



Northumberland,
Tyne and Wear
NHS Foundation Trust

Powered Wheelchairs Private Purchase

Patient and Carer Information Leaflet



Caring | Discovering | Growing | **Together**

Where would I go to find out about a powered wheelchair?

It is important to ensure that a powered chair is suitable for the purpose for which it is intended. There are various places that buyers can attend to try out and compare different chairs. It is important to try out the equipment before you purchase it.

- **Disabled Living Centres**

People can visit Disabled Living Centres and try out chosen pieces of equipment. Impartial advice on each chair can be obtained from the centre to allow appropriate equipment to be purchased: e.g. Disability North.

- **Mobility Centres**

Some mobility centres may offer advice on powered wheelchairs. There may also be an outdoor area to try out the chairs over different terrain. (Please note the Mobility Centre at Walkergate Park does not offer this service).

- **National Exhibitions**

Disability equipment suppliers can demonstrate equipment and supply information leaflets to enable an informed purchase to be made.

For information on local suppliers of Powered Wheelchairs contact Disability North (see useful addresses on page 9).

Funding for private purchase

If you are unable to self fund the purchase of a powered chair there are a number of options available:

- Private Loan
- Motability Scheme
- Applications can be made to charities and benevolent/occupational funds. A Disabled Living Foundation fact sheet is available upon request.
- Corporate funding: local and national

Second-hand equipment

Equipment can be purchased second-hand from a **private source** or **mobility equipment outlet**.

A powered chair bought privately should be checked to ensure that it has been serviced and has all the relevant information e.g. instructions and care manual.

Equipment bought through a mobility outlet may be a little more expensive, however it should have been serviced and have a short guarantee (3 months or more). The care manual and instructions should be provided.

It is important to obtain the name of a local company to repair and service your chair when necessary as **maintenance and servicing will be the purchaser's responsibility**.

Information regarding buying second hand wheelchairs etc. can be obtained from Disability North.

When choosing a powered chair you will need to consider:

- Where will you store the chair?
- Does the chair meet your individual needs?
- Is the chair easy to manoeuvre?
- If needed for indoor use, does it have a small turning circle?
- Is it suitable for outdoor use: does it have kerb climbers?
- Access to and from your home e.g. do you have level entry or are there steps?

You will also need to consider your health, for example:

- Vision: can you judge distance and width to enable you to manoeuvre the chair safely?
- Are you physically able to manage the chair?

Other available options

Home demonstrations

Arranging a home visit from a company can be a useful way of trying out equipment before purchasing. A purchaser can ensure that:

- The chair will fit through the doorways.
- It will suit requirements e.g. indoor/outdoor terrain.
- It will meet individual needs.

Do not feel pressured into signing for equipment.

If possible it is wise to have a friend with you for support.

Take time to consider things, **do not buy on impulse.**

Temporary access to powered wheelchairs

- **Short term loan/hire**

Powered chairs can be hired for a daily, weekly or monthly charge. Conditions of hire must be considered prior to agreeing to the loan e.g. is insurance included in the cost of hiring the chair?

- **Shopmobility Schemes**

These schemes based in towns around the country loan powered wheelchairs etc to enable a disabled person to go shopping. A small deposit may be required, however some schemes are free.

Contact the National Federation of Shopmobility Schemes for further information. (see useful addresses on page 9)

Insurance considerations

Insurance is not legally required; however it is recommended that you should take up insurance to cover accidental damage to other people or property. Insurance can be obtained through manufacturers at the time of purchase or privately through insurance brokers.

Information regarding insuring powered wheel chairs can be obtained from the Disabled Living Foundation.

What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?

If you want to make a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint you can:

- talk to the people directly involved in your care
- ask a member of staff for a feedback form, or complete a form on the Trust website www.ntw.nhs.uk (click on the 'Contact Us' tab)
- telephone the Complaints Department Tel: 0191 245 6672
- email complaints@ntw.nhs.uk Please note that information sent to the Trust via email is sent at your own risk
- We are always looking at ways to improve services. Your feedback allows us to monitor the quality of our services and act upon issues that you bring to our attention. You can provide feedback in the following ways:
 - the quickest way for you to do this is to complete our short online survey at www.ntw.nhs.uk/poy
 - complete a Points of You survey, available on wards, reception areas or from staff.
 - some areas of the Trust have electronic feedback touch screens, staff can help you to use these.

Useful contacts

For further information concerning powered wheelchairs contact:

- **Disabled Living Foundation**

Unit 1, 34 Chatfield Road
Wandsworth
London
SW11 3SE
Tel: 020 7289 6111
Email: info@dlf.org.uk
Web: www.dlf.org.uk

- **Disability North**

The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1PH
Tel: 0191 284 0480
Fax: 0191 213 0910
Email: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk
Web: www.disabilitynorth.org

- **Stockton Independent Living Centre**

Tithebarn House
High Newham Road
Hardwick
Stockton-on-Tees
TS19 8RH
Tel: 01642 524 750
Web: www.stockton.gov.uk

- **Middlesbrough Independent Living Centre**

45-47 Corporation Road
Middlesbrough
TS1 1LT
Tel: 01642 266 457



Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, easy read, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 246 7288

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