

## Accessing Wheelchair Scales

It is recommended that **ALL** Service Users (SU) have their weight monitored regularly. Routine weighing will increase compliance with CQC Outcome 5 regarding Nutrition. How often depends on each individual's needs; a dietitian or GP can advise if you're unsure.

SU's who cannot stand safely should be weighed using either hoist scales, sitting scales or wheelchair scales. If your unit does not have suitable scales then please consider either purchasing a set of scales or making arrangements to take the SU to a location that has suitable scales.

### Hertfordshire Scales Locations

#### 1. Hertfordshire Wheelchair Service

Millbrook Healthcare  
Unit J (Swiftfield), City Park  
Watchmead  
Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire  
AL7 1LT

Tel: 0333 234 0303

[hertswcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk](mailto:hertswcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk)

No appointment needed. Remember; you will need to know how much the empty wheelchair weighs - remove items from that have been hung on wheelchair (bags, backpacks, blankets, clothing etc.) and leave on all wheelchair attachments including headrest and footplates. Please note there will not be anybody there to help with transfers. Millbrook have confirmed with the dietitian they are happy for people to be weighed. If there are any problems please contact your dietitian.

#### 2. Kingsley Green

House 6 Forest Lane  
Kingsley Green  
Harper Lane  
Radlett  
WD7 9HQ

Opening Times: Mon-Fri 9:00am-4:30pm

Tel: 01923 633565

No appointment needed. Phone in advance to check the building is open as it is occasionally used for other purposes. The scales are located in the sensory room; with the main entrance behind you, turn left and go to the end of the corridor, last room on the right hand side (see pictures). Instructions on how to use scales are attached to them. Please note there will not be anybody there to help with transfers.



## Purchasing scales (Information correct 14.9.15)

Type	Cost	Advantage	Disadvantage
Wheelchair scales (Marsden M-610) 	£675 + vat	Suitable to weigh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SU in their own wheelchair (including specialist chairs).</li> <li>- Ambulant SU's who struggle with stand on scales.</li> </ul>	Need to be set up for use each time (Unless kept in an empty/treatment room).
Chair Scales 	£500 – 600 + vat	Suitable to weigh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SU's who can be hoisted onto the chair.</li> <li>- Ambulant SU's who struggle with stand on scales.</li> </ul>	Not suitable for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SU's who are unable to independently support their upper body.</li> <li>- SU who cannot be transferred to the chair scales.</li> <li>- Some bariatric SU's.</li> </ul>
Hoist Scales 	£500 – 600 + vat	Suitable to weigh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SU's who are hoisted.</li> </ul>	Not suitable for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SU who cannot tolerate being hoisted.</li> </ul> <p>Can be less accurate and difficult to use.</p>

## Cost comparison

Purchasing specialist scales has an upfront cost that some care settings may find expensive. Below is the cost of wheelchair scales compared to regularly transporting one SU to a Hertfordshire Scales Location:

	Cost per visit	Cost per year	Cost of scales
Wheelchair taxi. Additional staff time/costs as taken away from the unit.	£50 – 100 per trip Staff costs	Every 3 months = £100 – 400* Once a month = £600 – 1200*	£500 – 675
* Excluding staffing costs			

Therefore, the cost of purchasing specialist scales is less than transporting one SU to a Hertfordshire Scales Location over 6 - 18 months. Sharing with another unit can reduce the cost more.

For more information please contact West Hertfordshire Dietitian 01442 283464 or East & North Hertfordshire Dietitian 01438 792 160.

## Guide to using wheelchair scales

It is recommended that **ALL** Service Users (SU) have their weight monitored regularly. How often depends on each individual's needs – See page 2.

SU's who cannot stand safely should be weighed using suitable scales. If your unit does not have suitable scales then please consider either purchasing a set of scales or making arrangements to take the SU to a location that has wheelchair scales – See 'Accessing Wheelchair Scales' leaflet.

### Step 1- Setting up the scales

Set up the scales on a solid flat floor e.g. wood, lino or tiles.

Follow the manufacturer's guidance to set up scales.

Turn on and check that the weight displayed is 0 kilograms (Kg).



### Step 2- Weighing the empty wheelchair



Remove items from that have been hung on wheelchair; bags, backpacks, blankets, clothing etc.

Leave on all wheelchair attachments including headrest and footplates.

Write a list of the attachments and brief description to identify the wheelchair.

- Check the scales are turned on and the display is showing 0kg.  
Wheel the chair onto the scales; make sure all wheels are in the centre of the weighing plates. Apply the brakes, let go of the chair and check it is not touching anything.
- Electronic scales will usually 'bleep' when ready. Record the date and wheelchair weight.  
Repeat the process 3 times to ensure accuracy.



### Step 3- Weighing the person + wheelchair together

- Check the person being weighed is not wearing any heavy items of clothing (remove coat) and does not have anything heavy in their pockets (e.g. coins or phone). Check that extra items have not been added to the chair; no bags or blankets etc. and all wheelchair attachment are still in place (footplates, head rest).  
It is recommended that people are weighed after receiving personal care so that continence pads are dry.  
Explain the procedure to the person and if possible gain their verbal consent to being weighed.
- Check the scales are turned on and the display is showing 0kg  
Wheel the person onto the scales; make sure all wheels are in the centre of the weighing plates.  
Apply the brakes, let go of the chair.
- Electronic scales will usually 'bleep' when ready. Record the date and person + wheelchair weight.  
Repeat the process 3 times to ensure accuracy.

### Step 4- Calculating actual weight

Subtract (take away) the weight of the empty wheelchair (step 2) from the combined weight of the person + wheelchair (step 3) to obtain the persons weight.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Person + Wheelchair step 3} - \text{Empty Wheelchair step 2} \\ = \text{Actual Weight} \end{aligned}$$

Record this date and actual weight.



### Step 5- Calculating percentage weight change

! Tip- you may find a calculator helpful.

You will need a historic weight from 3-6months ago and you will need the current weight.  
Work out the difference by subtracting '-' the bigger number from the smaller number.  
Divide '-' your answer by the historic weight.  
Multiple 'x' by 100 to get a percentage (%).

If the previous weight is bigger than the current weigh you will have calculated percentage weight loss.

If the current weight is bigger than the previous weight you have calculated percentage weight gain.

*More than 10% unintentional weight loss/ gain in 3 to 6months maybe a cause for concern. It is important to alert the person's GP or other health care professional who may consider referral to a Dietitian.*

### Monitoring weight

It is recommended that **ALL** Service Users (SU) have their weight monitored regularly. Routine weighing will increase compliance with CQC Outcome 5 regarding Nutrition. How often depends on each individual's needs; a dietitian or GP can advise if you are unsure.

Although there are no national guidelines for how often people in care should be weighed, the Specialist Dietitians (for Learning Disability & Forensics) recommend the following:

**Routine:** 6 monthly. Routine for all SU's.

**Monthly:** SU at risk of weight loss or weight gain, who are receiving prescription supplements, reduced appetite, pressure ulcers, other clinical concerns.

**Other:** As advised by Dietitian or other health care professional.

For more information please contact West Hertfordshire Dietitian 01442 283464 or East & North Hertfordshire Dietitian 01438 792 160.



Available Wheelchair accessible weighing scales across Hertfordshire

Type of Organisation	Organisation	Location	Availability	Number of scales
Private Residential Care Home	Life Opportunities Trust	6 Sewells Welwyn garden city Tel - 01707 321344	Yes - Strictly via appointment only	1
Private Residential Care Home	Crosby Close Care Home	1 & 2 Crosby Close, Hill End Lane, St Albans AL4 0AT Tel - 01727 834139	Only for service users at Crosby Close	1
Private Residential Care Home	Macintyre Care	1 Station Road, Wheathampstead Tel -01582 833957	Only for service users living in Macintyre care	1
Private care home	Meadow Acres	7 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 5TA Tel – 01582 768098	Only for use by service users living at Meadow Acres	1
Activity centre	Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust	House 6 Forest Lane Kingsley Green Harper Lane Radlett WD7 9HQ Tel - 01923 633565	Phone in advance to check the building is open as it is occasionally used for other purposes. The scales are located in the sensory room; with the main entrance behind you, turn left and go to the end of the corridor, last room on the right hand side. Monday Friday 9am-4:30pm	1
Wheelchair Provider	Hertfordshire Wheelchair Service (Millbrook Healthcare)	Unit J, Swiftfields City Park Watchmead Welwyn Garden City, AL7 1LT Tel - 0333 234 0303	No appointment needed.	1
HCC Day services	Stevenage Resource Centre	Chells Way, Stevenage SG2 0LT Tel – 01438 725820	Strictly via appointment only. 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday only	1
HCC Day services	Ware Rd Day Centre Ware Rd Ware SG13 7HX	Hertford Hoddesdon Tel - 01920 461671	Strictly via appointment only. 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday only	1

