

**Gillian Taylor**

**Supportive seating and wheelchairs: what is important to young people?**

**Executive Summary**

This qualitative study explored young wheelchair users' views on their postural seating and wheelchair equipment.

Face-to-face interviews were carried out with fourteen young people (aged 11 to 19 years) who had cerebral palsy or a similar non-progressive condition. Their physical difficulties were classified at level IV or V on the Gross Motor Function Classification System (Palisano et al 1997). Participants had the cognitive and communication skills necessary to take part in an interview (at least National Curriculum Level 2 in English Attainment Target 1: Speaking and Listening (Dept for Education 2012), with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) methods being used where necessary. The seating included at least pelvic and thoracic support on a manual or powered wheelchair base.

A thematic analysis of the data was carried out. Eight themes were identified in the data, with independence, comfort and postural issues being referred to most frequently and by the greatest number of participants. An additional five aspects of the equipment were reported to be important by individual participants.