

# **Health and Social Care Integration**

**Public Bodies (Joint Working)  
(Scotland) Act 2014**

## **Guidance on the Provision of Wheelchairs on Short-Term Loan**

**March 2021**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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## Introduction

### Health and Social Care Integration

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Joint Working Act) establishes the legal framework for integrating health and social care in Scotland. The Act requires each Health Board and Local Authority to delegate some of their statutory functions, and associated budgets, to their Integration Authority.

Regulations that underpin the Act set out which health and social care functions must be delegated. The provision of equipment and adaptations are functions which **must be delegated** to the Integration Authority.

### Power of Ministers to Issue Direction and Guidance

Under the Joint Working Act Ministers have the power to issue Directions and Guidance to Health Boards, local authorities and Integration Authorities in relation to carrying out their functions.

**This advice note is issued as statutory guidance under the terms of Section 53 of the Joint Working Act, and as such Health Boards, local authorities and Integration Authorities must have regard to the advice provided.**

### Related Guidance

It should be read in conjunction with other statutory guidance and advice issued under the terms of the Act<sup>1</sup>, alongside the Guidance on Providing Equipment and Adaptations ([CCD 5/2009](#)), and subsequent guidance on providing children's equipment ([DL 01 \(2015\)](#)) which detail the overarching principles for the assessment for, and provision of, community equipment and adaptations.

This guidance has been developed in response to reports from the British Red Cross which highlighted inconsistency and gaps in the provision of standard wheelchairs for temporary, short-term loan.

Evidence shows that historical arrangements for short-term provision of standard wheelchairs has been inconsistent, unclear, reliant of the third sector, and staff are often left to problem solve the gap in provision leading to frustrations and delays.

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<sup>1</sup> [Read more about Health and Social Care Integration](#)

## Red Cross Reports and Research

Over recent years the Red Cross has worked to explore the problems and solutions associated with the provision of short-term wheelchair loans. In 2015 they published a report outlining the argument for a statutory duty to be placed on the NHS to provide wheelchairs for short-term use.

*Everyone who needs a wheelchair should be entitled to quickly and easily get one that is right for them, for as long as they need it.*

In addition to this, the Red Cross undertook [UK-wide research](#) to gather the experiences of people who had borrowed a wheelchair from them. This included an economic impact assessment, based on the data provided. It found that overall health and social care savings ranged from £469 to £4,607, with an average saving of £1,676.

### The impact of a short-term wheelchair loan

The Red Cross' [Maintaining Mobility Report](#) highlighted the benefits to individuals of the short-term use of a wheelchair. The report presents research from face-to-face surveys of over 4,000 people across the UK. In depth interviews were also carried out with eight people across the UK who had experienced a short-term unmet need. Healthcare professionals across the UK were also interviewed.

The benefits of short-term use of a wheelchair were widely felt, with 72% seeing the value of a wheelchair in preventing further injury, and almost half (49%) stating that using a wheelchair aided their recovery time.

For those who were not provided with a wheelchair, the majority (65%) felt a significant negative impact on their quality of life. A number of common themes and issues appeared in their responses, including:

- Isolation
- Dependency
- Emotional wellbeing
- Weakened physical health
- Inability to manage everyday life
- Affected employment

*“Some people do get to the point where they get so socially isolated that they don't feel that they could possibly get out of the house, even to see a doctor”*

**District Nurse**

The short term loan was to facilitate outings to hospital appointments for a patient with a family member while she progressed through her rehab goals. The outcome was favourable to the patient who was recovering from major surgery. Although in the process of improving her mobility, there were limits to the distance she could walk making it difficult to attend appointments.

The patient received her wheelchair within a few days of the request being made and this was a pleasing factor of overall service provision to the patient.

The team has not experienced any delays receiving a wheelchair, and believe the service is very well run and tailored to suit the needs of those who need them.

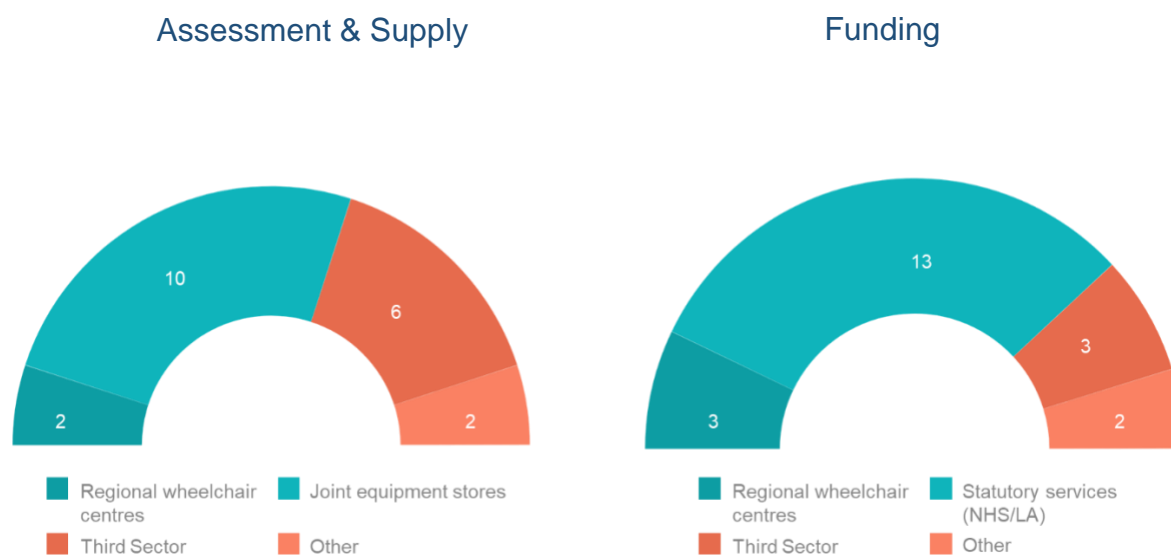
## Short-term loan survey

In 2018 the Scottish Government carried out a short survey of Health & Social Care Partnerships, Health Boards and regional wheelchair centres to establish the current provision of short term loans.

Responses were received on behalf of twenty individual Integration Authorities. Eleven Integration Authorities indicated that wheelchairs were already provided for short-term use. Of those, eight confirmed appropriate protocols were also in place.

It was clear from this survey, that a small number of joint equipment services and local authority and NHS partners had already recognised the need to address this gap in service provision.

Respondents were also asked for their views on how short-term loans should be funded and provided in the future. The majority of respondents indicated that responsibility for the assessment and supply should rest with joint equipment services, with funding provided from statutory services.



## Action Points

Health Boards, local authorities and Integration Authorities must have suitable arrangements in place to meet any eligible needs for a wheelchair on short-term loan, for up to a maximum of 6 months, to ensure no gaps in service provision.

These arrangements must also be monitored, and reported within the Integration Authority.

Options should include:

- exploring the opportunity to utilise local Community Equipment service joint stores which offer the logistics and systems to easily provide, maintain, and monitor this provision;
- where there is limited infrastructure via joint store services, consideration of commissioning other services e.g. Red Cross to provide this service

## Statutory Responsibilities to meet need

### Regional Wheelchair Services

Wheelchair and Seating Services across Scotland are based at five main rehabilitation centres:

- WestMARC (The West of Scotland Mobility and Rehabilitation Centre)
- SMART (South East Mobility and Rehabilitation Technology)
- TORT (Tayside Orthopaedic & Rehabilitation Technology)
- MARS (Mobility and Rehabilitation Service)
- Raigmore Hospital, Inverness

The wheelchair centres will, following assessment, provide standard wheelchairs for 'permanent and substantial use', which has been interpreted as being a need that will last longer than 6 months.

### NHS and local authority

The National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 places a duty on Health Boards to:

- Promote a comprehensive and integrated health service designed to secure improvement in the physical and mental health of the people of Scotland, and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness
- To provide medical, nursing and other services, whether accommodation or premises, in the home of the patient or elsewhere
- To meet all reasonable requirements, for the purposes of the prevention of illness, the care of persons suffering from illness or the after-care of such persons.

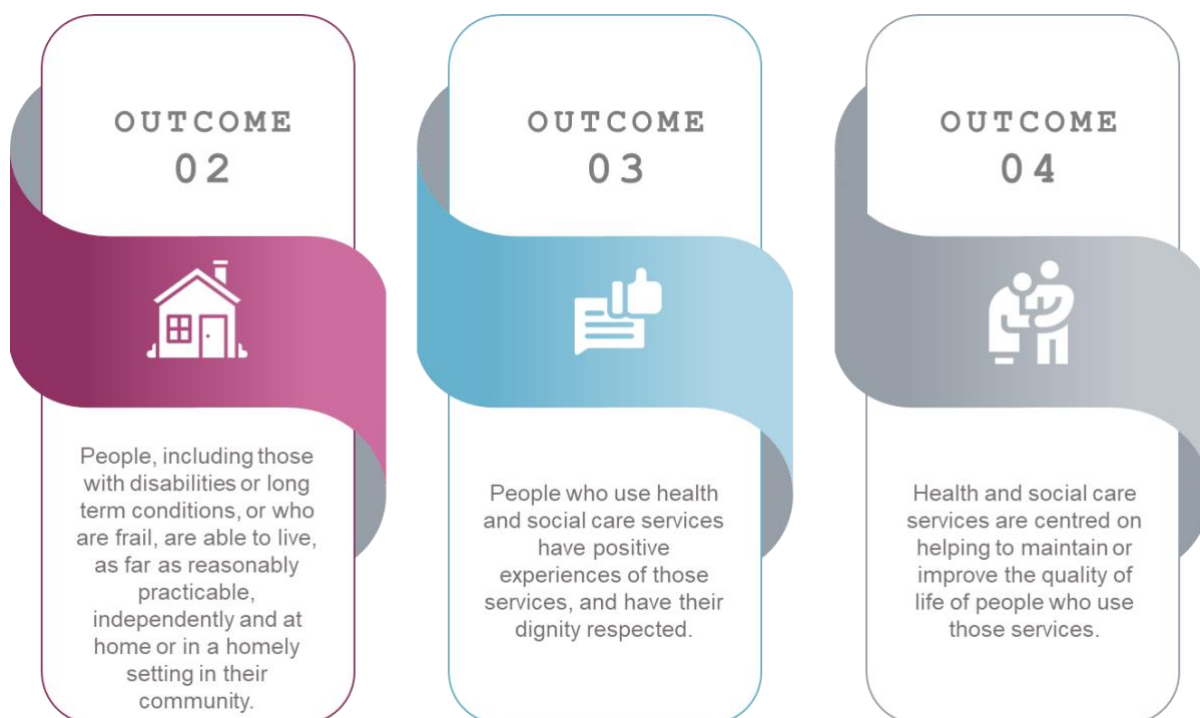
Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 places a duty on local authorities to promote social welfare by making available appropriate advice, guidance and assistance, and such facilities as they may consider suitable and adequate to anyone over 18 who need assistance.

Section 12a of the 1968 Act places a duty on local authorities to carry out an assessment of need for anyone they are under a duty to provide care or assistance to, and decide whether those needs call for the provision of any service.

## Health & Social Care Integration

The [Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) established the legal framework for the integration of health and social care in Scotland. It requires each health board and local authority to delegate some of their statutory functions, and associated budgets, to their Integration Authority (IA). The IA will be responsible for the planning and delivery of the related services using the entire delegated budget.

The Act also introduced [national health and wellbeing outcomes](#) that apply equally across health and social care services in Scotland. These outcomes aim to enable service users and carers to have a clear understanding of what they can expect in terms of improvements in their health and wellbeing.



Successful integration of health and social care services should provide for more people to be cared for and supported at home or in a homely setting. This outcome aims to ensure delivery of community based services, with a focus on **prevention and anticipatory care**, to mitigate against inappropriate admissions to hospital or long term care settings. It recognises that independent living is key to improving health and wellbeing.

The 2014 Act provides the statutory framework for driving forward these changes and is supported by a set of regulations that prescribe the housing-related functions that must be delegated by a Local Authority. In addition the regulations set out where Local Authority housing-related functions may be delegated subject to local agreement.

## Delegated Functions

To underpin the National Outcomes functions relating to equipment and adaptations are part of a range of local authority functions that **must** be delegated to the Integration Authority.

A definition of equipment (aid) and adaptations which must be delegated has been set out in Regulations<sup>2</sup>.

“aid or adaptation” means any alteration or addition to the structure, access, layout or fixtures of accommodation, and any equipment or fittings installed or provided for use in accommodation, for the purpose of allowing a person to occupy, or continue to occupy, the accommodation as their sole or main residence.”

**Where equipment and adaptations are provided, these services, along with the resources which fund this support must be included in the integration arrangements.**

- **This guidance recommends that Health Boards, Local Authorities and Integration Authorities, along with other relevant partners, should include the short-term provision of wheelchairs within their integrated arrangements for the provision of equipment and adaptation services.**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/adaptations-aids-equipment-advice-note/pages/4/>



## Assessment and Provision

Assessment for a wheelchair on short-term loan should form part of the wider assessment of on-going needs by appropriately trained staff (e.g. Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist or nurse).

Mrs B was a palliative patient in end of life stage. Her best-friend from primary school travelled from Australia to spend some time with her revisiting old school haunts. The loan of a wheelchair from the Health & Social Care Joint Equipment Store allowed Mrs B to spend time with her friend and travel to different locations without her over-tiring.

She would have been unable to do this without the timeous loan of the wheelchair. This reduced her social isolation and improved her quality of life and well-being at a crucial stage in her illness.

As with all other equipment the principal of 'minimum intervention, maximum independence' (and the avoidance of over-prescription) should underpin every assessment and alternative forms of managing should have been exhausted before any equipment is provided.

It is good practice to encourage service users to walk whenever it is practical and safe to do so, particularly where this is part of a Rehabilitation/reablement programme. However, a wheelchair can be used when the service user has been assessed as having limited exercise tolerance, is prohibitively slow or in pain when walking, the environment could be dangerous to them, or walking is contra-indicated for medical reasons.

### When to provide

It is recommended that, as a minimum, wheelchairs are provided for short-term loan in the following circumstances:

- To support those recovering from surgery, and are temporarily non-weight bearing following illness.
- To reduce social isolation.
- To provide improved quality of end of life care.
- To support service users awaiting a permanent wheelchair who are otherwise fit for discharge from hospital. (This will be dependent on the complexity of need, and whether a standard (attendant or self-propelled) wheelchair would be suitable).

### When not to provide

- People resident in care homes – it is the responsibility of care homes to meet the short-term/temporary needs of their residents.
- People requiring the long-term provision of a specialist wheelchair. It is likely that their needs would not be adequately met with a standard wheelchair, and they should be referred to wheelchair specialist services to address their immediate and long-term needs.
- Where the home environment is not suitable for wheelchair access (unless the chair is required for outdoor use only).
- People with fluctuating long term conditions may be better supported by the provision of a permanent wheelchair as part of the self-management of their condition, rather than seeking a short-term loan in an emergency.

## Models of provision

### Integrated Community Equipment Service

Where integrated Community Equipment services offer the logistics and infrastructure to provide a range of community equipment, they are well placed to offer short-term loan of standard wheelchairs as a responsive service in line with any other equipment provision and service intervention. This can help provide an important context for the provision of the wheelchair alongside other intervention e.g. ongoing rehabilitation, where there will be a need to balance issues related to fatigue, with the opportunity to maximise functional ability and strength. This approach is also cost-effective, and offers the inbuilt governance associated with the existing Equipment service e.g. professional review of equipment, maintenance, procurement efficiencies, reporting and financial monitoring.

In the West of Scotland, under the auspices of the Equipu Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde in partnership with Glasgow City, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, and South Lanarkshire have developed a joint protocol for the provision of wheelchairs for short-term use through the community equipment store. Clear assessment criteria were agreed, with a focus on reducing delayed discharges and supporting end of life stages. A copy of the protocol is available at [Annex B](#).

*Let's not always look at things from the health point of view. Let's allow someone to have some independence and quality of life.*

**Physiotherapist**

The Duty Occupational Therapist received a call from a Physiotherapist who was trying to prevent an admission to hospital. The duty OT immediately processed an order via the Equipu joint store for a wheelchair and this was delivered the next day. Quick provision of the wheelchair meant that the client was not admitted to hospital, and instead cared for in their own home.

The Duty OT stated *"It is great to have the option of Equipu, previously we were reliant on either the British Red Cross or a private hire company in such instances, but this is so much quicker and straightforward"*

## Commissioning from the Third Sector

Alternatively, this service could be commissioned from a third sector organisation, like the Red Cross. The Red Cross is the biggest national provider of short-term wheelchair loans. Operating from around 250 sites across the UK. In 2017 the charity provided 87,500 mobility aids across the UK, including 58,000 wheelchairs.

The Red Cross is currently providing short-term loans of wheelchairs that help:

- Avoid delayed discharges from hospital, as the patient awaits provision of a permanent chair, or requires a chair for a short-period to aid recovery.
- Aid rehabilitation; people are being referred to the Red Cross by OTs and physiotherapists who are unable to provide chairs for short-term use.

In a few areas, teams are based directly in hospitals and medical centres, where they work closely with medical staff in identifying who needs help.

Many areas are already working with the Red Cross through their Assessment at Home and Home from Hospital Services. This makes the Red Cross already well placed to also provide short-term wheelchair loans, where the infrastructure may not be in place to easily accommodate this provision via the local Community Equipment Store service.

Janis is 65 years old and is retired. She broke her ankle after a fall and had to undergo minor surgery and was in plaster for 6 months.

At the hospital Janice and her husband picked up a leaflet about wheelchair services, but none were close enough to their home in the countryside. However, one of the hospital staff mentioned that the Red Cross might provide a wheelchair loan.

Janis was discharged with a walking frame and crutches. Her husband felt that the wheelchair allowed his wife to return home earlier, avoiding an extra day or two in hospital.

The wheelchair helped Janis get around the house more easily than relying on crutches which hurt her knee and ankle. She could wheel herself to the kitchen, garden and toilet, and do day-to-day tasks by herself.

**“It enabled having a bit more capability and independence.... Reduced feelings of isolation for both of us for over four weeks and even longer, so there’s more freedom for both of us. Without it we would have been really stuck.”**

After ten days Janis was able to use the walking frame to get to the car, but still appreciated having the chair.

Her husband thinks that without the chair they may well have had to attend A&E, as Janis had stumbled a couple of times with the crutches. He feels strongly that the wheelchair had a significant and positive impact on maintaining his wife’s emotional wellbeing and quality of life.

## Length of loan period

The length of a loan will vary from individual to individual and should be based on an assessment of the person's needs.

Currently, the five regional wheelchair centres provide wheelchairs to people who require a wheelchair for **permanent and substantial use**. This has been interpreted as a need lasting 6 months or more.

Between April 2018 and March 2020 the EquipU partnership loaned a total of 73 wheelchairs.

The average loan period was 4-8 weeks, with the longest loan being 4 months.

Therefore, in order to address needs of 6 months or less, criteria should be set in place by local services to assist staff assessing for these needs. Although, the Equipu Partnership (see example above) had initially set a tighter timescale of 12 weeks, it is made clear in their Protocol, that needs can be met up to the 6 months maximum. In reality, it is unusual for someone with short term needs to require a wheelchair beyond 4 months unless their condition has changed, and a reassessment of all their needs would be required.

- **Integration Authorities must agree locally how they will address needs of less than 6 months, and put in place criteria and arrangements to deliver this service, and monitor provision.**

## Estimated Demand and cost

The British Red Cross conducted a survey of 1,105 people in Scotland, and found that 12% (130) people had experienced a serious short-term mobility need at least once in the past two years.

- These 130 people were then asked if they had had issues with everyday living during their most recent experience of need, and 105 people reported they did
- These 105 people were then asked if they had access to mobility aids during this time, and:
  - 31 people reported they had not had access to any mobility aids
  - 9 people reported they had access to a wheelchair
- Therefore, 96 people out of 105 had not had access to a wheelchair
- 17 (17.7 per cent) of these 96 people thought that having a wheelchair would have helped them with everyday living (1.53 per cent of respondents)

Based on the above it could be projected that around 1.5% of the population of Scotland's adult population (around 68,000) may have had an unmet need for a wheelchair in the last two years.

## Joint Community Equipment Store

During 2019/20 the EquipU joint equipment store made 54 individual wheelchair loans to facilitate hospital discharge and support people in the community. Of those, 33 were recycled.

- New wheelchairs were charged at **£154 each**, with a total expenditure of **£3,234 for new, and £528 for the recycled**, and an overall **total cost of £3762**.
- Recycling and reissuing of chairs in the future will ensure minimal costs going forward – in Equipu these are recharged at **£16 per chair**.
- Early figures from 2020/21 indicate that in the first 6 months there have been **45** wheelchairs provided by Equipu, which evidences that the service is increasing its scope and responsiveness in the pandemic. These have been provided to avoid admission to hospital, maintain people in the community, support hospital discharge, and end of life.

## Savings through recycling

Effective recycling of wheelchairs can result in significant cost efficiencies. For example, the EquipU partnership report the cost of issuing a recycled chair at just £16 per chair. A saving of £138 per loan.

In response to the wheelchair survey they stated “Standard wheelchairs are very cheap and very recyclable. We have found that very few new chairs have been purchased and we have been able to deliver this service with recycled chairs. This is cost effective and responsive and saves staff time in trying to problem solve this type of provision in other ways.”

## Savings through Prevention

The Red Cross's economic impact assessment found that overall health and social care savings ranged from £469 to £4,607, with an average saving of £1,676 to the health system in the cases presented.

## Economic Resource Savings Example<sup>3</sup>

Peggy is 89 and lives independently in a bungalow. At the end of 2014, she broke her ankle. Social Services recommended initially that she go into a care home to recover following her discharge from hospital, with her ankle in a cast. She did not want to do this and the local authority found her a wheelchair. With this and the support of friends, she was able to return home.

# £4,607

<p>Avoided community rehabilitation unit care home costs  <b>£1,913</b> cost saving to Community Rehabilitation Unit <sup>1</sup></p>	<p>Avoided ambulance call-outs for two A&amp;E incidences for resetting her ankle, and return trip home in plaster plus two additional follow-up hospital appointments  <b>£1,864</b> resource savings for ambulance service <sup>3</sup></p>
<p>Faster recovery by one week, plus avoiding 3 weeks of increased homecare  <b>£468</b> resource savings for social care services <sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Avoided A&amp;E attendance as an outpatient, from likely fall at home if she had been without a wheelchair during recovery  <b>£129</b> resource saving for Accident &amp; Emergency <sup>4</sup>  <b>£233</b> resource saving for ambulance service <sup>4</sup></p>

1. Based on £1,913 per typical low-cost episode, in purpose-built units for older people requiring recuperation after an illness, fall or temporary difficulty managing daily living; PSSRU 2014. Note: this is equal to approximately three weeks' recovery period with the Red Cross wheelchair, therefore consistent with timeframes of this case, as the weekly cost is estimated at approximately £637; PSSRU 2014.
2. Based on £117 difference between £397 per week 'critical' level homecare, and £280 per week 'Substantial' level care.; PSSRU, 2014.
3. Based on £233 per incidence of ambulance call out: see, treat and convey; PSSRU 2014
4. Based on NHS National Tariff of £129 per A&E incidence with category 2 investigation and category 3 treatment, i.e. plaster removal or application, bone fracture
5. Based on £233 per incidence of ambulance call out: see, treat and convey; PSSRU 2014

<sup>3</sup> [Read the Red Cross Report: Putting the Wheels in Motion: Assessing the value of British Red Cross short-term wheelchair loan](#)

## Action Points

Health Boards, local authorities and Integration Authorities must have suitable arrangements in place to meet any eligible needs for a wheelchair on short-term loan, for up to a maximum of 6 months, to ensure no gaps in service provision.

These arrangements must also be monitored, and reported within the Integration Authority.

Options should include:

- exploring the opportunity to utilise local Community Equipment service joint stores which offer the logistics and systems to easily provide, maintain, and monitor this provision;
- where there is limited infrastructure via joint store services, consideration of commissioning other services e.g. Red Cross to provide this service

# Protocol for the Provision of Wheelchairs



## Introduction

The Wheelchair protocol has been developed in response to national work which highlighted inconsistency and gaps in the provision of basic wheelchairs for temporary, short-term loan. Further work within the partnership confirmed that historical arrangements for short term provision of standard wheelchairs have been inconsistent, unclear, reliant on the third sector, and staff are often left to problem solve this gap in provision leading to frustration and delays. There is evidence of a direct impact on delaying discharges from hospital settings, and lack of timely short term provision has an effect on both the physical and mental wellbeing for those patients who are at key stages in their illness/condition.

This protocol does not replace the obligations of regional wheelchair services but rather, addresses the gaps.

Current criteria advises that the regional Wheelchair services will, following assessment, provide standard wheelchairs for 'permanent and substantial usage'. However if the needs are short term or intermittent then the needs will not be met by the service. In terms of residents within Care Homes (residential and Nursing), it is the responsibility of the care Homes to purchase and provide standard wheelchairs for any short term/variable needs.

### Section 1 - Key Roles and Responsibilities

The protocol will allow for the short-term provision of standard wheelchairs within the [Insert Partnership Name]. This will streamline the arrangements to avoid delayed discharges from hospital settings and to provide timely short term provision which will benefit the physical and mental wellbeing for those patients who are at key stages in their illness/condition e.g. end of life.

It will be the responsibility of the individual Partner organisations to identify the service settings (e.g. hospital and HSCP) via which this provision is likely to be most relevant in terms of meeting the wider service objectives and the strict criteria detailed below (see Section 2).

The equipment is accessed via the **[enter local store details]**. Their function is to:

- Procure, store, recycle, and maintain wheelchairs to relevant health and safety requirements.
- Deliver and uplift equipment directly to/from service users homes
- Arrange for repairs as requested.
- Arrange for the annual testing as per the arrangements for relevant equipment provided by Equipu.

## Section 2 - Assessment and Provision

Wheelchairs ordered from the equipment service and paid for by Partners will be provided for the key purpose of supporting service users. Criteria are as follows:-

- Provision will up to a **maximum of 6 months**.
- The wheelchair provided is a standard attendant propelled wheelchair. Self-propelled can also be provided where appropriate.
- Provision will provide some additional short-term support e.g. for 'end of life stages', enabling timeous discharge from hospital, or to prevent admission to hospital at such times.
- Support those recovering from surgery, and temporarily non-weight bearing following illness, including helping avoid social isolation, and/or prevention of hospital admission.
- Assessment for the wheelchair provision will only be in the context of services already being provided; e.g. OT/Physio/nurse, already involved with the service user
- Provision may include those patients who are waiting for a permanent wheelchair from the Regional Wheelchair Service and are otherwise fit for discharge.
  - *note: this will be dependent on the level of need the person has and whether the standard attendant propelled wheelchair would be suitable.*
- This service will only provide the wheelchair, and no other services will be provided as this is only to address an immediate and short-term need e.g. this does not include environmental adaptations, ramps etc.
- The person must meet the requirements identified in the Assessment Checklist (see attached Appendix A)
- Assessors should only consider the use of **core stock and recycled core stock** wheelchairs, and will not be able to order non-stock alternatives.

As with all other equipment the principal of 'minimum intervention, maximum independence' (and the avoidance of over-prescription) shall underpin every assessment and alternative forms of managing should have been exhausted.

## Section 3 - Ordering Process

The Equipu Store already stocks standard wheelchairs as a core product for order by the local authority Care Homes, and regularly uplifts wheelchairs from people's homes when returning other Equipu products. These chairs are asset managed within the Store.

- **Core stock:** - check website for current model under **product code HWC1**

### Process for ordering:

- Once assessors have considered the **Assessment Checklist [Appendix A]** and are satisfied that the wheelchair will be appropriate for the person's needs, they will use their Equipu login to order the wheelchair from the system:
- Chairs will be found on the system by using the product code search facility
- Staff will use their normal Equipu login.
- The assessor will pick a slot in the normal way but to ensure the wheelchair is returned within the agreed timescale, they will **order the Uplift immediately the order delivery is confirmed.**
- Where necessary, the assessor will make a telephone call to service users the day before the uplift to ensure all arrangements are in place for the return of the wheelchair.
- **All assessors must ensure that the service user and their family/carers are absolutely clear about their responsibility for the return of the equipment within the service timescale e.g. maximum of 4 weeks.**
- Authorisation will be carried out by designated authorisers for each service
- Staff placing the order will also select the 'Care Group' and the 'Reason for provision'.
- Prescribers or an appropriate designated other person, are responsible for ensuring users and carers are safe to use the wheelchair as per the guidance in **Appendix B**

### Repairs

In the event that a repair is required it can be arranged by the original assessor via the Equipu website or phoning the Equipu Store service directly.

### Section 4 - Financial Arrangements

Outcome information from the pilot wheelchair service suggests that the budgetary impact to Partners will be minimal, and timely provision of short-term loan of a wheelchair will assist with addressing delayed discharges and help save significant costs in the wider system. It is expected that there will be high rates of recycling due to short use time scales.

Four weekly monitoring Equipu reports provide managers with detailed information on the expenditure against their budgets. The Equipu Activity sheets name staff who have ordered and describe the types of equipment selected. This information allows managers to monitor the appropriateness of service usage.

## **Section 5 - Guidance**

Supporting information for assessors is available on Appendices A and B. Additional advice may be available through the Equipu Project team.

## **Section 6 - Communication**

The Operational Development Group will support the delivery of the new service arrangements and there will be ongoing monitoring and review to support the delivery of the service. These groups are composed of key representatives from across the Partnership, Equipu Store service provider, the Equipu Project Manager.


The Equipu Project Manager will support Partners in all relevant communication around the Protocol and will actively engage with service areas on an ongoing basis to ensure effective delivery of agreed arrangements.

## Equipu Partnership Provision of wheelchairs for short term use – Criteria and assessment check list

Service user's name CHI number	Address Contact details
<p>This service will only provide a wheelchair and no other services e.g. environmental adaptations/ramps etc. Chairs cannot be adapted or accessorised and come as per the specification below.</p> <p>Alternatives such as long term specialised wheelchairs for those with complex seating requirements and for those who spend considerable time in their wheelchair are sourced via appropriate referral to Westmarc wheelchair service.</p>	
<b>Loan period is for a maximum of 6 months or less</b>	
<b>The criteria for provision are: -</b>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary use post-operatively to facilitate hospital discharge/ prevent admission <input type="checkbox"/> For improved quality of 'end of life' care.</p>	
<b>Wheelchairs for short term loan within the Equipu Partnership have the following specifications:-</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attendant propelled folding wheelchair</li> <li>Seat Width: 19"</li> <li>Weight: 14.9kg</li> <li>Maximum user limit - 125kg/19st</li> <li>Half folding back</li> <li>Removable armrests for side transfers and access swing in/out leg rest hangers</li> <li>Flip up adjustable height footplates.</li> <li>Anti-tippers for extra stability on slopes or uneven ground</li> <li>Foot operated attendant controlled brakes Lap strap</li> </ul>	
<b>Considerations for the service user prior to use</b>	
1. The wheelchair is suitable for the environment- there is access for transfers or space to manoeuvre. Can the wheels cope with very uneven ground if this is encountered?	
2. The chair fits the service user's dimensions and they are within the safe weight limit for the wheelchair.	
3. How much assistance does the user need to get into the chair, and can the attendant cope with this?	
4. The service user has adequate sitting balance to sit in the chair without risk of falling out.	
5. The foot rests are adequate to support the user's legs and feet without risk of them falling off and being dragged under the chair.	
6. Will the user be able to cope with the vibration when ground is uneven [pain; maintaining position etc.]	
7. Are there any basic requirements for pressure care/cushions?	
<b>Service users with unpredictable behaviour can be at risk in a wheelchair so ensure that:-</b>	
1. The service user will keep their feet on the footplates when the chair is in motion	
2. The service will not try to get out of the chair while it is in motion.	

<b>The attendant must: -</b>	
1. Have the capacity to push the chair n.b. a gentle slope can be difficult to negotiate even with a light passenger	
2. Use the chair safely and appropriately – operate the brakes, reach the footplates to apply them, tip the chair to cope with steps and uneven surfaces?	
3. Be able to fold up the chair and lift into vehicles if required?	
Have the service user and/or attendant been given adequate instruction in the use of the chair? <b>Yes      No</b> [See wheelchair equipment template below for further information]	
<b>Assessor</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Assessors signature</b>	<b>Planned date of uplift:-</b>

**Appendix B**

<b>WHEELCHAIR FOR PROVISION</b>	
	<p><b>Description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendant propelled folding wheelchair</li> <li>• Seat Width: 19"</li> <li>• Weight: 14.9kg</li> <li>• Maximum user limit - 125kg/19st</li> <li>• Half folding back</li> <li>• Removable armrests for side transfers and access <input type="checkbox"/> swing in/out leg rest hangers</li> <li>• Flip up adjustable height footplates.</li> <li>• Anti-tippers for extra stability on slopes or uneven ground</li> <li>• Foot operated attendant controlled brakes</li> <li>• Lap strap</li> </ul>
<b>Weight restrictions</b>	<p><b>Safe Weight Limits</b> 125kg/19st</p> <p><b>*Check Safe Weight Limits for usage as these can change.</b></p>
<p><b>Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Specialised wheelchair for those with complex seating requirements and who spend significant time in their wheelchair – Assessment and provision requires appropriate referral to Westmarc wheelchair service</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>When should this equipment be issued?</b></p> <p><b>It is good practice to encourage service users to walk whenever it is practical and safe to do so however:-</b></p> <p>A wheelchair can be used when the service user has been assessed as having limited exercise tolerance, is prohibitively slow or in pain when walking, the environment could be dangerous to them or walking is contra-indicated for medical reasons.</p>	

### **Considerations Prior to use**

- The wheelchair is suitable for the environment - there is access for transfers or space to manoeuvre. Can the wheels cope with very uneven ground if this is encountered?
- The chair fits the service user's dimensions and they are within the safe weight limit for the wheelchair.
- How much assistance does the user need to get into the chair, and can the attendant cope with this?
- The service user has adequate sitting balance to sit in the chair without risk of falling out.
- The foot rests are adequate to support the user's legs and feet without risk of them falling off and being dragged under the chair.
- Will the user be able to cope with the vibration when ground is uneven [pain; maintaining position etc]
- Service users with unpredictable behaviour can be at risk in a wheelchair so ensure that:-
  - The service user will keep their feet on the footplates when the chair is in motion
  - The service will not try to get out of the chair while it is in motion.
- In the case of attendant propelled chairs, the attendant must have the capacity to push the chair
  - n.b. a gentle slope can be difficult to negotiate even with a light passenger
- Can the user or attendant use the chair safely and appropriately – operate the brakes, reach the footplates to apply them, tip the chair to cope with steps and uneven surfaces?
- Can the attendant fold up the chair and lift into vehicles if required?

## **Using the wheelchair**

### **Before seating the user:**

- Check the chair is fit for use. Brakes in working order, foot rests in place and at a comfortable height for the user.

### **Getting the user into the chair**

- Place the wheelchair as near the user as required.
- Apply the brakes and fold the foot rests back
- Ask the user to get into the chair or assist then to do so as required.
- Ensure the user is right back in the chair then ask them to apply the lap straps or assist them to do so.
- Position the foot plates and ensure the users feet are correctly positioned on them

### **Pushing the chair**

- Make sure clothing/rugs are tucked away from the wheels
- Don't hang heavy bags on the wheelchair handles as this could tip the wheelchair backwards
- Ensure the user knows not to stand on the footplates as this could tip the chair
- Attendants should use their whole body weight to push the chair not just their arms
- Assume an upright position to push the chair with arms bent – if attendants are significantly bent over the chair or pushing from too far back to move it, it is probably too heavy for them.
- Always look for a ramp rather than negotiate a kerb to ascend onto pavements.
- Do not try to negotiate more than 1 shallow step with a wheelchair.

### **Getting the user out of the chair**

- Apply the brakes and fold foot plates back
- Ask the user to remove the lap straps or assist as required
- Hold the handles keeping the chair stationery
- Ask the user to move forward in the chair and push up to a standing position using the wheelchair arms for support
- If they need assistance to get up and balance, move to their side offering an arm to steady them.
- If significant assistance is required to get someone out of the chair more than 1 attendant may be required.

### **Maintenance**

- Equipment should be cleaned in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.
- Wheelchairs will be regularly serviced and maintained by the EQUIPU store





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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
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ISBN: 978-1-80004-860-7 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, March 2021

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS847546 (03/21)

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