

Response to consultation on wheelchair and seating services

Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS)

The document is a very positive document and seems to be addressing many of the flaws in the present system. CHAS, however, has some suggestions.

Page 24

“WSS centres will develop referral pathways and protocols in partnership with other rehabilitation service providers to enhance multidisciplinary working”.

Could voluntary organisations such as CHAS be considered along with WSS Centres, Rehabilitation Services and Education Providers?

In response to the following statements CHAS would like to comment:

“Some wheelchair users, children, young people and adults have progressive conditions that change rapidly over time. Anticipatory approaches to provision are needed to ensure enabling equipment is made available to accommodate these. There is an opportunity to develop assessment and prescribing capacity for clients with specific conditions in partnership with other specialist services”.

In Palliative care there is still a lack of urgent responses to referrals. Lately we have been lucky access services for those children in the hospices in the terminal stages who need a wheelchair to simply get them out one last time or even just to support them out of bed - but this has not always been the case. In conditions such as Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy the system is slowly improving but patients are still waiting months, after the actual assessment, on adaptations to their wheelchairs by which time their needs have changed.

Is it possible for CHAS to have a fast track system with WSS, whereby, if one of the children/young adults has a sudden deterioration in their condition, CHAS staff can quickly access the child's local WSS for assessment and provision of whatever seating system is required to meet their needs? These children and young people don't have the luxury of time to wait around for the normal routes of referral.

“Wheelchairs are selected from the agreed range of products on the NHS national contract and this range of equipment needs to reflect the needs of users and their carers”

It would be helpful if all the wheelchair services in Scotland used the same manufacturer of wheelchair or at least minimised the variety they used. This would hopefully improve safety during transportation as wheelchair restraints would be the same or similar. Can the weight of the wheelchairs conform to the restraints available? There is no crash-tested restraint system on the market where the manufacturer will guarantee clamping in a wheelchair more than 120kgs if the frame requires the use of "D" rings.

“Repairs and maintenance services are provided by each centre for NHS supplied wheelchair and seating products”

Is there any scope for the wheelchair services in Scotland to take on the maintenance and repairs contract for those wheelchairs purchased privately by the patients or charities (which eases the burden of cost of the NHS purchasing a wheelchair)? Most families do not get this done as they struggle to pay maintenance. Also the voucher system currently in use in England assists with these issues.

Libby Gold (Director of Care Robin House Children’s Hospice) on behalf of Children’s Hospice Association Scotland

Respondent Information Form to follow in post.