

THE WHEELCHAIR AND SPECIAL SEATING SERVICE

SERVICE CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

This document has been produced for the benefit of wheelchair service users and Health care professionals. It gives detail of the criteria that equipment is issued against and how it is applied. It also outlines general information about the services that are provided.

The Bristol Wheelchair and Special Seating Service provide a service to patients who are registered with a GP within the following CCG areas;

- Bristol
- South Gloucestershire
- North Somerset
- Bath and North East Somerset

The CCG commission the service via a service specification [currently under review].

Client will be seen within the clinic setting at the Bristol Centre for Enablement or at their home, hospital, school or day care setting as appropriate.

Service base:

Bristol Centre for Enablement
Highwood Pavilions
Jupiter Road
Patchway
Bristol
BS34 5BW

Contact number: 0300 3000110

Email: wheelchairs@nbt.nhs.uk

Website: www.nbt.nhs.uk/bristol-centre-enablement

Service opening hours: Monday – Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: CRITERIA INFORMATION

SECTION 2: SERVICE INFORMATION

- 2.1 Referral to the service
- 2.2 The assessment process
- 2.3 Delivery of equipment
- 2.4 Replacement of equipment
- 2.5 Repairs
- 2.6 Review

SECTION 3: EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

- 3.1 Manual Wheelchairs and Buggies
 - 3.1(a) Standard Wheelchairs and Buggies
 - 3.1(b) Wheelchairs requiring further assessment
- 3.2 Powered Wheelchairs
- 3.3 Electrically powered indoor wheelchair (EPIC)
- 3.4 Electrically powered indoor/outdoor Wheelchair (EPIOC)
- 3.5 Accessories
- 3.6 Modifications
- 3.7 Pressure relieving cushions

SECTION 4: SPECIAL SEATING

SECTION 5: NURSING HOMES

SECTION 6: PERSONAL WHEELCHAIR BUDGETS

SECTION 1

CRITERIA INFORMATION (ADULTS & CHILDREN)

The specific detail of the criteria and consideration for provision for different types of equipment is contained within this document, **however the general criteria applies in all cases.**

Access criteria

Provision of equipment will be considered where the person:

- Has limited mobility – with a long term restriction of walking ability (over 6 months)
- Has a permanent need for a wheelchair and will expect to use the equipment on a regular basis, at least 4 days a week for more than 1 hour.
- Is registered to a GP in the area covered by the Wheelchair and Special seating service

There is no age restriction for provision, however equipment will not be provided for babies and very young children where posture of mobility needs can be met by commercially available buggies.

The Wheelchair Service does **not** issue chairs for:

- Short term periods; less than 6 months use
- Short term terminal care; less than 6 months. Provision of this may be considered but only in exceptional circumstances
- When wheelchair provision has contra-indications to the clients medical condition or safety.

SECTION 2

SERVICE INFORMATION

2.1 REFERRAL TO THE SERVICE

Professional staff should use the appropriate referral form(s) to access the service. Copies of all referral forms are available on the service website; alternatively referrals can be made using the e-referral system.

New/Initial referrals:

These are referrals for clients that are new and not previously known to the service. This is via the referral form (**DSC031**).

Referrals can be made by any registered health care professional who takes responsibility for the prescription detail and risk assessment issues and who has attended the services Accreditation Training. [We will accept referrals from HCPs who have gained accreditation in other areas, but we will ask they attend refresher training for our service].

Any healthcare assistant or support staff needs to have the referral countersigned by a registered HCP or accredited referrer.

The e-referral system; this can be used for all new referrals to the Service including requests for powered wheelchairs for indoor use only and buggies. This system can only be used by accredited referrers (those who have attended *our* wheelchair accreditation course), GP's and medical staff (consultants and paediatricians).

The Wheelchair Service is unable to accept referrals where the minimum data set is not supplied. Incomplete referrals are returned to the referrer with missing information fields highlighted. The minimum data set is as follows:

- Clients name, address, date of birth and contact details
- Referrers name, address, contact details and signature
- Name, Address and contact number of clients GP
- Clients diagnosis and resulting disability
- Clients height and weight
- The clients goals (i.e. how often and where they will use the wheelchair)
- Type of wheelchair or type of assessment required

If referrers are also able to provide the clients measurements in sitting this may expedite the process.

Existing client referrals:

These are referrals for clients who are known to the service and may already have equipment supplied by the wheelchair service. These referrals are accepted from GP's, accredited referrers, Health care professionals, clients themselves or their representatives.

An existing client referral form (**DSC040**) should be completed and sent in by e-mail, fax or post, for all clients already known to the service. Existing clients may refer themselves for review by telephoning or emailing the service.

Wheelchair pressure relieving cushions:

Pressure care cushion referral form (**DSC035**) should be completed on making these referrals. Pressure care cushions are only supplied for use in a wheelchair or buggy and for not for any other pieces of equipment.

Electrically Powered Indoor Wheelchair (EPIC):

The general wheelchair referral form (DSC031) should be fully completed. Referrals can be made by any registered health care professional who takes responsibility for the prescription detail and risk assessment issues and who had attended the service Accreditation Training Existing clients may refer themselves for consideration of powered equipment by telephoning or emailing the service.

Referrers must add specific information as to the clients need for an EPIC and include any relevant home environmental access issues.

Electrically Powered Indoor/Outdoor Wheelchair (EPIOC):

The specific referral form (DSC007) must be completed. Please refer to the criteria for issue of this equipment prior to completing the referral form

What happens when a referral is received?

Referrals to the service are checked for all essential information. Any incomplete referrals are returned to the referrer with missing information fields highlighted. Referrals not meeting the prescription criteria will be rejected and returned to the referrer with an explanation referring to the criteria, these referrals are not registered to the service until the correct information has been received.

Correctly completed referrals for new clients are registered onto the service database and given a specific client reference number. Referrals for existing Wheelchair service clients are logged onto their existing notes.

All registered referrals are passed to the appropriate clinical assessment team for triage.

Outcomes from triage:

Where there is sufficient information to safely supply equipment without the need for further assessment, equipment will be ordered and delivery will be arranged direct to the client.

Further information may be required from the client, GP or Healthcare professional in order to take the most appropriate action. Where a further assessment is required the referral will be prioritised and added to the appropriate waiting list. The client will be sent a letter to inform them of this action.

Provision of equipment to facilitate hospital discharge:

The referral must clearly denote if the assessment and equipment provision requested is required to facilitate hospital discharge. Hospital discharge needs will be given priority and early referral is desired, especially for those likely to require non-standard specification wheelchairs. Non-standard equipment is not held in stock and will be subject to manufacturer's delivery times.

Timescales for assessment and equipment provision:

The wheelchair service works within an 18 week pathway for the assessment and delivery of all adult and children's equipment; this is measured from receipt of referral to delivery of equipment.

2.2 THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Where will the client be seen?

- The Wheelchair and Special Seating Service currently operate at the Bristol Centre for Enablement (BCE). Transport is available for eligible patients; this is booked by the client or representative attending the clinic.
- Clients own home, hospital, school, work or day care setting if appropriate. Clients can be visited at home ONLY if they are unable to travel for medical reasons, due to their condition or the assessment requires them to be in their home environment. Their eligibility for a home visit will be determined by the triaging clinician.

Who will see the client?

- A Therapist and / or Rehabilitation Engineer, Wheelchair assistant or technician as appropriate from the referral.
- Other healthcare professionals may also be invited to attend, if appropriate.

The client can choose to have a family member, carer or friend present at the assessment.

The assessment appointment:

- At the assessment stage a functional and postural assessment will be undertaken.
- A client's goals and expected outcomes for mobility will be discussed.
- Verbal consent will always be obtained.
- Equipment may be trialled and options discussed, taking into account clinical and functional needs and clients goals.

Options following the assessment:

- Issue of equipment from limited held stock, if available.
- Order of equipment if appropriate.
- Personal Wheelchair budget taken
- Further appointment if necessary to trial or assess with equipment that needs to be obtained from manufacturers.

2.3 DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT

The Wheelchair Delivery Service will deliver, set up and adjust standard equipment. In the case of more complex equipment the Wheelchair Services Therapist and/or Rehabilitation Engineer will see the client to set up, adjust and instruct on the use of equipment either following delivery by the Delivery Service to the home address or in clinic at the Wheelchair Service. They will complete a handover checklist and conditions of supply to be signed by the client to accept terms and condition of supply.

2.4 REPLACING EXISTING EQUIPMENT

Replacement of equipment will only be undertaken if it no longer meets the clients 'clinical needs' or the repair service deems that the equipment is beyond economic repair.

2.5 REVIEW

Review is arranged as requested by existing clients or clinical staff. Clients, carers and professionals should make direct contact with the service if there are any changes that indicate that further intervention by the Wheelchair Service is required.

2.6 WHEELCHAIR REPAIR SERVICE

It is the responsibility of the client/carer to notify the repair service when wheelchairs are in need of repair, also if there has been an incident resulting in any damage to the equipment supplied.

Wheelchairs will only be repaired when they are recorded as being issued by the service to the person currently using the wheelchair.

Lost or stolen wheelchairs must be reported as soon as possible to the Wheelchair and Special Seating Service on the repair service number; which is 0117 969 6959. If your call is not answered please ensure that you leave your name and number on the voicemail and a member of staff will return your call.

SECTION 3

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED AND SPECIFIC CRITERIA

3.1 MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS AND BUGGIES

3.1(a) Standard Wheelchairs and Buggies

Basic Wheelchairs and buggies from an agreed range will be supplied following an assessment by an accredited referrer (those who have attended our wheelchair accreditation course), GP's and medical staff (consultants and paediatricians).

Equipment will be ordered and delivered direct to the client where the request is for standard, basic equipment and there is no indication of a need for wheelchair service clinical input and assessment.

3.1(b) Wheelchairs and buggies that require further assessment

Self-propelling configurable manual wheelchairs:

This range of wheelchairs offers more adjustability and range of size options than available in the standard wheelchair range.

High specification energy efficient manual wheelchairs:

Assessment for this range of equipment is undertaken by the Wheelchair Service Therapist and / or Rehabilitation Engineer. Outside manufacturers and dealers may also be involved.

Referrals for this type of manual wheelchair will be considered for provision when:

- The main service criteria for self-propelled wheelchairs are met.
- The clients clinical and mobility needs cannot be met by another wheelchair of a lower specification within the Wheelchair service range.
- The client is a full time wheelchair user and lifestyle needs and ability is such that maximum independence and mobility will be gained by provision of an energy efficient wheelchair.
- The wheelchair user has demonstrated adequate control of static and dynamic stability of the wheelchair necessary for their likely environment and planned usage.

Manual wheelchairs and buggies with a tilt in space and / or recline facility:

These will be supplied where the client requires postural support and regular changes in positioning within their wheelchair and their needs cannot be accommodated in any other wheelchair type with the addition of accessories.

One arm lever of dual rim self-propelling chairs:

These types of wheelchairs will be issues following a full assessment of the client's needs.

Double buggies:

The main responsibility of the Wheelchair Service is the provision of appropriate seating and mobility within a single buggy/wheelchair required by the child meeting the criteria.

Provision of a double buggy will only be considered where **both** children meet the main criteria for the provision of Wheelchair Service equipment. **This will be in the place of individual buggies for each child.**

Where only one child meets the criteria, a Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB) can be used as an option to obtain a double buggy in place of an individual buggy. The PWB buggy chosen by the family must meet the postural needs of the disabled child requiring wheelchair provision and accommodate the weight of both children.

3.2 POWERED WHEELCHAIRS

This service can supply:

- Electrically powered indoor wheelchairs (EPIC)
- Electrically powered indoor/outdoor wheelchairs (EPIOC)

This service does not provide powered wheelchairs for outdoor use only this includes mobility scooters.

3.3 ELECTRICALLY POWERED INDOOR WHEELCHAIRS (EPIC)

Provision for this type of equipment will be assessed by the Wheelchair service clinical team and will involve a full clinical, functional and environmental assessment. A Wheelchair and Special Seating Service referral form (DSC031) should be completed in full by a GP or accredited referrer with reference to the criteria.

Criteria:

An EPIC may be supplied under the following circumstances;

- The person meets the Service general criteria for the provision of equipment.
- The person is unable to walk or the walking is not functional within the home environment, or there are medical and / or functional contra-indications to them continuing to do so e.g. breathing difficulties, high risk of falls etc.
- The person is unable to manage to manually self-propel a wheelchair or there are medical issues that limit the consistent ability to self-propel or provide a significant risk of injury to the person when mobilising indoors.
- The person has a residential environment that is compatible with the use of an EPIC; and they have adequate space for the movement of the EPIC including leg rests/foot plates within the home; and have a suitable area with power supply for charging the batteries.
- The person must demonstrate an ability of reasonable potential with further training to safely control the EPIC independently within the home.
- Agreement to the annual planned preventative maintenance programmes to be completed, giving full access to the equipment when requested.
- Agree to Wheelchair Services conditions of supply; including the annual review process.

Assessment:

The person's home environment and their ability to manage the chair safely within this setting will be assessed by the clinical team. An EPIC is not intended for outdoor pavement use. However the chair may be suitable for use within the confines of a private garden and this will be investigated at the time of assessment by the clinical assessment team.

The Wheelchair Service will seek advice from the clients GP or other healthcare professionals, if, prior to or at assessment actual or potential risks to the health and safety of the client and others are identified. This will be done with the consent of the client.

EPIC provision for children:

EPIC's will be issued to children who are unable to walk or self-propel functionally, and have been assessed as being capable of independently controlling a powered wheelchair safely.

The Service may also issue for those children who have limited self-propelling ability or has limited walking ability at home but needs a power chair to be independent over larger distances at school.

On an individual basis the Wheelchair Service will consider provision of an EPIC for school use only. This chair can be used in playgrounds and between classrooms if the gradients and surfaces are compatible with the chair. A full assessment will be undertaken before supply.

EPIC provision for residents of nursing and residential home:

See section 6 – Nursing and residential homes.

3.4 ELECTRICALLY POWERED INDOOR/OUTDOOR WHEELCHAIR (EPIOC)

All EPIOC supply through the NHS has a limited maximum speed of 4mph and is for pavement use only.

A Wheelchair and Special Seating Service EPIOC form (**DSC077**) must be completed in full by a GP or accredited referrer with reference to the criteria.

Provision for this type of equipment will be assessed by the Wheelchair Service clinical team and will involve a full clinical, functional and environmental assessment.

Criteria:

Referrals must meet all of the criteria for supply of EPIC above AND additional criteria before they can be considered eligible for provision of an EPIOC.

Additional Criteria:

- Have safe and easy access to the outdoors from their home environment.
- Have a local environment which is accessible and compatible within safe EPIOC use.
- Be able to demonstrate that they have the potential to benefit from an EPIOC and will derive significant benefit to an improved quality of life through increased independent mobility.
- Be medically fit to independently control a powered wheelchair both indoors and outdoors and be free from conditions causing loss of consciousness and / or epileptic seizures within the last 12 months, in line with the DVLA requirements for motor vehicle drivers.

See www.dvla.gov.uk for more information on medical requirements.

- Be able to demonstrate during a driving assessment on a specified indoor and outdoor route that they have the insight, intellectual capacity and dexterity to operate an EPIOC both safely and responsibly on their own, without assistance (consideration is given to all age appropriate skills). Completion of an outdoor driving assessment is compulsory in ALL CASES.

Assessment:

Assessment will involve a review of current manual / power chair use within the home, a visit to the client's home to review environmental suitability for EPIOC use if this is appropriate and an indoor and outdoor driving assessment.

Additional information:

- Powered wheelchair provision is not considered to allow mobility solely for use within the workplace; for this usage the client should contact the Department of Employment 'Access to Work' for advice.
- An annual planned preventative maintenance check will be carried out by the Wheelchair Repair Service on all power wheelchairs supplied. These must be agreed to by the client on signing the conditions of supply.
- All accidents involving powered wheelchairs supplied must be reported immediately to the service for a review of the equipment to be carried out.
- Any changes to a person's medical condition must be reported immediately to the service for further assessment and consideration to ensure continued safe use of the equipment.

3.5 ACCESSORIES

Accessories are generally off the shelf parts that are readily available from the manufacturer. These will be supplied following an assessment and recommendation from an accredited referrer, Wheelchair Therapist or Rehabilitation Engineer. Applications for accessories must be supported with clear clinical reasoning for their provision. No accessories are supplied for short term use; less than 6 months.

Head Supports:

- The Wheelchair Service provides headrests for clients sitting in wheelchairs or seating systems where it is a clinical need e.g. to meet postural needs.
- They are not supplied to meet transport needs alone.
- Most headrests provided for postural support are not crash tested. It is the responsibility of the transporter to consider provision of the headrest as part of the safe transportation of a client in a wheelchair.

Trays:

- The supply of trays to fit wheelchair service supplied equipment will be considered in the following situations
- To assist postural support manager (i.e. to support clients arms, to encourage trunk extension or to facilitate fitting of anterior trunk support).
- To allow mounting of NHS supplied power chair controls to facilitate independent management of the power chair.
- It is advised that the tray should be removed from the wheelchair and stored for transit if the client is transported in a vehicle (refer to wheelchair manufacturers guidelines on transporting the wheelchair and occupant).

Trays are not supplied in the following instances:

- On transit wheelchairs; unless there are clear indications for postural support and the client meets the service criteria for the provision of a transit wheelchair.
- To carry a communication aid supplied by the communication aid service.
- Where school tables are neither accessible nor suitable. It is the responsibility of the school to provide suitable working surfaces to meet education needs within the school environment. These needs should be detailed in the child's statement, formulated, agreed and reviewed within the school.

If a tray is privately purchased and fitted, then its use is the responsibility of the clients or their advocate.

3.6 MODIFICATIONS

Modifications are custom made additions or changes to a wheelchair or buggy. Modifications are considered standard accessories are not suitable and there is a clear clinical need for provision.

3.7 PRESSURE RELIEVING CUSHIONS

The pressure care cushion referral form (DSC035) should be completed by the referring healthcare professional and forwarded to the Wheelchair Service.

Provision of a pressure relieving cushion is considered where:

- The client meets the Wheelchair Services criteria for provision of equipment.
- The client is a full time wheelchair user; using either a self-propelling manual wheelchair or a powered wheelchair as their main means of independent mobility.
- Pressure relieving cushions are usually issued for use in an NHS supplied wheelchair. However provision to clients with privately purchased wheelchairs will be considered on an individual basis once assessed by a Wheelchair Therapist. The client must still meet the Wheelchair Service criteria for issue of equipment and the provision of the cushion must not contra-indicate safety because of the design of the private wheelchair.

Pressure relieving cushions will not be provided:

- For use in armchairs or any other form of seating.
- For use in a transit wheelchair which is used as an alternative to appropriate armchair provision.
- For use in a privately owned wheelchair where it assessed that the addition of the cushion compromises safety.
- For use in private wheelchair where the standard criteria for NHS provision and use of equipment is not met.

3.8 NON FUNDED EQUIPMENT

There are certain items which the Wheelchair and Special Seating Service are not commissioned to provide, this includes;

- Wheelchair / Buggies to be used as an aid to restraint.

- Wheelchairs to be used in place of an armchair.
- Powered assisted units that can be attached to the chair e.g. power packs and power assisted hand rim systems.
- Rain covers or sunshades (consideration for provision may be given in exceptional circumstances where there is a clinical need).
- Equipment specifically required to meet work, education or sporting needs.
- Cushions for armchair or other seating use.
- Attendant only controlled powered wheelchairs.
- Powered wheelchairs used outdoors only (EPOC).
- Mobility scooters.
- Trike attachments.

SECTION 4

SPECIAL SEATING

Special Seating may be in the form of either off the shelf equipment or individual bespoke systems that are fitted to a wheelchair or buggy chassis.

Assessment will be carried out by the Wheelchair clinical team and may involve contractors from manufacturers. The provision of special seating will be considered where the client meets all of the general service criteria and has a postural positioning need that cannot be addressed through the provision of standard equipment.

Please note: Special seating is provided for use within a wheelchair to meet mobility needs and is not supplied to replace armchair provision or purely to provide a school seating or transport system.

SECTION 5

ISSUE OF EQUIPMENT TO NURSING AND RESIDENTIAL HOMES

The resident must meet the general wheelchair service criteria for the provision of equipment.

Self-propelling wheelchair provision to residents of nursing and residential homes:

Self-propelling wheelchairs and accessories; including pressure relieving cushions, may be issued to meet criteria to any resident who;

- Has a permanent disability, which prevents him/her from mobilising independently within the home.
- Is physically fit and able to self-propel a wheelchair.
- Is motivated to use the equipment for independent mobility.

Transit and Wheelchair controlled wheelchair provision to residents of nursing and residential homes:

This type of wheelchair will only be issued for the purposes of taking a resident out of the nursing/residential home (including the grounds) on a regular basis (at least 4 days a week) by a name relative or friend:

- The Wheelchair service is not responsible for provision of transit chairs within the nursing home / residential home setting. It is the responsibility of the nursing / residential home to supply equipment to transfer residents around the home in order to socialise, access meal facilities, access the immediate care home environment, garden etc.
- The wheelchair service is not responsible for seating within the nursing / residential home setting. It is a nursing / residential home responsibility to ensure that the client has a suitable arm chair or dining room chair to manage their comfort, postural and pressure case requirements.
- The wheelchair service will not provide wheelchairs to take residents out of the care setting by staff only on an infrequent basis. For these occasions the British Red Cross short term loan facilities could be utilised.
- Transit attendant controlled wheelchairs will only be issued to residents of nursing / residential homes who meet the criteria or in exceptional circumstances, and will require the agreement of the wheelchair service therapists and rehabilitation engineers.
- Equipment currently on issue to nursing / residential home residents will be exempt from these rules. However these chairs are on temporary loan for use by the named resident only and must be returned when no longer required.
- Residents, who prior to admission have a wheelchair on issue, will be able to retain the equipment for their own personal use within the care setting. It is the responsibility of the care home staff to inform the wheelchair service if the equipment is no longer required by the named individual.
- If the user requires a re-assessment of their wheelchairs needs within the care setting, general service conditions apply.

- Pressure relieving cushions are not issued for use in armchairs or non NHS supplied wheelchairs. Nursing and residential homes are expected to provide this equipment.

Please note:

Hospital transit stock; which is stock held for direct issue to patients to facilitate discharge cannot be issued to patients already resident in or awaiting placement in a nursing / residential home. If it is felt that the client will meet the criteria for issue, contact should be made with the wheelchair service to discuss the detail.

Indoor power chair (EPIC) provision to residents of nursing homes or residential homes:

The resident must meet the general wheelchair service criteria for the provision of equipment and the main EPIC criteria.

In addition an EPIC may be supplied if the person is:

- Able to control a powered wheelchair to enable them to be independently mobile.
- Able to operate the chair with regard to their safety and the safety of other residents.

Electrically powered indoor / outdoor wheelchair (EPIOC) provision to resident of nursing home or residential homes:

The main criteria for EPIOC provision applies in this case (See EPIOC criteria). Individual cases will be carefully assessed to establish if EPIOC provision is appropriate. There must be a need for the client to access the local environment independently.

SECTION 6

PERSONAL WHEELCHAIR BUDGETS (PWB)

This scheme replaced the Wheelchair Voucher Scheme in 2018. This scheme offers the client the choice to stay within the standard NHS provision or to use their PWB towards the cost of a different wheelchair. In simple terms, this means that anyone who qualifies for an NHS wheelchair can use what the NHS would have spent on a wheelchair for their needs towards the cost of a wheelchair of their choice.

Where a new client is assessed or a new wheelchair is required by an existing client; the clients Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB) will be calculated and the new scheme explained to them in detail. The wheelchair service staff will set out general prescription criteria in the PWB paperwork.

NB: Existing clients whose needs have not changed and equipment appropriate will not be eligible for a PWB.

The value of the PWB is based on the value of the equipment that would have been issued from the NHS range of wheelchairs.

There are 3 options available:

1. Notional

Accept the wheelchair prescribed to meet your needs. The chair will remain the property of the NHS.

2. Notional with Top-Up;

(a) Alternative Wheelchair

You can upgrade to an alternative model of wheelchair within the NHS range. The wheelchair can remain the property of the NHS.

(b) Accessories

You can add additional features to the wheelchair provided with guidance of the clinician. The wheelchair and any additional features will remain the property of the NHS.

3. Third Party

You can choose a model of wheelchair outside of the NHS range, provided it meets your needs, from an independent mobility provider.

This option includes an amount allocated to assist with repair and maintenance costs which will be the responsibility of the wheelchair user for the life of the wheelchair. The PWB will be issued for a period of 5 years for adults and 3 years for children under 18. This is considered to be the life expectancy of a wheelchair.

The possible contra-indications of choosing a PWB will be fully discussed at the assessment stage. Choosing the third party option will usually mean that the client has opted out of NHS input for the duration of the agreement. Clients with rapidly changing needs may find choosing a third part PWB has implications in addressing their long term needs.

It is however recognised that clinical needs may change unpredictably. If this happens and a re-assessment is require before the end of the 5 year period, a clinic appointment would be arranged to discuss issues. If appropriate, a wheelchair from the standard wheelchair service range may be prescribed to meet the changed clinical need, another third party PWB will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

If the third party chair is beyond economic repair before the end of the period but the wheelchair users' clinical needs have not changed, it may be possible to issue a replacement chair from the standard wheelchair service range. This chair will be from basic stock and meet clinical need but may not be of the same type as that purchased under the PWB scheme.

Additional information:

- PWB's will not be offered retrospectively to pay for wheelchairs already ordered or in use by a client. A PWB is subject to assessment and issue of a chair.
- The chair specification of the wheelchair to be purchased via Third party PWB must be agreed by the wheelchair service prior to an order being placed.
- The PWB must only be used to purchase a chair that meets the prescription and chair type detail as completed by the wheelchair service at assessment, e.g. a PWB issued for a manual wheelchair cannot be used to purchase a power chair.
- A PWB cannot be used to purchase second hand chairs.

=====