

## A guide for the Provision of wheelchairs within care home settings (Nursing and Residential)

### **What is the purpose of the Wheelchair Service?**

The purpose of the Wheelchair Service is to meet the needs of individuals with a permanent need for a wheelchair from the NHS that optimises mobility, with the overall aim of achieving optimal independence and function related to activities of daily living.

### **How does the Wheelchair Service know what it can provide for?**

The Wheelchair Service is supported by eligibility criteria. This sets out the areas of need it is able to support and those it does not have a responsibility to provide for.

The Wheelchair Service ensures that available resources are targeted at those who need wheelchairs to help with their independence and daily living activities.

### **What does the eligibility criteria say about wheelchair provision for individuals in care home settings?**

The Wheelchair Service is there to provide wheelchairs for individual need, where the individual has a long term condition that permanently and significantly affects the individual's mobility and their independence. It is also a requirement that the need for a wheelchair is for four days a week or more.

It is understood there can be a range of mobility needs for clients within a care home setting, from independent mobility needs, to being taken between rooms within the care home. Some of these needs can be met by the Wheelchair Service; however other requirements are outside the remit of this service. The following information is provided to ensure there is clarity as to what the Wheelchair Service can and cannot provide for those residing in care home settings.

### **What circumstances can the Wheelchair Service provide a wheelchair for?**

The person has a long term condition that significantly affects their mobility. Following an assessment, wheelchair equipment can be provided to enable a person to achieve independent mobility. This can either be a self-propelling manual wheelchair or a powered wheelchair, so independence means the individual can independently operate the wheelchair.

The person requires significant postural support to minimise postural deterioration and to maximise function. It must be noted that in some instances it is more suitable, for those requiring significant postural support, to be provided with a suitable static seating system rather than a wheelchair.

Wheelchairs are not intended to be sat in for prolonged periods of time. In such cases, it is not the responsibility of the Wheelchair Service to provide static seating.

### **What circumstances the Wheelchair Service is not able to support?**

- Provision of attendant pushed wheelchairs for general use within the care home setting by a number of individuals.
- Wheelchairs for 'portering' purposes i.e. transferring residents from room to room etc. within the care home setting.
- The provision of pressure relieving cushions for use in armchairs.
- The provision of a wheelchair to be used instead of appropriate armchairs or dining room chairs (static seating).
- The provision of wheelchairs to take clients out on occasional outings either by the care home or by members of the person's family.

- The provision of wheelchairs to support a rehabilitation/recovery programme i.e. where the person's condition is likely to change and therefore the wheelchair may not be suitable for the person's needs when they return to their normal place of residence.
- The provision of equipment where the client is unable to be seated safely in a wheelchair to support their function and independence. This will be discussed on an individual basis following an assessment.

### **Who can make a referral to the Wheelchair Service for a resident of a care home?**

If the individual already has a wheelchair to support their independence they, their next of kin, the care home or GP can contact the Wheelchair Service on their behalf and ask for a further assessment if their needs have changed significantly.

If the individual is not previously known to the Wheelchair Service and they meet the eligibility criteria laid out in this document, a referral can be made by their GP, community nurse or allied health or social care professional. If you require a referral form, please email your request to [ECCH.wheelchairrequest@nhs.net](mailto:ECCH.wheelchairrequest@nhs.net)

### **What will happen next?**

The information provided on the referral form will be reviewed and if it is assessed that the individual is not eligible for a provision from the Wheelchair Service, the referrer will be advised.

If from the information provided by the referrer, the individual has a need that meets the criteria, they will be invited to a 'duty assessment'. At this clinic appointment their needs will be reviewed and a plan put into place to enable the identified needs to be met through the provision of wheelchair equipment and training where necessary.

### **What if the person already had a transit/attendant pushed wheelchair before they became a resident in a Care Home?**

The Wheelchair Service will not replace the wheelchair in the event of it reaching the end of its useful life or the person's size changes for example. If the client no longer requires their wheelchair, we expect it to be returned to the service. However, if the individual's needs change and there is a consideration for a wheelchair to support independent mobility, then this can be assessed for and considered as for any other person accessing this service.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact the Wheelchair Service on Telephone number 01502 532182 or email [ECCH.wheelchairrequest@nhs.net](mailto:ECCH.wheelchairrequest@nhs.net)

