

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group

Dudley Wheelchair Service

Eligibility Criteria for the Supply of Wheelchairs and Related Equipment

November 2016

1. Clients

- Dudley Wheelchair Service (DWS) will assess and provide equipment to individuals who have long-term mobility problems.
- Clients must be registered with a GP within Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

2. Referrals

- A client with a long term mobility problem (someone who will require permanent use of a wheelchair) can be referred to DWS by any Health Professional, using the DWS referral form.
- All new referrals must be signed by the referrer (registered health professional) and include their contact details, should any queries arise.
- The GP's details **must** also be noted to ensure eligibility.
- Faxed copies of referrals are acceptable to assist in accelerating the assessment process but the original copy must subsequently be forwarded to DWS.
- Incomplete forms will be returned to the referrer and therefore delay assessment and provision.
- Referrals will be screened by appropriately-trained staff and/or students/trainees under supervision, within 2 working days of receipt.
- Once in the system, clients can be re-referred by themselves or Health Professionals should any new issues/problems arise. This can be done by any means such as telephone, secure email or in writing.

3. Residential and Nursing Home Provision

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

- Appendix 1 contains details of the circumstances in which other categories of wheelchair and related equipment will be provided to this client group.

4. Assessment

- Clinical assessments will be carried out at the venue most relevant to the circumstances of each individual case.
- Such venues may include DWS Centre, the client's home, place of education or work, in-patient setting, etc.
- The assessment will be conducted by the member(s) of staff deemed most appropriate during the screening process – this may include students/trainees under supervision.
- Referring professionals may be requested to attend assessments where their input/advocacy is pertinent.

5. Equipment Provided by Dudley Wheelchair Service

- Wheelchairs are issued first and foremost to provide mobility for the individual.
- Clients who also present with needs such as postural support, pressure care, etc will only have these issues considered and addressed if they meet eligibility criteria for wheelchair provision.
- DWS do not provide static seating therefore wheelchairs will not be issued for use in this way.
- All wheelchairs and related equipment will be issued on the basis of clinical need.
- Eligibility criteria will be applied consistently by DWS staff to all individual cases.
- The varying presentation and range of conditions encountered within DWS frequently results in difficulty establishing eligibility.
- In situations where eligibility is unclear, cases will be discussed at length in clinical team meetings while further supporting information may be sought from Health Professionals who are involved in the individual's care (if the client gives their permission for DWS to do so).
- Ultimately the decision of the DWS Manager is **final**.

- Documentation must reflect and justify the clinical reasoning and a letter outlining this should be sent to the client and copied to the referrer.
- Should a client wish to complain/appeal about such a decision, they should be given the opportunity to discuss their case with the DWS Manager.
- If they are still not satisfied following this they should be directed to the service provider's complaints procedure.

6. Standard Wheelchairs

- Basic manual wheelchairs are issued to meet the clinical need for mobility.
- It must be demonstrated that an individual will benefit from frequent and regular use of such equipment in their home environment and/or to access local services and amenities.
- DWS do not issue wheelchairs for occasional use e.g. for short trips once/twice per week. In such circumstances individuals will be advised to access free wheelchair loans by services such as shopping centres, supermarkets, theatres, etc.
- Standard off-the-shelf wheelchairs will be provided wherever suitable and delivered directly to the client if possible, to include all current standard, transit and self-propelling models, in a variety of sizes and weight limits.
- An assessment may be required to confirm the need for a wheelchair and to determine the most suitable type, size, etc for the client.

7. Prescription Wheelchairs

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

8. Powered Wheelchairs

- Powered wheelchair provision is based primarily on the need for indoor mobility within the client's home. Outdoor use can then be considered as an extension of this need.
- Powered wheelchairs will not be issued solely for outdoor use.
- All clients referred for a powered wheelchair will be seen initially in their home environment and local vicinity to determine eligibility and ensure suitable access.

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

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

- DWS will not consider powered wheelchair provision for:
 - Clients in acute stages of illness.

- Clients undergoing active rehabilitation.
- Clients whose prognosis is terminal, except MND clients; details are provided in Appendix 2.

9. Supply of Powered Wheelchairs to Children

- Children will undergo the same assessment and testing procedure as adults.
- There is no lower age limit for supply but children must demonstrate independent control and awareness.
- If this cannot be achieved then an adult must accompany the child when using the wheelchair at all times.
- The child must achieve a safe and acceptable standard of use under adult supervision to enable provision.
- There will be discussions with all involved as to where the powered wheelchair will be used and additional environmental checks will be carried out accordingly e.g. place of education.
- Powered wheelchairs will be provided to children solely for use in a place of education (including further/higher education), to facilitate their access to learning.
- This may occur where children can mobilise or self propel in their home environment but are unable to do so over the longer distances often present in schools, colleges, etc.

10. Attendant Controlled Powered Outdoor Wheelchairs & Power Packs

- If a client's carer suffers from a medical condition or disability which leaves them unable to push a manual wheelchair outdoors, an EPOC or Power Pack may be considered.

- Eligibility requires that:
 - The client is reliant on a manual transit wheelchair for indoor mobility and the EPOC or Power Pack is for frequent and regular use (defined as 3-4 times per week) to enable access to local services and amenities.
 - The client's main carer is in some way disabled, making it impossible for them to push the client outdoors in a manual wheelchair.
 - However the carer must still have sufficient walking ability to enable the equipment to be used within their local environment.
 - The carer must agree to DWS contacting their GP for supporting evidence regarding their condition/disability.
 - The carer must be able to demonstrate the ability to safely control the equipment and pass practical tests.
- The client and carer's lifestyles will be discussed and considered. Priority will be given to those who have no other means of transport to access their local environment.
- There must be adequate internal and external access to the home and suitable space and charging facilities available to store the equipment.
- Usage will be reviewed annually – if frequency and safety of use is not maintained then DWS will retrieve the equipment.

11.Special Seating

- Off-the-shelf and/or bespoke special seating can be issued to clients who require such postural support, assuming they meet the criteria for supply of mobility equipment.
- Special seating equipment will not be supplied in cases where mobility is not required – such demand can be met by static seating which is not part of the DWS remit.

12. Buggies (Pushchairs)

- DWS will assess all children and supply appropriate mobility equipment.
- This may be in the form of a buggy.
- Equipment will not usually be issued to children under the age of 30 months unless referred by a Health Professional specialising in Paediatrics.
- In such instances the professional in question should be involved in the assessment process to ensure adequate postural support and prevent over-seating, which can affect development.

13. Wheelchair Cushions

- A large range of wheelchair cushions are available on the NHS.
- These shall be provided to meet clinical need and can be issued to provide comfort, postural support, pressure relief or any combination of these factors.

14. Accessories

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

15. Modifications

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

16.Second Wheelchairs

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

17.Personal Health Budgets

In May 2016, NHS England sets out action to help people manage their own health by giving them more choice and control about the personal care they receive.

Personal Health Budgets will replace the current wheelchair voucher scheme as part of efforts to improve services for over 1.2 million people that currently use wheelchairs.

The CCG is currently waiting for further guidance on how these budgets will work. The aim is to roll out “personal wheelchair budgets” nationally from April 2017, to cover everyone who accesses the current wheelchair voucher scheme. This includes those with both low level and complex wheelchair requirements. The voucher scheme was introduced in 1996 on a voluntary basis and its use around the country is variable. The national team are confident that the choice and control offered by personal wheelchair budgets, when implemented well, can support increased flexibility and enable people to purchase the right wheelchair to meet their specific needs and requirements.

NHS England will produce guidance on the delivery model through rapid testing and evaluation with a number of CCG clusters over 2016/17. This work will cover care planning, information support and advice, budget setting (using learning from the development of the Wheelchair Tariff where appropriate) and review, in time for rollout from April 2017.

Further sites will be invited to join the programme over the course of 2016/17 and become a test bed in rolling out personal wheelchair budgets.

It is anticipated that replacing the voucher scheme with personal wheelchair budgets will support:

- A shift in control to individuals and their families over the wheelchair provided
- Greater transparency about funding and what that should include
- An opportunity to explore how the provision of wheelchairs can be joined with other care and support as part of a holistic person centred care and support plan and integrated budget.
- A stronger framework for person centred care and support planning
- A person centred care and support plan which includes repair, maintenance and review.

In addition to this, the national team are currently working with a small number of sites to explore the potential of personal wheelchair budgets for people with more complex wheelchair requirements, where the requirement for a wheelchair forms part of a wider package of care and support for an individual.

For more information email england.personalhealthbudgets@nhs.net

18.Short-term Loan Wheelchairs (See Appendix 3 for further details)

- DWS will supply short-term loan wheelchairs for a period of up to six months to those clients who are terminally ill.
- These clients are given priority and relatives or carers will be asked to collect and return the wheelchairs.

19.Hire Service (See Appendix 4 for further details)

- DWS provides a wheelchair hire service to clients who may require a wheelchair on a temporary basis.

Appendix 1:

Residential and Nursing Home Provision

- DWS does not provide transit wheelchairs to clients in residential or nursing homes - this is the responsibility of the home (Dept of Health 2001 & 2004; Integrating Community Equipment Services 2003).
- Self propelling wheelchairs may be provided for clinical need to allow clients to mobilise independently and safely.
- Powered wheelchairs may be provided for clinical need if residents are unable to self propel. Clients must undergo and pass the full assessment process outlined for powered wheelchairs and be able to use the equipment independently.
- Comfort wheelchairs and/or special seating may be provided for clinical need to enable mobility while maintaining postural deformity, facilitating feeding, etc.
- If mobility is not required then clients will not be prescribed special seating. This can be achieved via static seating which is not part of the DWS remit.
- In all instances mobility and quality of life must be considerably enhanced by enabling clients to access local services and amenities, including day centres and adult education.

Appendix 2:

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

- As the standard criteria for the provision of indoor and/or outdoor powered wheelchairs virtually excludes this client group from provision, special criteria have been drawn up in an attempt to meet some of these client's mobility needs.
- The critical aspect for this group is a fast response to mobility needs for indoor and outdoor mobility. As a compromise, the provision of special controls may not be considered unless they are readily available i.e. reusable and/or off-the-shelf.
- EPICs (electrically powered indoor chair) will be provided to clients who pass an abbreviated testing procedure, on the following basis:
 - Referral by a Health Professional for consideration of a powered wheelchair
 - Where the client's mobility is impacting on function and quality of life
 - Where fatigue or the effort of walking or self propelling compromises function and the client would benefit from the provision of a powered wheelchair
 - The client passes the indoor test to demonstrate adequate driving skills
 - The home environment is suitably accessible, as assessed by the Rehabilitation Engineer or Wheelchair Therapist.
- EPIOCs (electrically powered indoor & outdoor chair) may be provided quickly on completion of relevant testing.
- Dual controls for power chairs may be fitted if/when needed.
- Additional features, such as tilt-in-space, head and postural supports, etc can also be considered as appropriate.
- The provision of an EPIOC depends on the following;

- Written evidence from the client's Consultant or GP considers stating that they are medically safe to drive outdoors or
 - The referring Health Professional and/or Wheelchair Therapist assess the client as having competent visual perception and cognitive processing to control the wheelchair safely.
 - Clients can demonstrate competent outdoor driving skills
 - The home environment is suitably accessible, as assessed by the Rehabilitation Engineer or Wheelchair Therapist.
 - Where a ramp is required to get into the house, this needs to be secure ramps of 5° (1:12 slope) with kerb or edging along the edge for safety. A steeper slope will be considered if stability testing indicates the slope to be safe with the individual chair and person.
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- Clients cannot be provided with outdoor powered wheelchairs if they have uncontrolled epilepsy (need to be fit free for 12 months) or are taking medication that impacts on cognition or response speed.

Provision of equipment under this policy is subject to stock availability

Appendix 3:

Policy for the supply of short-term loan wheelchairs for palliative clients (requiring the wheelchair for up to 6 months)

- Dudley Wheelchair Service will provide transit or self-propelling standard model wheelchairs to palliative clients who have mobility problems.

- As short term loan wheelchairs are usually required urgently the following will apply:
 - Short-term loan wheelchair referral forms must be completed by a Health Professional.
 - Wheelchairs will be made available as soon as the referral has been authorised by DWS staff, subject to stock. Consequently these referrals will be processed without an assessment of the client.

- Once the wheelchair is available, it must be collected (by client, family, friend or carer) from DWS.

- The wheelchair must be returned to DWS when it is no longer required.

- If the wheelchair is subsequently required for longer than six months then DWS must be contacted to authorise the extended period. This is purely for administrative purposes.

Appendix 4:

Hire Service

- DWS provides a wheelchair hire service to clients who may require a wheelchair on a temporary basis.
- Only standard size transit models of wheelchairs are offered. No accessories will be issued for use on hire wheelchairs.
- These wheelchairs have a user weight limit of 17.5 - 20 stone, depending on the particular model.
- Stock of hire chairs is limited and if no wheelchairs are available, clients will be directed to other local hire services.
- A referral from a Health Professional is not required therefore DWS will accept self referrals.

Charges

Per day	£tbc
Per weekend (Fri-Mon)	£tbc
Per week	£tbc
Per month	£tbc

- **A deposit of £xx.xx is required – this will be refunded on return of the wheelchair.**

Method of Payment

- Payment is on collection of the hire wheelchair.
- Cash or cheques will be accepted.
- Proof of identity will be required (driving licence, pension book, etc).

- If the wheelchair is required for a further period, DWS must be contacted and the additional payment made direct to the Wheelchair Service.

- A member of DWS staff will complete the hire conditions of supply form, ensuring contact details are noted. This form must be signed by the person collecting the wheelchair and a copy will be issued along with a receipt of payment.

- Wheelchairs must be returned on time otherwise additional charges will be incurred and/or deposit withheld. No refunds will be given for early return of the wheelchair.