

# **Bolton Wheelchair Service**

## **Eligibility Criteria**

**December 2024**

## Core criteria

To be eligible for a permanent wheelchair the user must be registered with a Bolton GP and due to medical reasons:

- Be permanently dependent upon the wheelchair for all mobility needs, primarily indoors
- Be able to demonstrate they will regularly use it indoors on a daily basis
- Require the wheelchair for longer than 6 months

Children under 36 months will only be considered for mobility equipment if there is a specialist supportive/ postural seating need.

Bolton Wheelchair Service (BWS) aims to meet a client's basic mobility requirements. As such BWS will only provide equipment to meet physical mobility need. We do not provide wheelchairs for people who are mobile but whose behavioural problems affect their ability to mobilise safely.

All equipment is provided according to the clinical judgement of qualified wheelchair therapists, and is for the exclusive use of the person for whom it is provided. If a wheelchair is no longer required by the user, BWS must be contacted to arrange collection.

Provision of equipment is subject to the Terms & Conditions of Loan which are issued when the equipment is handed over (Appendix 1): the service user and / or their carer are expected to take responsibility for the basic care of the equipment, i.e., cleaning, reporting repairs, storage, etc; note that provision of a wheelchair may be declined if storage areas at home are not secure or sufficient.

If equipment is stolen, replacement is at the discretion of the wheelchair service and may be refused if due care was not taken to protect the equipment; the wheelchair service has the right to withdraw equipment or refuse replacement if it is found that damage has been deliberate or that the wheelchair is being improperly used.

Equipment will only be replaced if it ceases to meet the clinical needs of the service user, is beyond economical repair, or is obsolete and spare parts are no longer available.

Repairs will be carried out only by the wheelchair service (except for equipment purchased with a third party PWB – see section below).

The service user and / or their carer must demonstrate or have the potential to safely use the equipment in the intended environment; this will be established at assessment.

The home environment must be suitable for wheelchair use; adaptations may be needed to ensure service user safety and to allow accessibility, e.g., doorway widening or moving furniture; equipment will not be provided until these recommendations have been carried out.

## Exclusions

BWS does not provide:

- Adult wheelchairs for outdoor use only; this includes manually propelled and electrically powered chairs
- Wheelchairs in place of suitable static seating
- Transit wheelchairs to residents of residential care or nursing homes
- Short term loans
- Powered wheelchairs operated only by an attendant
- Powered wheelchairs having dual controls
- Powered wheelchairs that travel at more than 4mph
- Mobility scooters
- Wheelchairs required as part of a programme of rehabilitation, either in hospital or at a specialist rehabilitation centre, as part of the on-going treatment process
- Powered bariatric wheelchairs (for clients above 25 stone/160kg in weight) – assessment for manual chairs will be completed on an individual basis
- All terrain chairs, either manual or powered
- Standard attendant propelled wheelchairs for transit and portering purposes only will not be provided to people living in a residential or nursing home; if an existing service user is relocating into a nursing home, a wheelchair previously issued for transit purposes only must be returned to the wheelchair service
- Equipment for sole use at work, education or for sport, for which other sources of funding should be explored
- Cushions for use in armchairs or other seating
- Riser seats on powered wheelchairs
- Power packs, either attendant or occupant controlled
- Stair climbing devices
- Powered assisted hand-rim systems
- Rain covers, sunshades, baskets, or comfort (non-postural) items
- Wheelchair equipment specifically for support whilst sleeping or resting
- Lap trays, other than for postural purposes
- Lights, indicators, and Bluetooth technology
- Detachable seats for a second child

## Criteria for the provision of specific equipment

### Basic manual wheelchairs, transit and self-propelled

Supplied where a basic wheelchair will meet clinical need. They may be transit or self-propel versions.

### Modular manual wheelchairs

Provided where basic or lightweight wheelchairs will not meet the clinical need of the user.

### Active user manual wheelchairs

Provided where:

- The user is totally reliant on the wheelchair for all mobility needs
- Their medical condition results in significantly reduced strength meaning they are unable to functionally self-propel a basic or modular wheelchair
- Significant activity would result in deterioration of the person's medical condition, e.g., arm/shoulder issues
- Complete independence (including kerbs) is required

If the client is assessed as suitable for issue, all other wheelchair service equipment on loan must be surrendered.

Note these chairs are not provided solely for the benefit of the carer, i.e., reduced weight for pushing and/or lifting into a car.

### Pushchairs and buggies

Provided only when age appropriate, and not normally provided where a wheelchair would meet clinical need.

### Double / twin buggies / tandem pushchairs

These will only be provided either for two disabled children, or when the older child is disabled, and a standard twin buggy / tandem pushchair is not available or is unsuitable.

### Tilt-in-space wheelchairs

These are provided for service users who require assistance to maintain their sitting balance and posture, optimising the effect of the force of gravity.

A fixed recline wheelchair with ramped seat cushion may be considered as an alternative if a variable tilt-in-space angle is not required, i.e., a fixed orientation in space would be acceptable.

These chairs will not be provided solely to overcome difficulties with a) moving and handling / hoisting, b) eating and drinking, or c) breathing; they will not be provided for use during rehabilitation, nor to replace suitable static chair provision.

### **Electrically Powered Indoor (wheel)Chairs (EPIC)**

Powered indoor chairs will be supplied to people:

- Functionally unable to walk and functionally unable to self-propel indoors, **OR** where self-propelling or walking indoors would be detrimental to their medical condition
- Who would gain independence from such a chair

The following are essential to provision:

- An assessment to ensure the prospective user is cognitively, perceptually and physically capable of safely operating the chair; consideration will be given to epilepsy and other causes of loss of consciousness; the GP or other health professionals may be consulted as part of this process
- An inspection of the home environment to ensure adequate space, charging and storage facilities are available
- Adaptations required to the home are completed before the chair is delivered
- In the event of there being three or more months between assessment and delivery, a reassessment will be considered
- The user must be able to complete basic maintenance tasks, such as recharging the battery, or have a carer who is able to do so

The chair will remain on loan subject to regular review on the understanding that the client continues to meet the above criteria. If subsequently the client fails to meet any one of these criteria, the wheelchair may be withdrawn.

### **Electrically Powered Indoor/Outdoor (wheel)Chairs (EPIOC)**

Powered indoor/outdoor chairs will be supplied to people as above for EPIC provision, and who:

- Have the capacity to derive significant improvement in their independence and quality of life through daily use of an EPIOC
- Are medically fit to independently control a powered wheelchair indoors and outdoors

- Can demonstrate in a driving test both indoors and outdoors that they have the insight, intellectual capacity and dexterity to operate an indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair safely and responsibly on their own without assistance, taking into account any environmental factors; users should demonstrate the ability to compensate for any sensory or physical impairment, including visual acuity (normally the ability to read a car's number plate from a distance of 40ft/12.3 m)
- The applicant must have an accessible outside environment which is suitable for a powered wheelchair, i.e., a low external door threshold, no steps, and with any ramps or slopes having a safe gradient; any adaptations required must have been put in place prior to issue of an EPIOC

### **Accessories and adaptations**

These are only provided following assessment where there is a clear clinical need, e.g., postural support, pressure care, baskets/trays to carry medical equipment.

### **Pressure relieving cushions**

Provided only in conjunction with a prescribed wheelchair where there is a clear risk of damage to the skin. Users with pressure ulcers will only be provided with a pressure cushion following liaison with appropriate members of the wider health and social care multi-disciplinary team.

BWS do not provide pressure cushions for use on arm chairs or static seating.

### **Special seating systems**

These will be provided for users who are unable to maintain a conventional posture when sitting in a wheelchair, and where their posture cannot be managed with off-the-shelf cushions. They will be assessed by BWS in conjunction with the service user's own therapist and wherever possible their carer.

They are not to be requested as a substitute for static seating.

### **More than one wheelchair**

Supply may be considered where:

- The use of a wheelchair is required both upstairs and downstairs, and there is no through floor lift to transport the wheelchair; an additional wheelchair is therefore provided on loan for use upstairs only
- An indoor wheelchair has been issued and this is not suitable for outdoor use, i.e., is an Electrically Powered Indoor Chair, and therefore a transit wheelchair is issued for outdoor use

## Supply of wheelchairs and special seating to nursing homes

Provision of a wheelchair will allow the person to mobilise independently, i.e., self-propelled or using an EPIC/EPIOC.

Wheelchairs will only be issued for the exclusive use of the referred person, and will not be provided where the main use is for portering purposes around the home or for trips out with care staff.

## Pool wheelchairs

These are not supplied by BWS.

## The NHS Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB) scheme

BWS operates the PWB scheme in accordance with NHS England's published guidance; it is almost identical to, and follows on from the Voucher Scheme introduced to NHS wheelchair services in the 1990s.

Applicants must be a) be eligible for normal NHS provision, and b) assessed before they can apply for a PWB, i.e., a PWB cannot be issued retrospectively..

All adaptations required for any chair otherwise provided by BWS, and required for the chair for which the PWB is intended, must be in place prior to the PWB being issued.

PWBs are only provided towards chairs, either manual or powered, that:

- Meet the clinical needs of the person, and
- For which the person would ordinarily be eligible, and
- Which constitute equivalence in type with standard NHS provision (e.g. not provided towards all-terrain chairs)

The value of the PWB is based on clinical need and on the NHS equipment which would have been issued to meet that need; the value is not based on the equipment the service user would like to purchase.

The prescription of any proposed wheelchair must meet the clinical need of the service user and pose no risk in provision (e.g. appropriate for postural needs).

With the *Combined PWB* option the wheelchair remains the property of the NHS and will have all repairs and maintenance covered by the wheelchair service, at the cost of the wheelchair service.

With the *Third Party PWB* option the service user owns the wheelchair; the PWB includes a maintenance contribution to assist with the cost of repairs and maintenance, which are the responsibility of the service user.

Provision of pressure care cushions and postural accessories will remain the responsibility of the wheelchair service.

A minimum life span of five years is expected, but if at that point the equipment still meets the person's needs and is serviceable, maximum age is limited only by obsolescence and the availability of spare parts; should the person's clinical needs change, re-assessment will be considered.

PWBs will only be considered under exceptional circumstances for service users having rapidly deteriorating conditions.