

Electric Powered Indoor / Outdoor Occupant Controlled Wheelchairs (EPIOC)

Information for
patients



In February 1996, the Department of Health launched an initiative to help severely disabled people with the provision of class 2 Electric Powered Indoor / Outdoor Occupant Controlled wheelchairs (EPIOC). The scheme was set up to provide wheelchairs for those people who meet the necessary requirements. Access to these chairs gives greater mobility and independence.

The Leeds Wheelchair Service has operated the scheme for over 20 years and has actively worked to improve the process of providing quality equipment in a timely manner.

Funding is still limited; therefore, it is essential that a proper and fair process is followed. Applicants will need to meet the Leeds Wheelchair Service criteria to be considered for an electric powered wheelchair.

Criteria

To qualify for an indoor / outdoor powered wheelchair, applicants must be:

- severely and permanently restricted in mobility;
- need full-time use of a wheelchair (full time = unable to move around without the aid of a wheelchair, both inside and outside);

- be unable to propel a manual wheelchair outdoors;
- meet the necessary visual requirements;
- comply with the DVLA requirements for motor vehicle drivers concerning epilepsy and other causes of lost consciousness;
- be competent to use the wheelchair safely;
- pass an outdoor driving assessment;
- have a residential and external environment, which is compatible with the wheelchair; and
- be able to ensure that the wheelchair will be adequately maintained.

Leeds Wheelchair Service **does not** provide powered wheelchairs for **outdoor use only**.

Process

In order to receive an EPIOC, the patient has to be able to successfully complete each stage of the 7 stage process. The process can be terminated at any stage if, at any point, a member of the wheelchair team identifies that the provision of an EPIOC is not appropriate and the patient no longer meets the criteria.

Stage 1

Referral to the service

Patients referred to the service must be registered with a Leeds GP.

Stage 2

Postal questionnaire

A pre-assessment questionnaire will be sent to you to complete and return. This information will be passed to a therapist to review.

Stage 3

a) Home environment assessment

A technician will arrange to visit the patient at home to ensure there is:

- level access to the property;
- that doors and passageways are wide enough to turn a wheelchair around; and
- that there are suitable charging points.

b) Vision assessment

During the visit, the patient will be asked to complete a short vision check to ensure there is sufficient vision necessary to drive a powered wheelchair.

If there are concerns regarding vision, an eye test will need to be completed. This can be undertaken by the patient, either privately, or at St. James's University Hospital to confirm suitable vision.

Stage 4

Clinic assessment

If the patient reaches this stage, they will be put on a waiting list to be assessed in a powered wheelchair at the Wheelchair Centre. The patient will receive an appointment with the wheelchair therapist.

The patient will be able to trial a powered wheelchair and the therapist will prescribe the most suitable powered wheelchair and seating that meets the patient's clinical needs.

Please contact the Wheelchair Service if you require patient transport to attend the appointment.

At this appointment, it will be decided whether the chair is needed, for either indoor use only, or both indoor and outdoor use.

Stage 5

Wheelchair allocation and provision

In most cases, a powered wheelchair will be issued from the Leeds Wheelchair Service local stock and may not be the exact same wheelchair that the patient tried in clinic.

If a wheelchair needs to be ordered directly from the manufacturers, it can take up to 6 weeks for the chair to be dispatched.

Stage 6

Handover

Once a powered wheelchair is ready for dispatch, our contractors (Ross Care) will deliver the powered wheelchair to the patient's home and it will be handed over by a Rehabilitation Engineer. The patient will receive instructions on usage, the manufacturer's handbook and the conditions of loan.

Stage 7

Outdoor safety assessment

If the powered wheelchair is for outdoor use, a safety assessment will need to be completed and passed. This will be conducted in the patient's local area.

There are 2 categories for provision:

- **Passed unaccompanied** - able to go out alone.
- **Passed accompanied** - can only go out with supervision.

A certificate will be provided if the test is passed.



Useful information

This section provides some basic information about the EPIOC and how to get the best use from it.

It does not cover every eventuality and should you have any problems. Do not hesitate to contact the local wheelchair service.

The patient should always read the conditions of loan provided at handover.

Insurance

It is strongly recommended that anyone who is allocated a powered wheelchair takes out third party insurance. Details of insurance companies are on pages 10 and 11.

Transport

Powered wheelchairs from the service cannot be folded up to transport in the boot of a car but can usually be transported in a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV).

The Wheelchair Service will notify the school and transport authorities if a wheelchair has been changed to ensure the correct tie downs are used.

Braking system

Powered wheelchairs are designed with a freewheel facility to allow them to be manoeuvred in confined spaces and to be pushed in an emergency. In most cases, this action disengages the only effective braking system available to the user. If the patient was left at the top of an incline with the drive disengaged, then the effect of the user moving on the chair could cause it to roll. Manufacturers now have a safety mechanism in place to reduce the risks.

Breakdown - Wheelchair failure

Leeds Wheelchair Service does not provide breakdown cover. If the powered chair fails whilst the patient is outdoors, the chair needs to be disengaged into manual mode and pushed to the nearest wheelchair taxi or pick-up point for a vehicle. Ross Care will complete the repairs at the patients' home.

Out and about

Class 2 EPIOCs are not for use on the road. The maximum speed limit on a footpath is 4 mph / 6.4 kph. Whilst in your powered chair on the footpath, you are no longer classed as a pedestrian and pedestrians always have the right of way. It is your responsibility to ensure you do not run into anyone or cause any damage to your wheelchair.

Going out at night

We recommend that you wear high-visibility clothing or lights in the evening, when outdoors. If you wear dark coloured clothes, always wear a reflective jacket or band. We recommend carrying a torch and a mobile phone, if possible.

Alcohol and drugs

It is strongly recommended that patients do not drive a powered wheelchair whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Vouchers

A voucher can be issued in place of a NHS powered wheelchair when a patient has completed the powered wheelchair process and passed the outdoor safety assessment. The voucher will be issued in accordance with the independent voucher scheme.

Accessories

Trays and accessories will only be supplied if there is a postural or clinical need as per the accessories policy.

Alterations and modifications

The wheelchair must not be altered or have any attachments fitted to it without agreement from Leeds Wheelchair Service.

Contact telephone numbers:

Leeds Wheelchair Service

Tel: **0113 2063855**

Ross Care Repair Service

Tel: **0113 2777007**

Useful contacts:

Gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules>

Blue Badge Mobility Insurance

No 7 Ridgeway Office Park
Bedford Road
Petersfield
Hampshire
GU32 3QF

Tel: **01730 233101**

Email: support@BBMI.co.uk

<https://www.bluebadgemobilityinsurance.co.uk/electricwheelchair-insurance>

Fish Insurance

12 Sceptre Court
Sceptre Way
Bamber Bridge
Preston
PR5 6AW

Tel: **0333 331 3770**

<https://www.fishinsurance.co.uk>

Motability

Tel: **0300 456 4566**

<http://www.motability.co.uk>

Useful contacts *(continued)*:

Autohome Assistance

Membership Department & Customers Services

Tel: **01604 640900**

Email: **info@autohome.co.uk**

<http://www.autohome.co.uk>

Chartwell Insurance

Chartwell Insurance Services

East Winch Hall

East Winch

King's Lynn

Norfolk

PE32 1HN

Tel: **0330 123 1029**

<https://www.chartwellinsurance.co.uk>



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