

Powered Wheelchairs



Opcare

Enhancing your ability

A brand of the AM Healthcare Group

Powered or electric wheelchairs are available in some instances, depending on individual needs and eligibility criteria. This leaflet aims to answer some common questions about powered wheelchairs.

How can I get a powered wheelchair?

Healthcare professionals may prescribe powered wheelchairs for indoor use only, following a thorough assessment of your needs. This assessment takes into account postural requirements, medical history, lifestyle, and perceptual and cognitive abilities. NHS eligibility criteria must be fulfilled in order to get a powered wheelchair.

In general, individuals who are unable to walk or self-propel a wheelchair around their home may be eligible for a powered chair. The home environment must also be able to accommodate use of a powered chair, and the individual's GP must confirm it is medically safe for the individual to use this type of chair.

Powered wheelchair users must also meet specific guidelines from the DVLA, with alcohol consumption laws being the same as for motor vehicle drivers. You can read more here:

[**www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules**](http://www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules)

How can I arrange for a powered wheelchair assessment?

If you think you might be eligible for a powered wheelchair, please contact your GP or healthcare professional to be referred to our service. If you already have a wheelchair from our service, you can contact us to rearrange a reassessment of your needs.

If you are looking to change from a manual wheelchair to a powered one, you will need to obtain a referral from a medical professional.

Can powered wheelchairs be used inside and outside?

It depends on the type of wheelchair. The Wheelchair Service is able to provide powered wheelchairs which can be used indoors in a domestic environment, but which are not safe to use outdoors in public areas.

Can I get a powered wheelchair suitable for outdoor use?

Unfortunately, the Wheelchair Service cannot provide powered chairs exclusively for outdoor use. However, if you already have an indoor powered chair, you may be eligible for an upgrade to a chair which is suitable for both indoor and outdoor use. This is subject to a full assessment of driving ability, as well as consideration of the home environment.

Alternatively, powered wheelchairs for outdoor use are available to purchase privately from any reputable mobility supplier.

If I am eligible for a powered chair, how do I use it safely?

Your therapist will give you detailed advice prior to handing over the wheelchair. In general, you should:

1. Ensure the lap belt is securely fastened. It should be snug, with space for two fingers to slide between the belt and your body. It should be worn around your pelvis, both for safety and to keep your pelvis in a good position.
2. Adjust speed settings to suit the environment.
3. Where possible, avoid spending more than 3-4 hours in the chair at any one time. This helps you to maintain a good level of comfort and avoid developing pressure sores.
4. If you have an indoor-only powered wheelchair, do not use it outside of your home environment. Powered wheelchairs are unsuitable for use in wet weather, even if they are outdoor chairs.
5. Class 3 powered wheelchairs may be used on roads; however, it is illegal to do so with any other class of powered wheelchair. You can read more on this here:

www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules

If I receive a powered chair, do I own it?

No, the chair remains the property of the Wheelchair Service. However, for as long as it is on loan to you, you are responsible for it. We recommend you insure the wheelchair appropriately.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that you charge the wheelchair according to the manufacturer's guidelines. If you fail to do this, or if you make adaptations or malicious damage to the chair, the equipment may be removed from you.

What do I do if my powered wheelchair breaks or develops a fault?

We can carry out repairs to your NHS wheelchair. Please call us to arrange the repair.

We will also provide you with a basic manual wheelchair as a back-up for your power chair.

What if I think I require a review, or if my clinical needs change?

Please contact our service so we can address your concerns.

