

Introduction

All patients with a spinal cord injury (SCI) should have a lifetime of personalised care guided by a SCI centre¹. This is due to the ongoing impacts of their SCI which inevitably dictate change in circumstance and presentation.

At the LSCIC, for patients in re-admission beds, their Wheelchair Service (WCS) has often already provided a wheelchair and seating system. However, in many cases, the patient's abilities and/or function have changed since initial provision or were not captured due to pressures of time to provide for discharge.

Aims

To demonstrate the benefit of utilising seating therapists in SCICs to provide lifelong specialist SCI seating intervention through a case study design.

Results

Three users were admitted into readmission beds for daily therapy input and a posture and seating review was identified as a goal of the admission.

In each case, changes were required to the configuration of the wheelchair and/or seating system. Alternative products and set-ups were trialled and effects monitored in real-time. Solutions which did not have a positive effect could be disregarded and the most appropriate equipment trialled and identified.

At re-admission:



No independent mobility.
Hoist transfer with AO2.

At discharge:



Able to self-propel independently indoors and outdoors and able to lateral transfer independently (=reduced carer requirement and increased community independence)



Nil postural alignment nor adequate pressure relief. Discomfort and limited sitting stability



Improved postural alignment, reduced pain and reduce seat-to-ground height, facilitating sit-to-stand transfer



Back pain, sliding forward and restricted upper limb movement



Improved postural alignment, decreased back pain, increased sitting stability, improved ability to use upper limbs resulting in increased function.

Conclusion

Therapists at the LSCIC have the opportunity to see their patients on a daily basis which enables:

- Observation of the effect of input in real-time
- Adjustments to be made throughout the trial period
- A range of products to be trialled to enable comparison and identification of the most suitable options

For patients, this enables the opportunity to enhance their health and reduce secondary complications whilst also enhancing skills relating to use of a wheelchair, thus improving mobility and quality of life.

The utilisation of this service is an opportunity for WCS' to save time and resources, whilst providing patients with the best possible service.

References

1. BSPRM, BASCIS and MASCIIP (2022), Standards for Specialist Rehabilitation of Spinal Cord Injury.
2. NHS Improving Quality (2014), Right chair, right time, right now.
3. National Wheelchair Managers Forum (2015), Healthcare Standards for NHS-commissioned Wheelchair Services.
4. Wheelchair Alliance (2015), The Wheelchair Charter.
5. MASCIIP (2019), Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation: A wasted resource without appropriate mobility, posture, skin integrity and life role enhancing provision.
6. Motability and The Wheelchair Alliance (2022), An Economic Assessment of Wheelchair Provision in England.