

# Guideline - Request for secondary mobility bases and/or seating solutions

*Useful information to consider when completing a Request for Advice*

A Request for Equipment and Modifications Service (EMS) Advice is submitted when a higher specification configurable second manual wheelchair (MWC), second mobility base and/or seating solution is being sought. This is required in relation to the clarification of Whaikaha | Ministry of Disabled People eligibility and access criteria and where the EMS assessor is uncertain as to whether the person meets Whaikaha access criteria

<https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/get-involved/information-for-service-providers/equipment-and-modification-services/decision-making-and-complaints-process-for-assessors/>

## Consideration for the provision of two mobility bases or a higher specification/configurable standard backup MWC

(A standard backup MWC is generally a basic wheelchair with no or minimal adjustment within the frame i.e., not a replication of the primary wheelchair)

*'Generally, only **one option** to enable a person to sit safely and comfortably is provided. Consideration may be given for a dedicated seating option to enable a person to eat and drink safely if these activities are not possible within their everyday seating' (Whaikaha Manual, 2014, 11.5.10).*

*'A standard manual backup wheelchair can be considered for use by a person who has received a power wheelchair or when the power wheelchair is not available' (Whaikaha Manual, 2014, 11.5.3).*

- A standard backup MWC is provided and can be used when the power wheelchair (PWC) has broken down and/or is with the technician for repairs and maintenance, it is not expected that a person will be independently mobile in this MWC
- It is anticipated that the standard backup MWC is used infrequently and will meet the mobility and postural support needs of the person for a short duration of time
- Provision of a standard backup MWC is subject to Whaikaha access criteria having been met

Guideline for second mobility/seating, updated April 2023

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**Before consulting a Clinical Services Advisor, please consider:**

- If a scripted MWC or a PWC is intended to be a person’s primary means of mobility and meets Whaikaha eligibility and access criteria
- When recommending a wheelchair for a person, factors like transport and access in and around the home need to be discussed and a plan implemented (if needed) before the wheelchair is issued
- It is noted that this solution may not meet a person’s entire mobility needs, e.g., the solution provided may not meet their recreational mobility needs
- For PWC users, a plan needs to be discussed for when the PWC is unavailable (e.g., is being serviced or repaired by the technician), particularly if the user is unable to self-propel their standard backup MWC and/or is home alone for a significant period of time
- If a Whaikaha funded PWC is being used at school only, a standard backup MWC can be provided for at use home and in the community
- For people learning to independently drive a PWC, consideration needs to be given to whether the PWC is suitable as a primary chair. Whaikaha funding is to provide a person with functional independent mobility; it is not intended to provide ‘training chairs’ for therapy purposes or for people where independent driving is a long-term goal
- When a person has mobility needs that do not meet Whaikaha eligibility and access criteria, alternative sources of funding will need to be considered.

*It should be noted that - where a person has had both a scripted MWC and PWC in the past due to exceptional circumstances and a wheelchair replacement is considered, Whaikaha eligibility and access criteria (specifically the second seating criteria) will need to be met. This type of request is not an automatic replacement*

**Consideration of the provision of a second seating system for use on the standard backup MWC**

**Before consulting a Clinical Services Advisor, consider:**

- It is accepted that when able, the person or caregiver/support person will transfer the seating from the primary PWC to the standard backup MWC.
- Consider how the seating is to be transferred between wheelchairs (e.g., provision of additional mounting hardware or back supports, additional Velcro)
- Consider the frequency that the standard backup MWC is used and/or the length of time the person needs to sit in the wheelchair to ensure a cost-effective solution is sourced e.g., would adjustable back upholstery meet the person’s needs, versus a solid back support for this length of time?

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## Consideration of static positioning chair and/or indoor seating systems (e.g., fall-out style chairs, lift-out chairs)

- An indoor chair may be considered a person's 'primary' chair for positioning and they receive a standard backup MWC to allow mobility within the home and/or access to where a vehicle can reasonably be parked
- Where a person is unable to be left unsupervised in bed due to their disability-related need, or length of time in bed is not practical/reasonable
- People who have limited sitting tolerance, e.g., high tone. Where multiple configurations and/or power functions have been tried with the primary seating system and extenuating social circumstances exist
- Where a wheelchair solution is unable to be used inside the home, but a safe seating solution is required for feeding

### Before consulting a Clinical Services Advisor, consider:

- Has the primary wheelchair been reviewed? Can the issues be managed with a change of seating, configuration and/or additional accessories or power features?
- Is there furniture already available in the home that may meet the need? (e.g., standard lazy boy style chair), this may be complemented with the use of a cushion (e.g., Roho transferred from MWC for pressure relief) or by use of lying/positioning supports
- Can the person spend some time on their bed as an alternative position?
- If a person is needing to spend a significant amount of time in bed for the management of a pressure injury, can the bed be moved to allow for the person to be part of daily life (e.g., in the main living area)

## Consideration of high-low bases/ feeding chairs where a wheelchair is in place

*'Generally, only one option to enable a person to sit safely and comfortably is provided. Consideration may be given for a dedicated seating option to enable a person to eat and drink safely if these activities **are not possible within their everyday seating.**' (Whaikaha Manual, 2014, 11.5.10).*

- Some buggies have the option of an indoor high/low base
- Once the child reaches school age and/or a MWC is provided there is an expectation that the MWC would be used for indoor mobility and this would provide positioning for feeding

**Before consulting a Clinical Services Advisor, consider:**

- Configuration of the wheelchair to ensure optimal positioning for feeding
- Transport to/from and access into the home to ensure the wheelchair can be used inside
- Transfers between the two seating systems and how this will be managed
- The time spent in the second seating solution and the impact this will have on positioning needs

Requests for advice are all reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Genuine and exceptional circumstances may be considered for a higher specification MWC, second mobility base and/or seating.

Cost-effective equipment should be considered in the first instances before proposing higher specification MWC, second mobility base and/or seating. This includes refurbished equipment or a band 1 or 2 MWC, seating or other equipment solutions. This might result in a solution similar to the mobility base or seating that was requested.

(Whaikaha manual, 2014, 2.1).