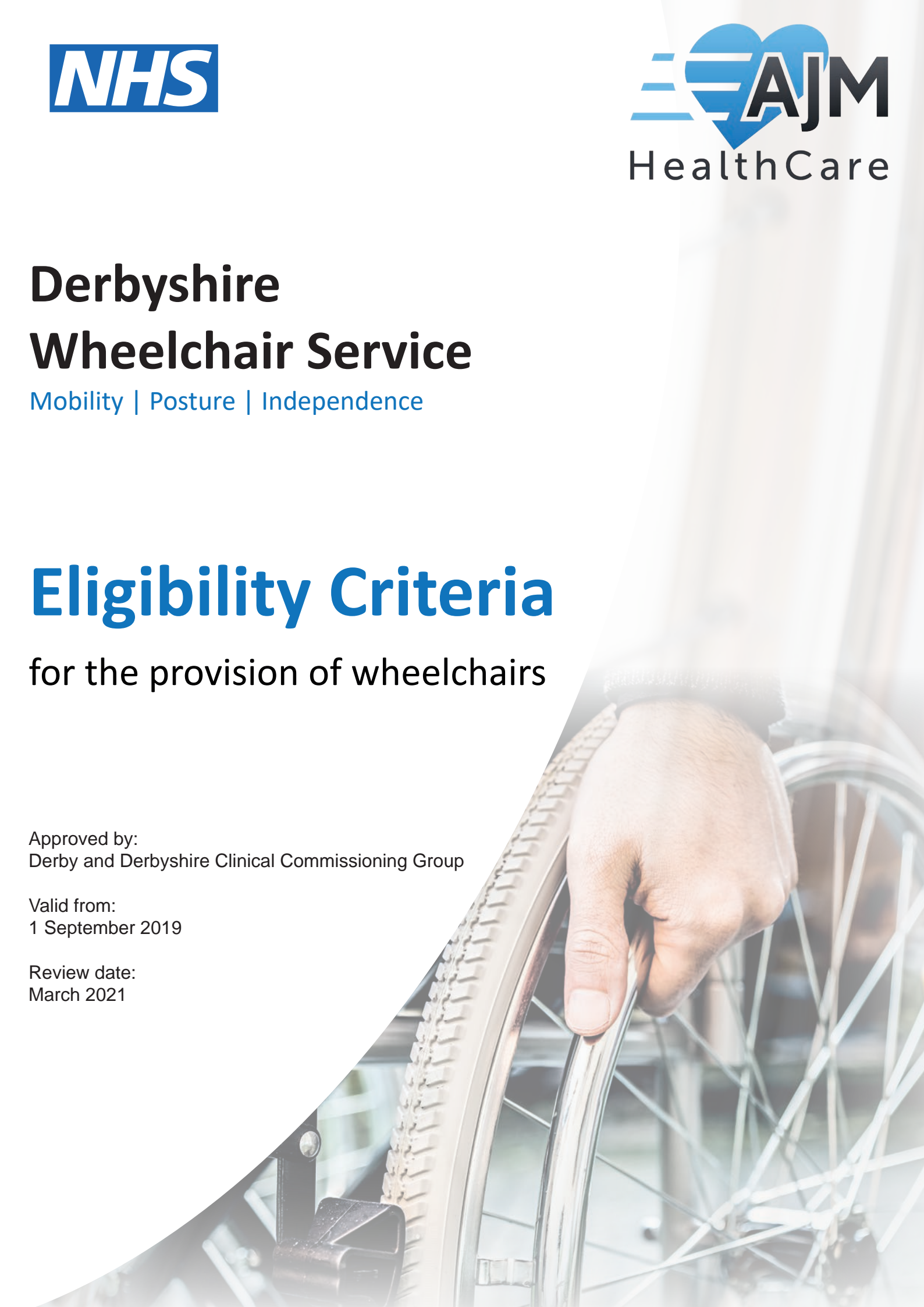
Eligibility Criteria

for the provision of wheelchairs

Approved by:
Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Valid from:
1 September 2019

Review date:
March 2021



1.0 Introduction

1.1 The eligibility criteria for wheelchairs and associated equipment have been produced for the benefit of referrers and users of Derbyshire Wheelchair Service, to ensure a fair and transparent service offer.

1.2 Wheelchairs and associated equipment will be prescribed according to a written instruction, which has been defined following an assessment of clinical need.

1.3 Equipment will be prescribed from a core range used within the service. The service will only investigate equipment and suppliers outside of this range if the needs of the service user cannot be met from within it.

1.4 Individual solutions will be provided based on assessed clinical need, and equipment is prescribed and issued for the sole use of the individual service user for whom it was assessed.

1.5 The wheelchair service has a responsibility to meet clinical needs in the most cost-effective way.

2.0 General conditions

2.1 People may be assessed for, and issued with a wheelchair by the wheelchair service if they:

- are registered with a General Practitioner (GP) who is a member of Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group, or is otherwise the responsibility of the Clinical Commissioning Group in line with the NHS England guidance document, 'Who Pays: Determining Responsibility for Payments to Providers' 2013 (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/who-pays.pdf>); and
- require a wheelchair for a permanent or long-term need (in excess of six months), based upon an assessment of their mobility; and
- can self-propel a manual wheelchair; or
- can control either an indoor and/or an indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair; and/or
- require specialist bespoke seating to interface with a manual or powered wheelchair due to postural requirements

2.2 It is sometimes not possible to meet all needs through the provision of one chair – for example, a chair might be the appropriate size for the home environment but not be compatible with the user's car. Wheelchair service clinicians will work with service users to prioritise requirements and ensure that priority needs are met.

2.3 The wheelchair service does not issue chairs for short-term use (less than six months). The community equipment services (Derby and Derbyshire) will provide these wheelchairs. Patients cannot self-refer to the community equipment services. An NHS equipment prescriber will need to assess the patient's needs, and prescribe a short-term wheelchair, if indicated.

3.0 Manual wheelchairs

3.1 The criteria for the provision of a standard non-powered wheelchair are:

- The service user has a permanent or long-term disability (in excess of six months), which will affect their ability to walk.
- The wheelchair is needed as an aid to mobility indoors and/ or outdoors (manual only, not powered wheelchair provision).
- The service user agrees to and complies with the terms and conditions of use, as supplied by the wheelchair service.

3.2 Low need wheelchairs are provided from a core range supplied by the wheelchair service. These will be supplied following an assessment by a trained referrer who has completed and returned a referral form.

3.3 Medium, high and specialist need wheelchairs will only be supplied following an assessment by a wheelchair services clinician (an occupational therapist (OT) or rehabilitation engineer (RE)).

3.4 Accessories are generally 'off-the-shelf' parts, or readily available (e.g. belts, headrest) from the manufacturer. These will be supplied following an assessment by a trained referrer who has completed and identified the need for accessories on the referral form. The service user may be subject to further assessment by the wheelchair service if needed. Accessories include headrests, belts, harnesses, lateral supports and hub brakes.

3.5 Standard modifications may be requested by a trained referrer or recommended and supplied following an assessment by a wheelchair service clinician. This includes out rigging.

4.0 Criteria for the supply of more than one wheelchair

4.1 Provision of more than one wheelchair is dependent upon clinical need.

4.2 Requests for more than one wheelchair will be considered under special circumstances. For example, a second wheelchair may be issued to allow the service user to access the upstairs of their property. Where a powered wheelchair has been issued, a manual wheelchair can also be issued to the service user. The second wheelchair will not necessarily be the same model as the primary wheelchair.

5.0 Criteria for the issue of a wheelchair that is lighter than a standard wheelchair

5.1 Following assessment, supply would only be made to meet the user's/carer's clinical and individual lifestyle needs to promote and maintain independent mobility. A lightweight wheelchair will be considered where:

- the service user will be unable to self-propel a standard wheelchair, because to do so would exacerbate an existing clinical condition
- the service user is an independent driver who cannot load the wheelchair into the car
- the carer is unable to load the wheelchair into a car

5.2 This category of wheelchair will only be issued when the wheelchair service has agreed that a standard wheelchair, less all accessories and removable parts, cannot be lifted by the carer/ service user.

5.3 It should be noted that even a lightweight wheelchair may be difficult to either self-propel or push, depending upon the weight of the occupant.

5.4 If needed, the corrective seating system or modifications for postural support will be compatible with the lighter standard wheelchair that has been selected.

6.0 Active user wheelchairs

6.1 Following assessment, supply would only be made to meet the user's clinical and individual lifestyle needs to promote and maintain independent mobility.

6.2 Assessment for this type of equipment will always be undertaken by a wheelchair service OT or RE (as appropriate).

6.3 Referrals for equipment of this category will be considered for issue when a service user is unable to function or self-propel in a standard wheelchair.

6.4 If needed, the corrective seating system, or modifications for postural support, will be compatible with the active user wheelchair that has been selected.

7.0 Guidelines for the supply of heavy duty wheelchairs

7.1 Heavy duty wheelchairs are issued to service users exceeding the weight limit of the standard range of wheelchairs (18 to 21 stones for most models).

7.2 It is essential to have the service user accurately weighed, and the weight documented. An estimate is not safe or acceptable.

7.3 Consideration of the environment in which the wheelchair will be used is essential for service users needing heavy duty wheelchairs, especially where the service user needs a wheelchair with a seat width of over 20". This is to ensure that it is safe and appropriate for the carer to lift/push this load/size of wheelchair, and that there are no problems with access/doorways.

7.4 In order for these service users to be supplied with an EPIC or an EPIOC they must meet the criteria set out in Sections 12 and 13 respectively.

8.0 Criteria for the provision of pressure relieving cushions

8.1 The service holds a range of cushions for all levels of risk/pressure relieving qualities. The cushion can be used in an NHS provided or privately purchased wheelchair. Cushions will not be issued for use in an armchair.

8.2 If the service user requires a pressure relieving cushion other than a standard wheelchair cushion, then a separate referral should be made.

8.3 A pressure-relieving cushion can be issued for use within the wheelchair, and it is used as part of an overall pressure management routine.

9.0 Criteria for the provision of special seating systems

9.1 Special seating can be divided into two types:

- Off-the-shelf postural support or modifications
- Individual bespoke seating systems that are fitted to a wheelchair chassis.

9.2 Special seating systems are only provided where the service user has specific postural needs which can only be met by the issue of the specialist or bespoke seating systems or accessories.

9.3 Care will be taken in selecting the system which best meets the health needs of the service user on a long-term basis, taking into account cost-effectiveness.

9.4 This type of seating system will only be prescribed and supplied following assessment by a wheelchair service clinician.

9.5 Only one system will be supplied.

9.6 The wheelchair service will assess on an individual basis the appropriateness of fitting NHS special seating systems into private wheelchairs. This should be documented in the service user's notes and permission sought from the team leader or manager of the service.

10.0 Criteria for paediatric provision

10.1 Assessment for provision will be carried out in the presence of the parent/guardian or designated other (e.g. school). The referrer will be invited to attend.

10.2 Special pushchairs and special seating systems are issued to children who have significant postural problems, following an assessment by a wheelchair service clinician.

10.3 Wheelchairs will only be supplied following an assessment by a wheelchair service clinician.

10.4 Double (twin) buggies will be supplied only where there is a second child (or twin), who is close in age, who also has a disability.

10.5 The model of double (twin) buggy chosen and any necessary postural support within it will be provided to meet the needs of both children. These will be sourced on a case-by-case basis due to the limitations in range of product.

10.6 Indoor powered wheelchairs will be issued to children who are unable to walk or self-propel, but who are able to independently control a powered wheelchair safely indoors.

10.7 Indoor powered wheelchairs must only be used indoors at home. They must not be used outdoors, except in a private garden.

10.8 Derbyshire Wheelchair Service does not provide wheelchairs for sole use in the educational or social care setting. However, if the equipment provided by the service for use at home/in the community also meets the needs of the child at school/college, the wheelchair may be used.

10.9 Indoor/outdoor powered wheelchairs will be issued to children who are unable to walk or self-propel, but are able to independently control a powered wheelchair safely. The child will need to use the powered wheelchair constantly, indoors and outdoors as a form of mobility and meeting the safe driving requirements in Section 13.

11.0 Criteria for provision of electrically powered indoor wheelchairs (EPIC)

11.1 This service provides occupant-controlled wheelchairs only.

11.2 These wheelchairs are intended for indoor use only. Limited use of the wheelchair outside will be defined and discussed with the service user and their carer following a risk assessment by the wheelchair service. A wheelchair service clinician will review the environment in which the user needs or intends to use the wheelchair at handover. They should not be used in any indoor public environment e.g. shopping centres.

11.3 In order to be eligible for the provision of an EPIC, the service user must meet all of the following criteria:

- 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 indoor mobility needs.
- The service user must be unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair sufficiently to successfully function indoors.
- The supply of the EPIC will significantly improve the service users' independence and quality of life indoors.
- The service user will have no visual, cognitive, perceptual problems, or medical problem (e.g. recurring loss of consciousness including epilepsy - no more than two episodes in the last five years) that would affect the safe use of an EPIC.
- The service user is able to demonstrate the ability to use an indoor powered wheelchair safely and independently without endangering themselves and other people.
- The service user must have a suitable home environment including adequate space to drive the wheelchair (including the footplates) in the home, and suitable space with a power supply for charging the batteries.
- The service user must ensure that the wheelchair will be adequately cared for and charged either personally or by a carer.

11.4 This equipment will not be issued for use solely in the school, college or day centre environment. However, the wheelchair service will assess against the current eligibility criteria and patients may also choose to consider options under the personal wheelchair budget (PWB).

In special circumstances, the service can provide a recommendation that would meet additional needs, including those at school, college or day centre. Provision would be subject to additional funding being support by other agencies.

11.5 Upon receipt of the referral, it is screened by our clinical team. For most new referrals for power provision, a questionnaire is sent to the patient for them and their GP to complete and send back to the service.

In some circumstances, the service may visit you at home.

Upon receipt of the information from the questionnaire and visit, if clinically required, a decision is made regarding eligibility.

For those who are eligible, a review of driving skills is completed and agreement regarding the specification of the wheelchair is finalised, if not already agreed.

The wheelchair will be sourced from stock and built to your prescription. Generally, handovers will take place at home for new drivers and in clinic for existing power users.

11.6 If, subsequently, the service user fails to meet any one of these criteria, deteriorates medically, or their driving skills are deemed to be dangerous, the wheelchair will need to be withdrawn if the risks cannot be managed. This will be determined by regular reviews. In some circumstances, the clinical team may consult with others as part of the decision process.

11.7 The assessors may need to seek further medical advice about individual service users from their referrers, carers, other health or social care professionals involved in their care, their GP or consultant, if appropriate.

12.0 Criteria for provision of electrically powered indoor/outdoor wheelchairs (EPIOC)

12.1 In order to be eligible for the provision of an EPIOC, the service user must meet all of the following criteria:

- As a result of a medical condition, the service user must be unable to walk at all (e.g. functional; efficient and safe), and be unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair at all.
- The service user will need to use the powered wheelchair constantly, indoors and outdoors.
- The supply of the EPIOC will significantly improve the service user's independence and quality of life, indoors and outdoors.
- The service user will have no cognitive, perceptual problems, or other medical conditions that would endanger themselves, pedestrians or other road users.

12.2 A service user should report any medical condition to the Wheelchair Service which involves situations where they could lose consciousness whilst driving their wheelchair. Referrals which indicate the service user has one of these conditions will mean that they will not be considered for a powered indoor/outdoor wheelchair.

12.3 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 an EPIOC, the service user will need to demonstrate the following skills:

- vision
- visuo-spatial perception
- hearing
- attention and concentration
- memory
- insight and understanding;
- judgement
- adaptive strategies
- good reaction time
- planning and organisation
- self-monitoring skills
- sensation
- muscle power
- control and coordination

The skills listed above are abilities which are considered as part of the assessment including any compensatory strategies patients use.

12.4 If a service user has a significant skill deficit in any of these areas, the referring professional should consider carefully if they will meet the eligibility criteria and a referral should not be made.

12.5 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.

12.6 With reference to conditions which involve the loss of consciousness, the wheelchair service 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.

12.7 If a service user who has a diagnosis of a significant medical condition that affects consciousness, including epilepsy, has had two or more episodes in the last five years, they would not be considered for assessment of an EPIOC. 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.

12.8 The service may seek assurance from the service user's consultant (or GP if they are not registered to a consultant-based service) to provide assurance that the service user meets the eligibility criteria.

12.9 The service user will have the visual acuity to drive the wheelchair safely. If there are any concerns, the clinician may reserve the right to request the patient provides medical evidence, e.g. report from optician, GP or consultant.

12.10 The service user will have a visual acuity of at least 6/24 (i.e. can read a car number plate from at least 40 feet). Service users must also have a field of vision of 120 degrees in a horizontal plane, and 20 degrees above and below this plane. This is equivalent to class 3 vehicle visual standards.

12.11 The service user will need to demonstrate by a driving test, conducted by the wheelchair service, all the skills required to independently operate an EPIOC safely and responsibly without endangering themselves and/or other people.

12.12 The service user will need to have a residential environment that is appropriate for the use of an indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair, and have suitable facilities to enable independent access to the outdoor environment (e.g. a permanent floor fixed ramped access, this does not include portable ramps). The local outside environment must be accessible in an EPIOC, and must be compatible with its use. For any referrals that do not have the required residential environment, patients will be discharged. To minimise delays, please refer service users for an EPIOC when home adaptations are in place. If you have any concerns, please discuss with the duty team relating to the wider eligibility criteria, or consider referral for an indoor chair only.

12.13 The service user must ensure that the wheelchair will be adequately cared for and maintained, and charged either personally or by a carer.

12.14 The service user must agree to the terms and conditions of supply.

12.15 Upon receipt of the referral, it is screened by our clinical team. For most new referrals for power provision, a questionnaire is sent to the patient for them and their GP to complete and send back to the service.

In some circumstances the service may visit you at home.

Upon receipt of the information from the questionnaire and visit, if clinically required, a decision is made regarding eligibility.

For those who are eligible, a review of driving skills is completed and agreement regarding the specification of the wheelchair is finalised, if not already agreed.

The wheelchair will be sourced from stock and built to your prescription. Generally, handovers will take place at home for new drivers and in clinic for existing power users.

12.16 If, subsequently, the service user fails to meet any one of these criteria, deteriorates medically, or their driving skills are deemed to be dangerous, the wheelchair will need to be withdrawn if the risks cannot be managed. This will be determined by regular reviews. In some circumstances, the clinical team may consult with others as part of the decision process.

12.17 The assessors may need to seek further medical advice about individual service users from their referrers, carers, other health or social care professionals involved in their care, their GP or consultant if appropriate.

13.0 Guidelines regarding attendant-controlled power-assisted wheelchairs

13.1 The wheelchair service does not supply attendant-controlled powered wheelchairs, nor does it supply add-on power pack units as part of the NHS provision. However, you may wish to consider a PWB to support adding features to an NHS wheelchair or choose a different wheelchair to an agreed list of features (prescription).

13.2 The wheelchair service may allow privately purchased power pack units to be fitted to wheelchairs supplied by the wheelchair service. However, the fitting must be arranged privately.

13.3 The wheelchair service reserves the right to take appropriate action should it become apparent that a privately fitted power pack has contributed to a fault in the wheelchair or its unsafe use. This action may include withdrawal of the wheelchair or a charge for incurred repair costs.

14.0 Issue of equipment to nursing/care homes

14.1 Newly referred service users living in nursing/care homes may be assessed for and issued with a manual wheelchair by the wheelchair service if

- they can self-propel or have a desire to self-propel and they have a long-term or permanent need for a wheelchair
- they have a need for a special wheelchair because they require special postural seating

14.2 The service cannot provide attendant propelled wheelchairs which are for occasional use, outings, or are used by the nursing/care home to transport patients.

14.3 Service users living in nursing/care homes may be referred and assessed for a powered wheelchair if they are unable to self-propel and are able to control a powered wheelchair to enable them to be independently mobile. As with all referrals for powered mobility, the service user must also meet all the criteria for an EPIC or EPIOC, as listed in Sections 12 and 13.

14.4 Service users living in nursing/care homes who are existing wheelchair users, who have been using their wheelchairs as their main form of seating, and who wish to continue to do so, may

keep their wheelchairs even if, due to deterioration in their medical condition, they are no longer able to propel themselves totally independently.

14.5 The service will not provide pressure relieving cushions for use in armchairs.

14.6 Repair or collection of wheelchairs on behalf of the service user will be carried out when it has been established that the service user is recorded as being the user of the prescribed wheelchair.

14.7 Equipment issued by the wheelchair service may only be used by the named resident to whom it was issued.

14.8 If during a visit by the approved repairer, equipment is identified which belongs to the wheelchair service which is not in use by the service user to whom it was issued, or is being used inappropriately, it will be retrieved and returned to the service.

14.9 It is the responsibility of the nursing home to notify the approved repairers when a wheelchair needs repairing or collecting.

14.10 The wheelchair service cannot be held responsible for any accidents or injuries sustained if a wheelchair is used by anyone other than the named resident for whom it was supplied.

15.0 Meeting carer needs

15.1 We recognise the important role that carers play in the lives of disabled people, and will strive to prescribe a wheelchair which can take account of carer needs, provided that this is from the standard range of equipment available.

16.0 Repair/recovery of equipment

16.1 The wheelchair service provides a repair service for the equipment that it owns and loans to service users.

16.2 However, the wheelchair service does not provide an emergency recovery service. It is the responsibility of the service user to have a plan in place to return to their home with their wheelchair if it breaks down whilst out of their usual place of residence. The service would recommend that service users take out insurance to cover such eventualities.

16.3 For service users who are resident outside of Derbyshire, it may not be practical either for a home visit to take place to repair the chair/equipment, or for the service user to bring the chair/equipment to the wheelchair service's premises. In this situation, a company local to the service user may be used to carry out the repairs.

17.0 Exclusions

17.1 In order to be eligible for the provision of a powered wheelchair, the service user must meet all of the criteria set out in Sections 12 and 13. Service users with some medical conditions will be considered even if they can walk and are able to self-propel a manual wheelchair, but this is entirely dependent upon the presenting needs of the service user, and their diagnosis/prognosis. In this case, the service user must still meet the rest of the criteria, and demonstrate safe driving skills.

17.2 The wheelchair service does not supply wheelchairs for the rehabilitation process; this is the responsibility of the rehabilitation provider. The service will provide a wheelchair to meet the service user's long-term needs only when the long-term need has been identified following the rehabilitation process.

17.3 The wheelchair service does not assess for, or provide, wheelchairs for sports, recreation or leisure.

17.4 The wheelchair service does not provide the following features:

- Attendant controls or dual controls
- Rise
- Power assisted wheels
- Power packs
- Powered elevating leg rests
- Full recline (horizontal)
- Bluetooth
- Lights and indicators

18.0 Personal wheelchair budgets

Personal wheelchair budgets are available to

- all children and young people
- all adults with medium, high and specialist needs.

Abbreviations

OT	Occupational therapist
RE	Rehabilitation engineer
GP	General practitioner
EPIC	Electrically powered indoor wheelchair
EPIOC	Electrically powered indoor/outdoor wheelchair
PWB	Personal wheelchair budget

Reference

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appendices-assessing-fitness-to-drive#appendix-a-the-legal-basis-for-the-medical-standards>



IF YOU NEED US TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU IN A DIFFERENT WAY, OR HAVE ANY OTHER ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE LET US KNOW



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