

nwmf

National Wheelchair Managers Forum

A guide to NHS Wheelchair Services

Frequently Asked Questions



Empowering people
to live life to the full

Introduction

The Wheelchair Managers Forum exists to assist NHS managers involved in the provision of wheelchair service. Therefore the Forum does not have the ability to address any individual requests for wheelchair equipment. However here are some helpful answers to common questions.

How can I get a wheelchair?

NHS wheelchair services offer assessments to determine what type of wheelchair or mobility equipment you may be entitled to on the NHS.

To get an NHS wheelchair, you will need to ask your GP, Consultant, Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist to refer you to your local wheelchair service. They will have the details of the Wheelchair service which covers your area. Each area has their own procedures to help them decide the type of wheelchair (if any) they will supply. Once the service receives the referral, they will ask you to go for an assessment if not able to prescribe equipment with the patient information they have.

The wheelchair service will maintain and repair the chair. They will provide you with contact details for the maintenance service and in case you have any problems

You will need to contact your local service for specific advice as the Managers Forum cannot provide this level of information. Each Wheelchair Service has its own procedures and assessment criteria.

Powered Wheelchairs

To enquire if you are eligible for a powered wheelchair or a carer/attendant controlled powered wheelchair you will need to contact your local wheelchair service. Each service will have a strict criteria of eligibility. Usually the NHS services do not provide powered wheelchairs or scooters for outdoor use only.

I need to get a temporary wheelchair (for example broken leg)

It is unlikely an NHS Wheelchair Service will be able to provide equipment on a temporary loan. Our advice is to contact your local Wheelchair service who will advise you who provides this sort of equipment in your local area. The organisations who provide this equipment are The British Red Cross and St John's Ambulance.

You will need to contact your local service for specific advice as the Managers Forum cannot provide this level of information. Each Wheelchair Service has its own procedures and assessment criteria.

How do I get my wheelchair repaired or maintained?

All wheelchair services have a process to maintain and repair wheelchair equipment. When you received your wheelchair you will have been given information on how to get your wheelchair maintained or

repaired as part of the loan agreement. You will therefore need to contact the wheelchair service who issued you with the equipment.

If you are on holiday or away from home in the UK and need urgent repairs you will usually be able to get it repaired locally. Our advice is to contact your home wheelchair service for assistance. A useful tip is to always carry the telephone number of your local service in case you need to contact them in an emergency.

I need to return equipment that is no longer needed.

In the documentation supplied with your NHS equipment you will have received instructions on how and where to return equipment. If in doubt contact the service who issued the equipment.

How do I find the contact details for my local wheelchair service?

The forum provides an Alphabetic list of Wheelchair services in England and Wales on their website www.wheelchairmanagers.nhs.uk. Select the "Directory of Service" tab from the top menu. There is a basic search facility. The best way to find services in your local area is to search by county only. Select "Service Search" and enter your county and press Search.

Also your local GP surgery will have the contact details for your nearest NHS Wheelchair Service.

Alternatively, if you live in an area which has the new NHS 111 non emergency medical help service up and running, you can telephone 111 and they will advise you on how to access local NHS healthcare services. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.



I would like to make a comment about a wheelchair service.

You will need to contact your local Patient Liaison Service (PALS) to find out how to make a complaint or pass on comments about the quality of service received. Your GP surgery will know the contact details for your local PALS office.

If you have any other questions about the NHS Wheelchair Service.

Please contact your local service in the first instance. They will have all the information you need. If you find it difficult to contact your service speak to your GP in the first instance.