# North West London Wheelchair Service

**Eligibility Criteria** 

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# **Contents**

1	Introduction		
2	Eligibility criteria		
3	Eligibility exclusions		
4	Determining eligibility		
5	Prescription request process		
6	Hospital discharges		
7	Criteria for provision of specific equipment		
	<ul> <li>7.1 Transit / attendant manual wheelchair</li> <li>7.2 Self-propelled manual wheelchair</li> <li>7.3 High performance manual wheelchair</li> <li>7.4 Buggy</li> <li>7.5 Tilt-in-space wheelchair</li> <li>7.6 Powered chairs</li> <li>7.6a Electrically Powered Indoor (wheel) Chair (EPIC)</li> <li>7.6b Electrically Powered Indoor / Outdoor (wheel) Chair (EPIOC)</li> </ul>		
8	Criteria for the provision of more than one manual wheelchair		
9	Criteria for the provision of cushions, accessories and modifications		
10	The NHS Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB) scheme		
	(formerly the Voucher Scheme)		

- Appendix 1 Terms & Conditions of Loan
- Appendix 2 DVLA 'At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive'



## 1 Introduction

AJM Healthcare is the service provider for the North West London Wheelchair Service. It provides wheelchair services for the following boroughs:

- Brent
- Ealing
- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Harrow
- Hillingdon
- Kensington & Chelsea
- Westminster

Note there is a different service provider for Hounslow, a borough also encompassed by NWL ICB.

The Department of Health & Social Care categories of need are reproduced below:

Table 1: DH categories of need

	National Wheelchair Operational Data Collection Definitions – low and medium need
Low	Occasional users of wheelchair with relatively simple needs that can be readily met.
Need	Do not have postural or special seating needs.
	Physical condition is stable, or not expected to change significantly.
	Assessment does not typically require specialist staff.
	(Generally self-assessment or telephone triage supported by health/social care professional
	or technician).
	Limited (or no) requirement for continued follow up/review.
	Equipment Requirements –
	Basic.
	<ul> <li>Non-modular wheelchair (self or attendant-propelled).</li> </ul>
	Standard cushion.
	Up to 1x accessory.
Medium	Up to 1x modification.  Daily years of whoolshair, or year for significant positions must day.
Need	Daily users of wheelchair, or use for significant periods most days.
IVEEU	Have some postural or seating needs.
	Physical condition may be expected to change (e.g. weight gain / loss; some degenerative conditions).
	Comprehensive, holistic assessment by skilled assessor required.
	Regular follow up / review.
	Equipment requirements –
	Configurable.
	<ul> <li>Lightweight or modular wheelchair (self-or attendant propelled).</li> </ul>
	Low to medium pressure relieving cushions.
	Basic buggies.
	Up to 2x accessories.
	Up to 2x modifications.



	National Wheelchair Operational Data Collection  Definitions – high and specialist need
High	Permanent users who are fully dependent on their wheelchair for all mobility needs.
Need	Complex postural or seating requirements
	(e.g. for high levels of physical deformity).
	Physical condition may be expected to change / degenerate over time.
	Very active users, requiring ultra-lightweight equipment to maintain high level of independence.
	·
	Initial assessment for all children.
	Comprehensive, holistic assessment by skilled assessor required.
	Regular follow up/review with frequent adjustment required/expected.
	Equipment requirements –
	<ul> <li>Complex manual or powered equipment.</li> </ul>
	Fixed frame chairs.
	<ul> <li>High pressure relieving cushions.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Specialist buggies.</li> </ul>
	Up to 3x accessories.
	Up to 3x modifications.
	Needs are met by customised equipment.
Specialist	Permanent users who are fully dependent on their wheelchair for all mobility needs.
Need	Highly complex postural or seating requirements (e.g. for high levels of physical disability)
	and/or are at greatest risk to their health and well being.
	Physical condition may be expected to change / degenerate over time.
	Have complex and /or fluctuating medical conditions and multiple disabilities, which may
	include physical, cognitive, sensory and learning aspects.
	They are likely to require 24 hour postural management due to; poor trunk control, inability
	to sit without support, limited upper limb function, possible spinal curvature and joint
	contractures.
	They are at high risk of secondary complications due to their levels of disability such as pressure ulcers, contractures, chest infections and respiratory diseases.
	The most common diagnoses for people who need specialist wheelchair services are:
	cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, brain injury, motor neurone disease,
	high level spinal cord injuries.
	Regular follow up / review with frequent adjustment required / expected.
	Comprehensive, holistic assessment by skilled assessor required.
	Equipment requirements –
	<ul> <li>Highly complex powered equipment with specialist controllers.</li> </ul>
	Tilt in space chairs.
	<ul> <li>Seating systems on different chassis.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Complex manual wheelchairs with integrated seating systems.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>4 or more accessories.</li> </ul>
	4 or more modifications.
<u> </u>	<ul> <li>Highly complex modifications that needs are met by bespoke equipment.</li> </ul>
	Specialist controls.
	<ul> <li>Devices that require Integration with other assistive technology drivers.</li> </ul>



For further definition the following is reproduced from Healthcare Standards for NHS-Commissioned Wheelchair Services (2015); **note that Category 4 is EXCLUDED from this contract:** 

## **Priority Levels**

Category 1 - Fulltime Wheelchair User & Terminally III

Category 2 - Part-time Regular User

Category 3 - Part-time Occasional User

Category 4 - Short Term User

GRADE	DESCRIPTION OF USER	EQUIPMENT NEEDS
1 (CAT 4)	PART TIME USER SHORT TERM - Temporary requirement. Normally independently mobile. Immobile due to accident or operation. (May include terminal care) NB NOT INCLUDED IN SOME WHEELCHAIR CONTRACTS	*Pushed or self-propelling standard. Special chair may be required e.g. recliner for full leg plaster or hip spica
2 (CAT 3)	PART TIME USER  LONG TERM - Ability to walk short distances. Requires wheelchair on regular basis for outdoor use or to enhance quality of life for user/Carer	Pushed standard or lightweight Self propelling standard, Buggies for children
3 (CAT 2)	PART TIME USER  LONG TERM - Variable indoor walking ability due to fluctuating condition.  High degree of independent life-style but requires wheelchair to maintain level of independence and quality of life	Self propelling standard or lightweight
4 (CAT 1) 5 (CAT 1)	**FULL TIME USER LOW ACTIVITY - Limited or lack of ability to self propel. Dependent for many daily living needs FULL TIME USER ACTIVE - Unable to self propel. Independent mobility with powered	Pushed or self propelling standard or buggy. Specialist chassis for custom-made seat. Bespoke seating  EPIC, & EPIOC depending on ability/environment + motivation + transit + Transit for travel
6 (CAT 1)	wheelchair. Degree of independence in daily living activities  FULL TIME USER  ACTIVE - Independent mobility and lifestyle Appropriate equipment reduces dependence on others and improves quality of life	Self propelling standard or  ***high performance (adjustable stability by change of wheel position)



# 2 Eligibility criteria

All referrals are triaged against the following criteria; if an individual does not meet them, provision will be declined.

- Individuals registered with a General Practitioner (GP) based in any of the following boroughs:
  - o Brent
  - Ealing
  - Hammersmith & Fulham
  - Harrow
  - o Hillingdon
  - Kensington & Chelsea
  - Westminster

N.B. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis to those living in temporary accommodation, particularly regarding wheelchair accessibility

- Individuals who have been formally diagnosed with a long term physical disability or medical condition which affects their ability to walk permanently (i.e. more than six months); exception will be given to individuals who are terminally ill and whose life expectancy is less than 6 months; conditions include but are not limited to:
  - Congenital conditions (e.g. spina bifida, muscular dystrophy)
  - Neurological conditions (e.g. cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, stroke, motor neurone disease)
  - Acquired conditions (e.g. head injury, spinal cord injury)
  - o Musculoskeletal conditions (e.g. arthritis, amputation)
- Equipment will only be provided to service users who are dependent upon a
  wheelchair or buggy to mobilise indoors regularly throughout the week, i.e., four
  days or more; depending on the nature of the equipment and the service user's
  capability it may also be used outdoors
- The minimum age for referral is generally 36 months, but younger children with functional wheelchair needs will be considered, as will those where postural needs cannot be met seated in a standard commercially available buggy that a parent would normally purchase
- Modifications and accessories may be provided for use in the wheelchair to address specific clinical and mobility needs, e.g., postural support, pressure care
- Provision of equipment is subject to the Terms & Conditions of Loan which are
  issued when the equipment is handed over (Appendix 1): the service user and /
  or their carer are expected to take responsibility for the basic care of the
  equipment, i.e., cleaning, reporting repairs, storage, etc; note that provision of a
  wheelchair may be declined if storage areas at home are not secure or sufficient
- If equipment is stolen, replacement is at the discretion of the wheelchair service and may be refused if due care was not taken to protect it; the wheelchair service has the right to withdraw or refuse to replace equipment if it is found that damage has been deliberate or that the wheelchair is being improperly used



- Equipment will only be replaced if it ceases to meet the clinical needs of the service user, is beyond economical repair, or is obsolete and spare parts are no longer available
- Repairs will be carried out only by the wheelchair service
- The service user and / or their carer must demonstrate or have the potential to safely use the equipment in the intended environment
- The home environment must be suitable for wheelchair use; adaptations may be needed to ensure service user safety and to allow accessibility, e.g., doorway widening or moving furniture; equipment will not be provided until these recommendations have been carried out
- Service users will agree for their details to be shared with the database provider

# 3 Eligibility exclusions

- Wheelchairs / buggies will not be provided as a restraint or in replacement of a static chair, e.g., armchair
- Standard attendant propelled wheelchairs for transit purposes only will not be provided to people living in a residential or nursing home; if an existing service user is relocating into a nursing home, a wheelchair previously issued for transit purposes only must be returned to the wheelchair service
- Wheelchairs and buggies will not be issued to persons who are able to walk, but for various reasons refuse to do so, i.e., there is no underlying physical reason why they cannot walk
- The wheelchair service does not provide any of the following:
  - Powered outdoor-only wheelchairs or mobility scooters
  - Powered wheelchairs that weigh above 150kg, or 150kg + 50kg where additional equipment is fitted
  - o Powered wheelchairs that travel at more than 4mph
  - Attendant controls for powered wheelchairs (apart from when specialist controls are fitted for the service user)
  - More than one powered wheelchair
  - o Riser-seats on powered wheelchairs
  - o Power packs, either attendant or occupant controlled
  - Stair climbing devices
  - Powered assisted hand-rim systems
  - Manual wheelchairs with a user weight capacity exceeding 250kg
  - Wheelchairs in place of a suitable static seat, i.e., the wheelchair must be used primarily as a mobility device
  - Wheelchairs used as a walking aid, i.e., the user must be seated in the wheelchair when in use
  - o Rain covers, sunshades, device holders, or comfort (non-postural) items



- o Equipment solely for use in wheelchair accessible transport
- Equipment solely for use at work, education or sport
- Cushions for use in armchairs or other seating
- o Equipment for use in rehabilitation
- Wheelchair equipment specifically for support whilst sleeping or resting
- Lap trays, other than for postural purposes
- Lights, indicators, and Bluetooth technology

# 4 Determining eligibility

The process is as follows:

- The duty therapist evaluates against the stated eligibility criteria the details included within the referral
- During initial assessment, a wheelchair service therapist may determine that the person does not meet the criteria for a particular wheelchair
- At subsequent clinical review a wheelchair service therapist may determine that the service user no longer meets the criteria owing to a change in circumstances, e.g., someone with a deteriorating condition who has a powered wheelchair on loan may experience a decline in their function, leaving them unable to operate the wheelchair safely; in such circumstances the wheelchair would be withdrawn, but the service would endeavour to support the user with the emphasis on the continued safety of the themselves and others; withdrawal of equipment would be in consultation with the service user, and would be the culmination of a detailed assessment of their circumstances

If a person does not meet the criteria for a wheelchair, the wheelchair service will confirm this decision in writing.

# 5 Prescription request process

Healthcare professionals who are employed outside the wheelchair service and are suitably trained may request basic equipment solutions on behalf of their patients / existing service users.

These external therapists take full responsibility for the prescription, adjustment and handover of the equipment they have requested.

Recommendations should be made in accordance with the 'external prescription' process; provision is at the discretion of the wheelchair service.

External prescribers will comply with all wheelchair service requirements, e.g., completing necessary paperwork. Those not following this process will no longer be able to prescribe.

Prescription requests require 10 working days to process from date of receipt.



# 6 Hospital discharges

Equipment is considered essential for discharge only where wheelchair provision will negate the need for or reduce the required package of care, i.e., wheelchair provision will enable independence with personal care.

All other referrals are processed in accordance with standard referral and external prescription request processes.

# 7 Criteria for the provision of specific equipment

## 7.1 TRANSIT / ATTENDANT MANUAL WHEELCHAIR

Used where the service user cannot self-propel themselves; the service user has a carer who is willing and able to manage and manoeuvre the wheelchair in a suitable environment.

#### 7.2 SELF- PROPELLED MANUAL WHEELCHAIR

The service user must be able to physically self-propel, and this should not be detrimental to their medical condition. The GP may be required to provide advice on medical fitness to self-propel.

A therapist may sometimes provide a self-propelled solution to assist carers who would benefit from the improved manoeuvrability gained by large rear wheels.

## 7.3 HIGH PERFORMANCE MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS

The criteria for a self-propelling wheelchair must be met.

The service user's medical condition results in reduced strength and / or where excessive activity would result in deterioration of the medical condition.

The service user must be a full time user and their lifestyle needs and ability must be such that significantly improved independence and indoor and outdoor mobility will be gained by such provision.

These chairs are not provided solely for the benefit of the carer, i.e., reduced weight for lifting into a car.

#### 7.4 BUGGY

Buggies are provided to children up to 4 or 5 years old who cannot be safely sat in a commercially available buggy; younger children may also be issued with a wheelchair instead of a buggy where this is deemed beneficial.

#### 7.5 TILT-IN-SPACE WHEELCHAIR

Tilt-in-space wheelchairs are provided for service users who require assistance to maintain their sitting balance and posture, optimising the effect of the force of gravity.



A fixed recline wheelchair with ramped seat cushion may be considered as an alternative if a variable tilt-in-space angle is not required, i.e., a fixed orientation in space would be acceptable.

Carers must be able to demonstrate they are able to operate the wheelchair safely and appropriately as demonstrated by the therapist on hand over.

These chairs will not be provided solely to overcome difficulties with a) moving and handling / hoisting, b) eating and drinking, or c) breathing; they will not be provided for use during rehabilitation, nor to replace suitable static chair provision.

#### 7.6 POWERED WHEELCHAIRS

Provision will be considered where:

- a) the service user is permanently unable to effectively self-propel a manual wheelchair indoors (i.e. inside their own home), or
- b) self-propelling within their home would be detrimental to their medical condition or pose a significant risk of injury, and
- c) function and independence within the home will be increased

Where the service user has a rapidly deteriorating condition, provision may be considered prior to the level of disability indicated above.

The service user must comply with the DVLA requirements for motor vehicle drivers concerning epilepsy and other causes of loss of consciousness; see Appendix B for link to the 'At a glance Guide to the current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive.'

The service user must agree for the wheelchair service to contact their GP or other health professionals for the purpose of gaining information to assist with the application.

Powered wheelchairs cannot be provided for use only outdoors, or only in a place of work or education.

If at any review the service user is found no longer to meet the eligibility criteria for a powered wheelchair, including no longer being able to independently and safely operate the equipment, or are found to misuse the power chair or to be non-compliant with the Terms & Conditions of Loan, the wheelchair service has the right to withdraw the powered chair.

The wheelchair service does not provide power chairs to be used only in the presence of a responsible person, or for attendant control, i.e. the service user must be independent using the powered chair.

A basic manual wheelchair will be offered as a back-up for use during essential repairs and maintenance of the powered wheelchair. People who have high performance manual wheelchairs prior to powered provision may retain their high performance wheelchair (at the Service Operational Manager's discretion) until that chair is beyond economical repair; any replacement manual wheelchair will be a basic wheelchair.

Service users are strongly recommended to take out 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance.



## 7.6.1 ELECTRICALLY POWERED INDOOR WHEELCHAIR (EPIC)

The service user must:

- Be medically fit to independently and safely control a powered wheelchair indoors
- Be free from any combination of medical conditions (including visual, cognitive and visuospacial disturbances), medications and / or treatments likely to make independent control of powered wheelchair unsafe to themselves or others

All service users must comply with the assessment process which will include evaluation of vision, perception, cognition, driving ability, etc.

Provision is also dependent on a suitable home environment which includes:-

- Adequate space for storage of the wheelchair with power supply for battery charger (including ventilation as specified by the manufacturer)
- Adequate space for movement of the wheelchair within their own home
- Suitable and safe access to areas required
- Ramps, if required, are fixed and permanent and no steeper than 1:12

The user must be able to complete basic maintenance tasks, such as recharging the battery, or have a carer who is able to do so

If applicable, EPIC users will return their chair on provision of an EPIOC once the new provision is deemed satisfactory.

## 7.6.2 ELECTRICALLY POWERED INDOOR / OUTDOOR WHEELCHAIR (EPIOC)

The service user must:

- Meet all requirements for an EPIC
- Have a suitable home environment and access to street level

During an outdoor driving assessment the service user will have demonstrated to a wheelchair service therapist and / or rehabilitation engineer the ability to drive independently, safely and appropriately, with due care and attention to the environment and the safety of self and others with whom they will come into contact in the public domain.

## 8 More than one manual wheelchair

More than one wheelchair may be provided when it is required to facilitate independent mobility over two levels and where a through floor lift is not fitted; provision for an additional chair is strictly limited to a basic manual wheelchair model.

# 9 Cushions, accessories and modifications

Cushions, accessories and modifications will be provided as appropriate to meet an assessed clinical need, e.g., postural, mobility and pressure care needs.



Cushions are provided to optimise posture and to distribute pressure as part of an individual's 24 hour posture and pressure management regime.

Cushions may be considered for privately purchased wheelchairs in special circumstances relating to an individual's case, and as agreed by the service operational manager or clinical manager, but only if that private purchase wheelchair is clinically suitable and the service user would have met the criteria for NHS provision of that wheelchair, e.g., not for outdoor only powered wheelchairs. Note that only one cushion may be issued per person, regardless of the number of wheelchairs they use.

Modifications affecting a manufacturer's warranty will not be considered for equipment, including those purchased under third party PWB.

# 10 The NHS Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB) scheme

This scheme was introduced by the Government to give people choice in the selection of their wheelchair; it is very similar to, and follows on from the Voucher Scheme introduced to wheelchair services in the 1990s. Service users have the option of either staying within the standard NHS provision or of receiving a contribution towards the cost of a different wheelchair.

Service users must meet the criteria for the provision of a manual or power wheelchair.

Service users must be assessed by the wheelchair service prior to considering the PWB scheme, i.e., a PWB cannot be issued retrospectively.

The value of the PWB is based on clinical need and on the NHS equipment which would have been issued to meet that need; the value is not based on the equipment the service user would like to purchase.

The prescription of any proposed wheelchair must meet the clinical need of the service user and pose no risk in provision (e.g. appropriate for postural needs).

With the *Combined PWB* option the wheelchair remains the property of the NHS and will have all repairs and maintenance covered by the wheelchair service, at the cost of the wheelchair service.

With the *Third Party PWB* option the service user owns the wheelchair; the PWB includes a maintenance contribution to assist with the cost of repairs and maintenance, which are the responsibility of the service user.

Provision of pressure care cushions and postural accessories will remain the responsibility of the wheelchair service.

In contrast to the preceding Voucher Scheme there is no set lifespan for a PWB.

PWBs will only be considered under exceptional circumstances for service users with rapidly deteriorating conditions.



## **Terms & Conditions of Loan**

(Copy to be left with service user; copy required for AJM Healthcare record) NHS No: Service user: Date: **Equipment being issued:** Wheelchair: Manufacturer: Model: Serial number: Asset number: Size: Value: Cushion manufacturer / model: Size: Value: Accessories (detail and value):

Safety is our priority with regard to the use of your wheelchair and accessories, so please read the information below. By signing this document you are agreeing to our terms and conditions of loan.

All equipment provided by the wheelchair service remains the property of the National Health Service (NHS) and is loaned to you under the following conditions.

## Section 1 – User Responsibility

- Your details are automatically shared with our database providers, Ethitec
- The wheelchair is for your use only and must not be used by anyone else or for any other purpose other than that for which it was provided
- It is your responsibility to use the equipment safely as instructed by the wheelchair service and the manufacturer's user manual
- The equipment must be kept clean (e.g. wipe with damp cloth) and maintained in good order
- Any faults or problems should be reported to the wheelchair service for repair
- No alterations or attachments may be made to the equipment without prior agreement from the wheelchair service; this includes the fitting of third party equipment such as power packs, trikes, etc, which may invalidate the manufacturer's warranty; in situations where this is done without prior consent from the wheelchair service, the



wheelchair may be removed permanently and any subsequent repair costs passed on to the service user

- If you have a powered chair, you must look after the battery as shown in the instructions given with the chair; good ventilation is needed when charging the battery to avoid a build up of harmful gases
- It is advisable that you inform your home insurers to amend your policy to include the wheelchair and accessories or alternatively take out insurance to cover your wheelchair and accessories
- If the equipment is no longer required, for any reason, you must inform the wheelchair service, and arrangements will then be made for it to be collected; it **must not** be disposed of in any other way or given to anyone other than the wheelchair service (including someone who may otherwise meet our criteria for loan)
- The wheelchair service has the right to withdraw the wheelchair in the event of negligence, unsafe use or misuse; this includes occasions when the wheelchair service considers that the service user's condition has deteriorated to a point where they are no longer safe, either to themselves or others, whilst using the wheelchair
- You must inform the wheelchair service immediately if any or the equipment is:
  - a) Lost or stolen
  - b) Involved in an accident
  - c) Damaged
- You must also inform the wheelchair service if you change your address; if you move
  out of area your equipment may be taken with you; please inform us of your forwarding
  address so that we can transfer your notes to your new wheelchair service
- You must also inform the wheelchair service if you move into a nursing or residential home
- You must also inform the wheelchair service if you intend to leave the country for any period of time exceeding 90 days
- If you take the equipment oversees on holiday you are advised to take out insurance, as you will be responsible for the cost of any loss, damage or repairs incurred abroad; it may be preferable for you to hire a wheelchair solely for use abroad
- If you are moving abroad permanently, you are not entitled to take the wheelchair and associated equipment with you; please discuss your individual circumstances with the wheelchair service
- If you are travelling within the UK for a short break, before leaving please call the local
  wheelchair service at your holiday destination for details of their local Approved
  Repairer, in case you require assistance with repairs while you are away; repairs
  carried out within the UK, and only by recognised NHS Approved Repairers contracted
  to the local NHS wheelchair service, should not result in costs to you

## Section 2 - Adverse Incidents

Wheelchairs and associated equipment are defined as Medical Devices and governed by regulations laid down by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). An adverse incident is an event which causes, or has the potential to cause, unexpected or unwanted effects involving the safety of users or other persons. It is important to identify what may constitute an adverse Incident. All Adverse Incidents must be reported to the Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) If you feel that an accident / incident has occurred which constitutes an adverse incident, you



must contact the wheelchair service immediately and they will give advice on appropriate action to take.

## Section 3 – Repairs

For repairs to the wheelchair on loan to you from the NHS, please call us on:

AJM Healthcare Unit 3 Abbey Road Industrial Park Commercial Way Park Royal London, NW10 7XF Tel: 0808 164 2040

Fax: 0808 133 0138

## Hours of work:

8.00 am - 6.00 pm Monday to Friday.

## Repair service available:

An out-of-hours emergency facility operates outside of core weekday hours between 7:00 and 8.00 and 18:00 and 23:00. The weekend emergency cover operates between the hours of 7:00 and 23:00, inclusive of bank holidays.

- The wheelchair and associated equipment must not be repaired by anyone other than AJM Healthcare
- The wheelchair service is only responsible for repairs relating to normal wear and tear of your equipment
- AJM Healthcare is not responsible for costs of repairs which are the result of misuse or negligence
- AJM Healthcare will come to your home or other appropriate venue (day centre, school, etc,) to carry out repairs
- If your wheelchair needs to be removed by AJM Healthcare for completion of repairs at their factory, we may be able to provide you with a temporary replacement wheelchair; this wheelchair will only be a standard model and will not necessarily be the same model or size as your own issued wheelchair

## Planned preventative maintenance:

If you have an electrically powered indoor or indoor/outdoor wheelchair (EPIC or EPIOC), AJM Healthcare are required to carry out an annual service on it and on the charger. You will be contacted to make arrangements for this. Refusal to comply with this maintenance plan may result in your power chair being withdrawn.



SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
I agree to accept the wheelchair prescribed for me by the wheelchair service, under the conditions of loan described above.
Signed by user or family / carer:
Name (please print):
Signed by AJM Healthcare representative:
Name (please print):
Date:



# Appendix 2

**DVLA** 

For Medical Practitioners

'At a Glance Guide to the current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive'

Issued by Drivers Medical Group, DVLA, Swansea February 2007

http://www.dvla.gov.uk/media/pdf/medical/aagv1.pdf

