

Frequently asked questions: **Problems relating to an NHS provided wheelchair**

Some wheelchair users and their families may experience problems relating to their wheelchair. These could include issues such as

- Being referred to a wheelchair service
- Getting the right wheelchair
- Getting your wheelchair repaired
- Delays in getting any problems resolved
- How to make suggestions for improvements

The first four points should be resolved by talking the issue through with your wheelchair service directly. They may also have a Wheelchair User Forum that you could attend, especially to make suggestions about service wide improvements or developments that could be considered. If they don't have a Wheelchair User Forum, do ask why not! Even if they don't have a forum, this doesn't mean the Wheelchair Service isn't collecting feedback e.g. through satisfaction surveys so it is worth emailing them. If you don't know where your local NHS wheelchair service is, you can ask your GP or look at the NHS directory of local services to help you. If you decided to buy a wheelchair through an independent retailer, then you should talk the problem through with them in the first instance.

However, despite talking directly with the wheelchair service provider, you may find your problem isn't resolved. What do you do then?

We hope that the following step by step approach will help you.

1. Identify exactly what your issue is, with any supporting dates and evidence. Being specific helps to resolve your problem.
2. Contact the local wheelchair service provider who gave you your wheelchair to discuss the issue directly.
3. If you do not get a reply, ask the wheelchair service provider for an update on the situation and if you are unhappy with the response, raise a formal written complaint.
4. If your problem still isn't resolved contact your local Integrated Care Board (ICB). An ICB is the organisation that develops plans, funds and awards contracts for the health services in your area. The following link may help you find the right ICB [Find your local integrated care board \(ICB\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)#](#)

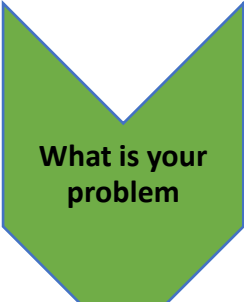
The person in the ICB who commissions the wheelchair service will be unable to deal with individual service users' issues as they do not have access to the relevant notes. However, they are responsible for ensuring your wheelchair service provider delivers the service

commissioned. They will expect the wheelchair service provider to have communicated any risks and issues to them in a timely manner and that remedial action plans are in place as and when appropriate.

5. If your wheelchair was provided by the NHS, you may also want to contact the NHS service via the Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS) which considers patient experience and complaints. Details of how to contact PALS will be on the local NHS website.
6. Healthwatch is another local service who may be interested in knowing about the situation.
7. Your experience of your wheelchair service and of using a wheelchair is extremely valuable and joining the local wheelchair user group or forum will help to influence service improvements.


If you decide to buy a wheelchair privately you may find the British Healthcare Trade Association publications useful. They have a code of Code of Practice which companies registered with them should abide by. These can be found on their website [Code of Practice doc – first draft: 15 April 2002 \(bhta.com\)](#)

There is also a useful publication called 'Get wise to accessing a wheelchair or mobility scooter [GW-NAWMS-15.pdf \(bhta.com\)](#)



What is your problem

- Be specific about what your problem is
- Include dates, names of people you have spoken to and other important information



Try to resolve the problem locally

- Speak to your local wheelchair service provider first. If the problem remains:
- Contact your local **ICB**
- Consider contacting your local Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS)
- Consider contacting your local Healthwatch



If all else fails

- If your problem remains unresolved you may wish to:
- Contact your local MP
- Make a complaint to the **Ombudsman**