

Who are Westmarc?

WestMARC is an NHS department within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde that prescribes and provides wheelchair and buggy equipment to the West of Scotland.

My child has a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), can I get help to transport them safely?

Yes.

Autism Scotland has asked us to provide mobility equipment (e.g. a buggy or wheelchair) to help mobilise children with ASD.

We can provide mobility equipment, if your child is at risk of harm when outdoors and this is the only option to manage the following situations:

- whether they run away
- struggle with noisy or busy environments
- decline to walk

As your child is mobile, keeping them in a wheelchair or buggy is a restraint. Therefore you will need to complete a Restraint Consent Form. We will explain this further below.

What's involved in attending an appointment at Westmarc?

Please refer to the booklet Wheelchairs for Children – Some thoughts from parents, this will give an insight into what happens at an appointment. This booklet can be accessed via our website using the following link.

<http://library.nhsggc.org.uk/mediaAssets/Westmarc/Wheelchairs%20for%20children-%20Some%20thoughts%20from%20parents-270173.pdf>

What type of Equipment do you provide?

We routinely prescribe 2 types of equipment:

1. A larger than standard umbrella fold buggy – for children **only under** the age of 6 years old.
2. A manual wheelchair for children **under and over** the age of 6 years old. We will offer you a clinic appointment so that we can measure your child for a suitable wheelchair.

Umbrella Fold Buggy

This is a folding device fitted with a 5-point harness.

Suitable for children who weigh less than **50kg**. Please tell us if your child exceeds this weight.

This is a lightweight buggy, so not designed to be a very heavy duty buggy. Please let us know if your child has been breaking standard shop bought

buggies, e.g. how and why, as this will help us to prescribe the right equipment for your child?



Image shows- example Vanos Elise Travel buggy

Manual Wheelchair

This is a folding device with a push button lap belt and a cushion. These can have large self propelling or small attendant propelled wheels.



Image shows- example Action 3 Junior wheelchair

What are the pros and cons of using a buggy or wheelchair for children with ASD?

Umbrella Fold Buggy

Pros	Cons
Lightweight	High seat to ground height making standing transfers difficult
Adjustable 5 point harness fitted as standard	
Umbrella fold, footplate requires to be removed first	Less stable, increasing the risk of tipping if child rocks and no option to make it more stable.
	Adjustability limited to 3 footplate heights

Manual Wheelchair

Pros	Cons
Can adjust to make more stable and has option to fit anti-tip levers	Standard push button lap strap
More robust device	Heavier
Lower seat to ground height to facilitate independent transfers	More steps to fold to fit into boot of a vehicle
Higher weight limit	
Range of sizes available with greater adjustment available for growth	

Why do you only provide these 2 types of equipment?

These chairs are fleet chairs and to allow us to provide an urgent repair/ replacement service within 1 working day and standard repair within 5 working days. We are able to do this by reducing the number of chairs and required spare parts we hold in stock.

What if I do not like the buggy or wheelchair provided by Westmarc?

In this case we would advise you contact a Registered Charity to ask if they have funding available to provide something you would prefer. If you do this, then unfortunately the equipment is your responsibility and Westmarc are not responsible for maintaining or repairing the equipment.

What do you mean by restraint?

As your child is mobile, keeping them in a wheelchair or buggy is a restraint. As a parent you have a greater authority to restrain your child but you still need to be aware of this when using a wheelchair or a buggy.

What is included in the restraint form?

When we receive your referral we will send you a Restraint Consent Form, please complete this within **4 weeks**. We need this completed form returned to us before we can prescribe any equipment for your child.

The restraint form will gather information about your child's abilities, the equipment to be issued and highlight the risks involved in using this type of equipment with a mobile child.

We will ask that you make sure your child is **supervised at all times** when using this equipment. We would recommend that the equipment is only used if **absolutely necessary** and for the **minimum amount of time**.

We will review the restraint form with a telephone call within 2 years time to establish if your child still needs this equipment.

Please read and complete the restraint form carefully. If you have any questions please call Westmarc to speak to a clinician.

What level of restraint do you provide?

The buggy or wheelchair will have the minimal level of restraint required to keep a mobile child in a wheelchair. Westmarc will not provide any additional restraints without first assessing your child.

Why do I need to complete a restraint form?

We need you to complete this restraint form before we can prescribe your child with a piece of equipment. This is to ensure we have considered, documented and where possible minimised the risks associated with using this type of equipment.

Who will get a copy of the restraint form?

Westmarc will keep a copy. We will send a copy to your GP and education provider we have on record. We are happy to provide additional copies to anyone else you think would be appropriate, for example, anyone else who may be using the equipment provided for your child.

What if I have concerns about my child escaping from the standard belt fitted to the wheelchair or buggy?

Please contact Westmarc and we will offer your child an appointment and your child will be assessed by a clinician.

My child has postural needs in addition to ASD, what do I do?

Please contact Westmarc and we will offer your child an appointment and your child will be assessed by a clinician.

My child is getting too big for a buggy, what is available if they still require a mobility device?

Once your child outgrows the umbrella fold buggy there is not a larger buggy available that Westmarc can provide. The next available option is a wheelchair. Please contact Westmarc if you continue to need mobility equipment and we will offer your child a review appointment.

We appreciate that mobility equipment can be helpful for your family to access your environment, however, as your child grows we hope that alternative strategies can be put in place to reduce the need for using mobility equipment.

If you are concerned about managing your child's challenging behaviour, please contact your local Child Development Centre or GP to request information on support available.

What do I do if my buggy or wheelchair is broken?

Please contact Westmarc and we will arrange a repair or replacement.

Telephone: 0300 790 0129 (Monday - Friday 9am to 4pm)

Email: westmarc@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

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