

SWIFT Provision: How far have we come, where are we going, how do we get there?

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Discussion between the London Spinal Cord Injury Centre, Stanmore, the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and AJM Healthcare highlighted the need for:

- improved timelines
- improved quality of provision

of wheelchairs for spinal cord injury (SCI) individuals being discharged from their first episode of rehabilitation. It was recognised that changes in current practice were overdue.

The aim of the pilot project was:

To provide a mid-term, manual wheelchair or powered wheelchair (dependent on user need to include posture and seating requirements), in readiness for discharge from the user's first episode of SCI rehabilitation.

In order to achieve this, the pathway process needed to be streamlined to improve the timing of prescription identification, support direct ordering, and provide delivery to the SCI centres for set up before the person's discharge.

A new pathway was devised whereby a representative from the Wheelchair Services preferred equipment provider and the SCI therapist carried out a joint assessment with their SCI patient and completed a wheelchair and seating prescription. The prescription was drawn up from a pre-determined list of preferred equipment used by each Wheelchair Service to ensure maintenance could be carried within the Wheelchair Services Approved Repairers contract. A formalised prescription was identified by the senior seating therapist on the day of assessment. This was sent to the Wheelchair Service, along with the referral for direct ordering, with delivery to the SCI centre for set-up prior to patient discharge.

The pilot project was presented at last year's PMG conference and won best free paper.

The authors would like to actively engage with the PMG audience and propose:

- a brief overview of the project
- provide an update on outcomes
- identify ongoing barriers
- presentation of a success story
- allow service user participation
- develop trust and establish agreed competencies
- to engage commissioners
- development of a national working party

Following this, the authors invite an open and frank discussion allowing alternative perspectives to be shared. It is hoped that stimulating discussion will generate a desire for collaborative working and the impetus to find solutions to this complex challenge.

References

The value of a wheelchair, December 2023, Revealing Reality and Frontier Economics for The Wheelchair Alliance

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