

Get Wise to accessing a wheelchair or mobility scooter



Need a wheelchair or mobility scooter? Not sure where to go and how to get one? Do you know your options?

When you find yourself, or someone you know requiring a wheelchair, mobility scooter or powered wheelchair then you should be talking to your local BHTA member retailer.

Dealing with a lack of mobility, whether due to an ongoing, chronic illness, or to a sudden incident, can be a confusing and stressful time. We all see manual and powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters being used, but where do they come from? How do you get one? Until you find yourself in a situation of needing one, it's not something most people think about.

The wheelchair may be needed full time to get around the house, or to work, which may be a different model from something that may be used occasionally for trips to the doctors or for visiting friends where you may need assistance.

Your options

NHS

You can ask your GP for a referral to your local NHS Wheelchair Service if you are having mobility issues. They will discuss your situation with you, and may provide an assessment for your needs. If they determine that you require a wheelchair, and you meet their criteria, they will offer to provide you with one. Wheelchair services provide both manual and powered wheelchairs, but do not currently provide mobility scooters.

You may have an option to request a voucher, or to use a Personal Wheelchair Budget (PWB), which can be used to purchase a chair from a mobility retailer if you want a higher specification or options that they cannot provide.

Sometimes you may require a wheelchair temporarily, whilst you rehabilitate, or while awaiting delivery of an NHS wheelchair. The British Red Cross in your area will usually have wheelchairs available for temporary use. You can also contact your local BHTA Member retailer, who may have different types of wheelchairs available for temporary hire.

Private Purchase

If you do not qualify for a wheelchair through NHS Wheelchair Services, or simply wish to purchase your own wheelchair or a mobility scooter, you can contact a BHTA registered mobility retailer.

BHTA member retailers

BHTA members across the UK offer mobility products and many independent living aids to enhance your life and keep you independent at home and outdoors. They will guide you through a detailed assessment to ensure the product meets your current needs. The BHTA member retailer will discuss the model that will most suit your lifestyle and demonstrate this to ensure you are capable of controlling the mobility product in a safe environment before you head out on your adventures. Once you have identified the correct model, the BHTA member retailer will be able to also advise you on other topics such as finance, insurance and any extended warranty packages that are available. All BHTA members sign up to a Code of Practice which is approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. This ensures you are dealing with a company that will give you good advice, guide you in your discussion making and will not cold call you or use pressure selling techniques.

A copy of the Code of Practice is available to download from the website at www.bhta.com/code-of-practice.

Once you have had your assessment, agreed your needs and purchased all you need, your local BHTA member retailer will set up your mobility product, carry out pre-delivery inspection and ensure you know how to charge your vehicle so you are ready to get out and about, unless you opt to take it away with you from their showroom. Having someone local for



back up, after sales and servicing is important for your own piece of mind so should you have any issues you have somewhere local to talk to and visit. The BHTA member retailer will have a wealth of experience about your product and their engineers will be trained and experienced to assist you with any issues you may have with your product.

To find your nearest BHTA member retailer visit: <http://bhta.com/find-a-member/> and put "mobility" in the search box.

If you are looking for a second hand piece of equipment check with your local BHTA member retailer who will be able to advise you on availability and suitability for your needs.

Charities

If you need assistance with the funding of a mobility scooter or wheelchair, there are numerous charities that may be able to assist you, and many BHTA member companies will have links to these on their websites and will be able to give you advice when they carry out an assessment with you.

Use your PIP allowance

In some cases, people can use a portion of their PIP (Personal Independence Payment) allowance to lease a mobility vehicle through companies providing this option.

Finance

Some customers buy their mobility products via credit cards, bank personal loans or finance that is available through a number of specialist companies that have packages designed to meet the needs of the mobility industry. With a variety of options available it is worth discussing the best options that suit your situation with your local BHTA member retailer.

Insurance

There are many things to consider when thinking about insurance for your new mobility vehicle or wheelchair. There are insurance companies who provide dedicated insurance policies for mobility products. Some home contents insurance policies will cover mobility products, but it is always important to check that the cover is right for you.

Your home cover may pay for a replacement product if stolen but does it cover you for personal injury and public liability, for example should you accidentally cause any damage with your mobility product or have an accident? Your BHTA member retailer can advise you of insurance companies that provide specific mobility policies.

Extended Warranty and Service Packages

Most wheelchairs and scooters when purchased new, come with a 12 month guarantee. Sometimes this may be longer, and there may be options for purchasing extended warranties, and/or service and maintenance packages. Your BHTA member retailer can discuss these options with you to help you make an informed decision about what's best for you.

Helpful advice

BHTA produce a number of Get Wise leaflets to assist consumers when choosing a mobility product. The leaflets contain useful tips on buying safely to help guide you through the process, and point out questions to ask and things to consider.

To view the Get Wise range of information leaflets visit: <http://bhta.com/get-wise-leaflets/>

These are PDFs and can be downloaded or printed from your personal computer.

www.bhta.com

The BHTA represent almost 500 companies, all of whom commit to the BHTA Code of Practice, the only one in this industry to be approved by The Chartered Trading Standards Institute. BHTA member companies operate to higher standards of customer protection than the law requires.

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