

HERTFORDSHIRE WHEELCHAIR SERVICE

POWERED PERSONAL WHEELCHAIR BUDGET – INFORMATION SHEET

The Personal Wheelchair Budget (referred to as PWB) is offered by the Wheelchair Service in order to provide a wider choice for wheelchair users.

Following assessment by a member of the clinical team, a clinically appropriate wheelchair will be prescribed for you, funded by the Wheelchair Service. This remains the property of the Wheelchair Service and the Wheelchair Service will meet the cost of maintenance and repair. If for any reason you are not satisfied with the wheelchair provided by the Wheelchair Service following your assessment you may wish to discuss a Personal Wheelchair Budget with a therapist to see if this would allow your personal requirements to be met.

Eligibility Criteria for Powered Wheelchairs

In order to be entitled to a PWB to use against a powered wheelchair, you will need to have been assessed specifically in relation to the provision of a powered wheelchair. This includes completing our powered application forms, agreeing to the wheelchair service obtaining information from your GP as required and completing a powered wheelchair driving assessment. If at any point during the power chair application and assessment process you fail to meet our eligibility requirements for the provision of a powered wheelchair, we will be unable to issue you with a PWB.

Under our criteria:

- Applicants must be unable to walk within their home environment and unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair.
- Applicants must also have been free from epileptic seizures or blackouts for a minimum of one year.
- Powered wheelchairs are not provided for outdoor only use.

For full details please refer to our service eligibility criteria.

There are two options available, these are as follows:

NOTIONAL PERSONAL WHEELCHAIR BUDGET

This option allows you to contribute towards the cost of an alternative wheelchair of your choice within the range selected by the Wheelchair Service. The Wheelchair Service will own the wheelchair and be responsible for maintenance and repair. The wheelchair must meet your clinical needs and be approved by the Wheelchair Service.

You can also choose to add on additional features to the wheelchair prescribed by the Wheelchair Service. The cost of adding these additional features will need to be covered by the service user as well as any repairs or replacement of the additional features.

If you choose the Notional option, the Wheelchair Service will request that the finance department send you an invoice for the amount that you need to pay. This needs to be paid before the Wheelchair Service can place the order for the wheelchair.

THIRD PARTY PERSONAL WHEELCHAIR BUDGET

This option allows you to contribute towards the cost of an alternative wheelchair of your choice which falls outside of the range offered by the Wheelchair Service. The wheelchair must meet your clinical needs and be approved by the Wheelchair Service.

The Personal Wheelchair Budget will include an additional sum to cover the repairs and maintenance of the wheelchair. The wheelchair will then belong to you and you will be responsible for all the maintenance and repairs of that wheelchair.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can apply for a Personal Wheelchair Budget?

Any individual who meets the eligibility criteria for a wheelchair through the Wheelchair Service may apply for a PWB. The Wheelchair Service reserves the right to refuse a PWB request if it seems likely that the client's clinical need may change during the PWB period. For clients whose diagnosis makes it difficult to anticipate the speed of deterioration, where a PWB is required, we may reduce the length of the PWB term – this will be dependent upon an individual assessment by the clinical team.

Will I have to be assessed by the Wheelchair Service?

Yes, an assessment by a Wheelchair Service Clinician is a condition of a PWB. This assessment must be specifically in relation to the provision of a powered wheelchair. Please note that due to the restricted market of Indoor only powered wheelchairs that are currently available, PWB's will not be issued for an indoor only powered wheelchair. PWB's will only be offered for an indoor/outdoor powered wheelchair following completion of the NHS assessment process.

What does a Personal Wheelchair Budget look like?

The PWB is in the form of a letter from the Wheelchair Service to the approved supplier you have chosen. The value of the PWB is paid directly to the supplier and any additional payment is made by you directly to the supplier.

What can the Personal Wheelchair Budget be used for?

The PWB can be used towards the purchase of a wheelchair with approved accessories only. It cannot be exchanged for money.

If your clinical need has been identified as requiring a manual wheelchair you may only use the personal budget for the purchase of a manual wheelchair.

How much is the value of the Personal Wheelchair Budget?

The value of the PWB will depend on the assessment of your clinical needs and on the model of the chair that has been prescribed by the therapist. For a third party PWB an additional amount will be included to contribute to the cost of future maintenance and repairs.

Do I have to pay VAT?

If you are registered disabled then you do not have to pay the VAT if you choose the third party option. You will need to complete an exemption form that will be included in the PWB offer. If you choose to pay for additional features, as the wheelchair is ordered by the Wheelchair Service, we have to pay VAT and therefore is included in your contribution. Although you cannot claim this VAT back, this option is still cheaper than if you were to purchase the wheelchair or features outside of the NHS.

How long does a Personal Wheelchair Budget last and what if I want to change my chair?

Normally a wheelchair should last for at least five years with appropriate care and maintenance; you cannot apply for another PWB until the initial PWB period has ended. If your clinical needs change within the set PWB period, you can request a reassessment by the Wheelchair Service. If the wheelchair is deemed as no longer meeting your clinical needs, you will be offered an NHS wheelchair.

A PWB is typically issued for five years for adult users and three years for children. In certain circumstances, the length of the PWB may be reduced dependant on an individual's needs, if this is the case your therapist will discuss this with you.

PLEASE NOTE: At the end of Personal Wheelchair Budget period, a new PWB will only be issued if the existing wheelchair no longer meets the current clinical needs of the wheelchair user or is deemed beyond economic repair by a Rehabilitation Engineer.

If at the end of 5 years my wheelchair still meets my clinical needs, can I apply for assistance with maintenance?

Yes – if at the end of your PWB period, the wheelchair still meets your clinical needs, you can apply for maintenance funding. This is calculated on a yearly basis. You can present receipts for repairs and this will be paid to you out of the fund until it is used up. Any repairs following this will then be the responsibility of the user. The difference will not be given in cash to either the user or the supplier. This value will be calculated as one fifth of the original maintenance allowance when the voucher was originally issued (this is based on a 5 year PWB and is subject to change dependant on the original PWB length).

My wheelchair repair costs are high, why do I only get a value based on the wheelchair that would have been supplied by the Wheelchair Service?

The Personal Wheelchair Budget allows clients choice. The Wheelchair Service is unable to finance the ongoing maintenance and repairs of higher specification wheelchairs. It is client choice to choose a wheelchair that has higher maintenance costs.

Is it necessary for the wheelchair to be insured?

We recommend the wheelchair is insured and you may find it is included as part of your household insurance.

If I wish to return my chair, under either option, do I get a refund?

No, unfortunately, the Wheelchair Service is unable to make a refund once a PWB has been completed.

What if I have already got an NHS wheelchair on loan?

If you have been using a wheelchair provided by the Wheelchair Service and your clinical needs have changed, you can request a re-assessment and a PWB will be considered. Any NHS or Millbrook Healthcare wheelchair you already have would need to be returned upon receipt of a PWB.

What if the value of the wheelchair chosen on the Third Party option is less than the value of the PWB?

If the cost of the chosen wheelchair under the Third Party option is less than the value of the PWB, the Wheelchair Service would keep the difference in a fund for repair and maintenance of your chair. You can present receipts for repairs and this will be paid to you out of the fund until it is used up. Any repairs following this will then be the responsibility of the user. The difference will not be given in cash to either the user or the supplier.

If I have recently bought a wheelchair, can I claim a PWB retrospectively?

No, the scheme does not allow for this. The Wheelchair Service cannot issue PWB's retrospectively or issue refunds on any money related to purchase of a wheelchair under the PWB's.

What if a pressure cushion or seating is required?

Pressure relieving cushions and specialised seating systems remain the responsibility of the Wheelchair Service and cannot be purchased with the PWB contributions. If such equipment is required, the powered wheelchair you purchase must be compatible with the Wheelchair Service seating accessories you require.

Which supplier can I approach?

Any supplier can be approached for provision of a wheelchair under the third party option. However the Wheelchair Service would want to be satisfied that the supplier meets the minimum standard of service. There is a list of suppliers available that have been checked by the Wheelchair Service.

The Wheelchair Service is not able to deal with companies that only operate over the internet; this includes e-Bay and other auction sites. Wheelchairs purchased under the scheme **must be new** and not reconditioned or second-hand.

Why does the service need to approve the chair I have chosen?

It is important that the Wheelchair Service ensures that the chosen chair meets your clinical needs and thus fulfils our responsibility.

How would any disputes or complaints be settled?

Any such problems would be dealt with through Millbrook Healthcare normal complaints procedure. Contact the service manager on hertswcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk

ATTENDANT CONTROLS FOR POWERED WHEELCHAIRS

The purchase of a powered wheelchair with attendant controls will only be considered for a PWB on an individual basis. Please discuss this with your therapist.

ASSISTIVE POWER DEVICES

Assistive power devices that act as attachments to a manual wheelchair are not issued by Hertfordshire Wheelchair Service. If you have individual circumstances in relation to assistive power devices, please discuss these with your Therapist.

PLEASE NOTE

Following your assessment and agreement from the Wheelchair Service to issue you with a PWB, you have 6 months in which to redeem the PWB against your chosen wheelchair. After 6 months it will be assumed that you no longer require the PWB and the PWB will be cancelled. You will receive a letter from the service to advise you of this action. Any future requirements will need to be dealt with in a new referral as your clinical needs may need to be reassessed.

All wheelchairs to be agreed on a PWB need to be certified as crash worthy. There is no exception to this with regard to the provision of a PWB for a powered wheelchair.

The Wheelchair Service provides powered wheelchairs that are intended to be used in people's homes and, if eligible, to enable people to access amenities within their local environment such as educational establishments, hospitals, shopping centres and pedestrian areas. This includes travelling on pavements and footpaths and crossing the road as a pedestrian. This means that they are legally classified as Class 2 or Class 3 invalid carriages and are restricted to a maximum speed of 4 miles per hour.

All equipment issued by the wheelchair service must be used in accordance with the law.

If you have any queries please contact:

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