

EQUIPMENT HIRE FROM THE EQUIPMENT LOAN POOLS PROCEDURE [®]

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- This document outlines the standard procedure for the hire and return of equipment to the Equipment Loan Pools of SCHN.
- The equipment loan pool at CHW is managed by the Appliance Centre. The equipment loan pool at SCH is managed by the Home Equipment Lending Pool (HELP).
- Equipment may be required for patient discharge or following a visit to an outpatient clinic.
- Equipment is provided to enhance patient outcomes through care in the home.
- For a list of available equipment, location of equipment, cleaning and maintenance and specialised equipment procedures, see site specific CHW and SCH guidelines.
- Patients who have an eligible health care card are entitled to concession rates and there are further procedures for families who experience severe financial hardship.

CHANGE SUMMARY

- New SCHN document: replaces CHW “Equipment Hire from the Appliance Centre” and SCH “Home Equipment Lending Pool (HELP) Centre” facility documents
- Changes have been made in the following sections: Management of Equipment Hire; Recording of credit card details; Financial hardship process and concession rates; Refundable Deposits and Return of equipment and; Equipment hire for palliative care patients.

READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Allied Health Staff, Sleep Medicine and Equipment Loan Pool staff need to read and acknowledge they understand the contents of this document.
- Nursing Unit Managers, CNCs and Biomedical Engineering staff need to be aware of this document.

Approved by:	SCHN Policy, Procedure and Guideline Committee	
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Team Leader:	Project Officer	Area/Dept: CARPA, SCHN

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1 Statement of Intent

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure for the hire of equipment from the equipment pool, which is located in the Appliance Centre at The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) and at the Home Equipment Lending Pool (HELP) at The Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick (SCH). Throughout this document, they will be referred to as the **Equipment Loan Pools** at SCHN.

Equipment is available for short-term hire on discharge or following a visit to an outpatient clinic and is only available through referral from a clinician in the hospital.

All hire equipment attracts a standardised refundable deposit and a non-refundable hire fee. The deposit and hire fee system aims to improve the return and re-use rate of equipment. It also creates a pool of funds to go towards repair and replacement of the equipment loaned. The Equipment Loan Pools provide specialised paediatric equipment, which is typically more expensive to repair and replace than standard equipment.

The Equipment Loan Pools aim to provide a timely, accessible and equitable service across the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. To ensure this is achieved for all of our patients, it is essential that the following hire procedures are strictly adhered to.

2 Management of Hire Equipment

1. **Hire:** Any piece of equipment managed by the Equipment Loan Pools which are hired to patients for use outside of the hospital.
2. **Clinicians** prescribe hire equipment. Clinicians include nursing staff, allied health staff and medical staff.
3. **Equipment Loan Pool staff** manage the administration for equipment hired to patients for use outside of the hospital.

Hire equipment will always attract a deposit and hire fee for a standard 3 month period.

For the list and location of available equipment, please see site specific information:

- o [Appendix A Appliance Centre Guidelines – CHW](#)
- o [Appendix B HELP Centre Guidelines – SCH](#)

Procedure:

- When equipment is required for use outside of the hospital, information on the costs of equipment hire must be given to families as soon as possible, in accordance with NSW health policy directive: [Your Rights and Responsibilities](#).
- An information brochure detailing hire costs and the hire procedure for families is available on the intranet.
- Parents/Carers/Patients are instructed in the use of the equipment by the prescribing clinician, provided with written instructions if required and must be able to demonstrate the ability to use the equipment safely and effectively.

- A **hire form** must be completed by the clinician involved in the patient's care. The form is found at:
 - [Appliance Centre Loan Form](#)
 - [HELP Loan Form](#)
- The hire form is completed by the clinician and left with the Equipment Loan Pool or placed in a designated place for collection by Equipment Loan Pool staff. A copy is attached to the piece of equipment and given to families.
- Families are encouraged to pay at the Equipment Loan Pool at the time of equipment provision and must pay prior to discharge. If families leave the hospital prior to payment of the equipment hire fees, they will be contacted by the Equipment Loan Pool staff to follow up payment.
- For weekend and after hour patient discharges, where possible, payment should be arranged in advance. For those discharges or equipment prescription where advance payment is not possible, parents should be advised of the costs by the prescribing clinician and that they will be contacted by the Equipment Loan Pool during business hours to follow up payment.
- At times, hire equipment is provided for inpatient use, as standard ward equipment may not be suitable or available. Completion of a hire form is still required to identify and monitor this equipment. See site specific guidelines on management of inpatient equipment loans.
 - [Appendix A Appliance Centre Guidelines – CHW](#)
 - [Appendix B HELP Centre Guidelines – SCH](#)

3 Hire Charges

- All hire equipment attracts a refundable deposit and a non-refundable rental fee. Hire charges can be viewed on the Intranet site.
- When hiring multiple pieces of equipment, a maximum deposit of \$150 will be charged for three or more pieces of equipment. Hire fees will be charged per item as per standard fees.
- If additional pieces of equipment are needed after initial hire of multiple items, then the deposit for the equipment should be waived and only the hire fee charged.
- The deposit for multiple items will only be returned when all equipment is returned.
- Equipment that is hired to Compensable patients attracts a weekly hire charge commensurate with commercial rates, as per hire equipment list. No deposit is taken.
- For Compensable patients: The insurance company/institution/individual is to be notified of this in writing prior to the commencement of the hire. Equipment will not be issued until an acceptance / acknowledgement and agreement to pay is received in writing. Invoicing will occur monthly or three monthly through the Finance Department.
- **Palliative care:** Patients with far advanced progressive disease, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, end stage respiratory disease, cardiac and liver disease, or any other palliative care group who requires short term equipment of up to three months do not

have fees charged in accordance with the NSW Health policy directive: [Enable NSW](#). However a refundable deposit should be obtained for equipment security. Completion of the hire form is still required in order to identify and keep track of these equipment items. Palliative care patients should have involvement of the palliative care team to be eligible for fee waiver and ideally should be referred by a member of the palliative care team.

- **Oncology** patients: There are local guidelines for oncology patients who require equipment. See:
 - [Appendix A](#) **Appliance Centre Guidelines – CHW**
 - [Appendix B](#) **HELP Centre Guidelines – SCH**

Financial Hardship

- No families will be denied equipment hire due to financial hardship, as this has a direct impact on patient safety.
- Families are to be informed of hire costs by the prescribing clinician as soon as equipment needs are identified.
- Concession rates are provided for holders of a healthcare card. Concession rates will be approximately 40% of standard hire fee charges and 50% of the refundable deposit.
- Children and young people who have a new diagnosis and are in the process of applying for a health care card, will also be eligible for the maximum monthly cap. The Equipment Loan Pool should be advised of the application for a health care card by the social worker.
- If a family who holds a health care card indicates they are unable to pay concession rates, they are to be referred to the Social Work department by the prescribing clinician for a financial hardship assessment and comprehensive support for their situation. Referrals to Social Work must be completed 72 hours prior to discharge.
- When a family indicates they are unable to afford the designated hire charges and do not have a concession card, they are to be referred to the Social Work department by the prescribing clinician for financial hardship assessment and comprehensive support for their situation. Referrals to Social Work must be completed 72 hours prior to discharge.
- A financial hardship assessment form is to be completed by the allocated social worker and a summary with recommendations given to the Equipment Loan Pool manager for authorisation.
- Recommendations for financial hardship include payment plans in the first instance, or a reduction in fees.
- In exceptional circumstances, where there is an urgent need and insufficient time for Social Work referral (such as short stay/day outpatients/after hours), families will be asked to complete the financial hardship form independently and present it to the Equipment Loan Pool manager, who will authorise the payment plan/reduction in fees.
- Review of financial hardship status will be completed at six months, if equipment is still required. The Equipment Loan Pool staff will notify the social worker involved, so they may review financial hardship.

Payment of charges

This can be by cash, credit card, money order or bank cheque. Personal cheques cannot be accepted. Refer to the Cash Handling Policy.

4 Hire Period

- Equipment is hired for a standard period of three months.
- Monthly hire will be available for patients who require equipment for less than 2 months. Length of the loan will be at the discretion of the prescribing clinician. The fee for one month's hire will be a third of the standard hire fee, with deposit fee to remain the same.
- Hire periods may be extended upon request for a maximum total hire period of 6 months, with clinician involvement.
- Extension fees are charged if equipment is kept for longer than the standard three months. This fee will be commensurate with hire charges.
- At the time of the extension request, the prescriber of the equipment is to be notified by the Equipment Loan Pool staff, ideally via email.
- If equipment is required for longer than 6 months, an application should be made to Enable NSW by the prescribing clinician. The Equipment Loan Pool staff should be notified of the Enable NSW application by the clinician.
- If the child does not meet Enable NSW eligibility criteria and the equipment is required for longer than six months, alternative sources need to be explored. These include private equipment hire and charity funding. Limiting the period of equipment loan will allow other patients to benefit from the equipment.
- In exceptional circumstances, where alternative equipment sources are not possible, long term loans may be considered, with liaison between the family, prescribing clinician and the Equipment Loan Pool manager. Hire fees will continue to be charged at the same rates.
- In circumstances where equipment is out on an extended loan for longer than 12 months, equipment must be returned for routine service and maintenance, to ensure it can continue to be used safely and effectively. Families will be contacted by the Equipment Loan Pool staff to advise them when routine service and maintenance is required.
- Families will be contacted by the Equipment Loan Pool via letter towards the end of the nominated hire period to remind them to return the equipment or to request an extension if the equipment is still required.
- If equipment is not returned by the due date, staff of the Equipment Loan Pools will contact the family by phone to follow up, providing verbal reminders to return or extend the equipment hire.
- Follow up letters and phone calls will be made to families on a monthly basis until contact is made with the family and equipment is returned or hire extension agreed upon, or until advised otherwise by the Equipment Loan Pool manager.

5 Refundable Deposits

- On return of equipment to the Equipment Loan Pools, deposits are refunded in cash where possible. Otherwise a cheque will be forwarded by mail from the Finance Department as soon as possible.
- If equipment is damaged or is in poor condition, the hospital may retain the deposit for the maintenance and cleaning that is required. This will be decided by the Equipment Loan Pool manager.
- If equipment is returned inadvertently damaged beyond repair, it is understood that the deposit will go towards replacement of that equipment. No additional fees will be charged to the family, as their deposit is retained and they have contributed to the repair and replacement fund through the payment of hire fees.
- All equipment loaned is to be used in the way that it is intended. Abuse or misuse of the equipment will not be tolerated, and the patient will not be entitled to replacement equipment if this happens. If equipment is damaged due to misuse, additional fees may be charged to repair or replace this equipment.
- If equipment is returned overdue, an overdue fee may be taken out of the deposit prior to refund, to cover the cost of the overdue period. This fee is commensurate to the hire fee charges. In cases where overdue fees exceed the deposit amount, additional fees may be charged to the family.

6 Return of Equipment

- All returned equipment is to be taken to the Equipment Loan Pool for staff to sight and document it as having been returned.
- The visible condition of the equipment at the time of return will be compared to the condition of the equipment as documented on hire the form.
- Families are encouraged to bring their deposit receipts with them.
- Equipment is to be returned to the Equipment Loan Pool during normal working hours. If this is not possible, the family are to be advised to ring the Equipment Loan Pool to make alternate arrangements.
- After hours it is possible for equipment to be left with Enquiries/Admissions; however the Equipment Loan Pool staff MUST be informed prior to this happening. The returned equipment must be clearly labelled with the child's name, address, contact telephone number etc. Responsibility for the equipment returned after hours stays with the family until it is in the Equipment Loan Pool.
- In exceptional circumstances, where families are unable to return equipment and the equipment lies outside the local health district, a courier service may be offered to collect the equipment. The equipment deposit in this instance may be used towards transport costs and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- In exceptional circumstances, where the family are unable to return the equipment and where equipment lies within the local health district, a collection service may be organised by the Equipment Loan Pool, in liaison with the family.

7 Maintenance

- If equipment breaks down or becomes faulty during the hire period, families are asked to contact the Equipment Loan Pool immediately, to discuss return and exchange or repair of the equipment. If available, equipment will be exchanged at no additional cost to the family for the remaining hire period. If unavailable, emergency maintenance and repair of the equipment may be arranged.
- If equipment has been damaged by incorrect use, the prescribing clinician will be contacted to provide further education, before equipment will be re-issued. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with liaison between the family, the Equipment Loan Pool manager and the prescribing clinician.
- When medical equipment is returned to the Equipment Loan Pool, it must be sent to Biomedical Engineering for testing, before being re-issued.
- When therapy equipment, such as wheelchairs, rollator frames etc. are returned from hire to the Equipment Loan Pool, they must be checked for safety by Allied Health staff and as required sent to Maintenance for repair, before being re-hired.

8 Local guidelines

Please see local guidelines:

- [Appendix A](#) **Appliance Centre Guidelines – CHW**
- [Appendix B](#) **HELP Centre Guidelines – SCH**
- List of available equipment
- Location of available equipment
- Cleaning and Maintenance
- Hire equipment for inpatient use
- Oncology patients
- Specialised equipment procedures

9 Related Documents

SCHN Equipment Hire Price List

- http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/forms/appliance_centre/SCHN_equipment_loan_pool_hire_fees_price_list.pdf

CHW Forms

- **Equipment Hire Form:**
 - http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/forms/appliance_centre/equipment_loan_form.pdf
- **Financial Hardship form**
 - http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/forms/appliance_centre/financial_hardship_assistance_application_form.pdf

SCH Forms or Brochure

- **SCH Information Brochure for families:**
<http://sch.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/policy/forms/he.00.3%20help%20centre%20information%20brochure.pdf>
- **Equipment Hire Form**
 - <http://sch.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/policy/forms/he.13%20help%20centre%20equipment%20loan%20form.pdf>
- **Financial Hardship form**
 - <http://sch.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/policy/forms/he.14%20help%20centre%20financial%20hardship%20assistance%20application%20form.pdf>

10 Bibliography

1. Biomedical Engineering website http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/ou/biomedical_engineering/
2. Enable: Assistive Technology for Communication, Mobility, Respiratory Function & Self-Care- Policy Directive NSW Health, 12 May 2011
http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2011/pdf/PD2011_027.pdf
3. Your Rights and Responsibilities- Policy Directive, NSW Health 20 April 2011
http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2011/pdf/PD2011_022.pdf
4. SCHN Policy: Acceptance for Admission of Overseas and/or Medicare Ineligible Patients
<http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/documents/policies/policies/2013-9051.pdf>

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Appendix A – Appliance Centre Guidelines – CHW

The Appliance Centre is located on Level 2 of the Children's Hospital, Westmead, opposite the outpatient's department. They are open from 9am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, closed on weekends and public holidays. To contact them, please call: (02) 9845 2563.

Location of Equipment

Physiotherapy Department

Items kept in the Physiotherapy Department are:

- Walking frames
- Walking sticks
- Adjustable height tables
- Corner chairs and tables
- Quad sticks
- Standing frames
- Wheelie stools
- Tilt tables

Appliance Centre

Items stored in the Appliance Centre are listed below:

- Wheelchairs (standard)/strollers
- Commodes
- Bath aids, such as bath boards, Rifton, Leckey
- Slide boards
- Tumble Form seats and bases
- Cushions- pressure care
- Over toilet aids
- Shower chairs/stools
- Transfer bench
- Ramps
- Hoist and slings
- Leg boards & wing boards

Biomedical Engineering

Biomedical Engineering (electrical equipment), stores and maintains items for issue through the Appliance Centre, including:

- Enteral feeding pumps
- Portable suction units
- Home monitoring equipment

These items are prepared and delivered to the Appliance Centre upon the request of a clinician. Biomedical Engineering also issues specialised and "one off" items directly as well as managing equipment issue for the home ventilation / oxygen program, the Respiratory Support Service, the Thalassaemia Clinic, the Myoelectric Clinic and the Cystic Fibrosis Clinic. Often patients and parents will require such equipment in conjunction with equipment issued from the Appliance Centre.

Further Information

- Biomedical Engineering Equipment: Management Procedure - CHW:
<http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/documents/policies/procedures/2006-8308.pdf>

Sleep Medicine

Sleep Medicine has limited equipment available for hire through the Appliance Centre. This equipment is prepared and delivered to the Appliance Centre by the Sleep Medicine team. Further information is available from the Sleep Medicine Team.

Cleaning and Maintenance

The Appliance Centre staff have overall responsibility for the cleaning and maintenance checks of returned equipment.

Exceptions include physiotherapy equipment, which is returned to the physiotherapy department and all cleaning and maintenance requests are completed by physiotherapy staff.

Respiratory equipment is cleaned by Inhalation Therapy.

For wheelchair maintenance: see the Wheelchair Maintenance and Repair checklist at: http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/ou/equipment/resources/wheelchair_maintenance_and_repair_checklist.pdf

All therapy equipment returned from hire must be checked for safety by Allied Health staff and as required sent to maintenance for repair. Allied Health staff or Appliance Centre staff will send a maintenance request via the usual CHW procedure.

For infection prevention and control reasons all returned equipment must be washed thoroughly using warm soapy water or bacterial wipes. All used foam e.g. foam cushions that are returned, must be discarded and cannot be reused. All material items e.g. Car seat covers that have been returned must be washed and dried. There is a washing machine located in the hydrotherapy pool area.

If equipment is on loan and an urgent repair is needed, it should be brought back to the Appliance Centre. The Allied Health assistant or Appliance Centre staff will contact Maintenance and send the parent/carer with the equipment to be repaired while waiting.

If it is not possible to repair equipment (and with the therapist's approval), the equipment is to be exchanged for a working piece, for the remaining loan period. Extensions will be granted as per usual procedure.

Access to the Appliance Centre

The Appliance Centre storeroom is locked. Therapists/staff should access the Appliance Centre during normal business hours (9-5pm Monday to Friday). The Occupational Therapy department have designated staff that can access the Appliance Centre after hours if necessary. For other staff, access outside of these hours, including Christmas closures, is to be done by contacting Security who will unlock the door to the centre. A form for whom and when this access occurs is completed every time by Security and signed by the staff member. If any equipment is removed from the Appliance Centre, the relevant form **MUST** be filled in completely.

Inpatient loans

For equipment stored in the Appliance Centre: If an item is for trial for an inpatient then sufficient information must be recorded on the form to identify the equipment and patient, ensuring a ward is listed and the therapist's name and contact details. A hire fee is not incurred until the piece of equipment has been deemed safe and appropriate for that particular patient.

For equipment stored elsewhere: Inpatient loans for equipment are to be monitored by individual departments, following own internal processes.

Oncology patients

Oncology patients who require equipment have their hire fee managed through Oncology Services. To access the Oncology Department Equipment Hire form, refer to the intranet site: http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/forms/appliance_centre/equipment_hire_-_oncology.pdf

Specialised equipment

Hire of specialised reclining wheelchairs with extended headrest section are only to be used for orthopaedic, rehabilitation, neurological, oncology and neurosurgical patients who are unable to use regular wheelchairs. Head rests and foot rests are NOT to be removed from these wheelchairs. If the head rest extension and/or the reclining function is not required, then that wheelchair should not be issued to that particular patient. A standard wheelchair should be provided in that instance.

Wheelchairs (standard)

If arm rests and foot rests (one or more) are not required then those items must be left at the Appliance Centre suitably labelled. These will then be re-fitted to the hire wheelchair when it is returned to the Appliance Centre. The number of armrests and footrests (footplates) on any hire wheelchair must always be recorded on the hire form. This is the issuing therapist's responsibility. Wheelchairs will be assumed to have been issued with 2 armrests and 2 footrests UNLESS otherwise identified on the hire form.

Appendix B – HELP Centre Guidelines – SCH

The HELP Centre is located next to the High Street Main Entrance. It is open from 8:30am to 5pm, closed 1pm-2pm Monday to Friday and closed on weekends and public holidays. To contact the HELP Centre, please call: (02) 9382 1985.

List and Location of Available Equipment

Physiotherapy Department

Items kept in the Physiotherapy Department include:

- Walking frames (PUF, rollators, FASF, Kaye walkers)
- Functional electrical stimulation machines
- Respiratory equipment (nebulisers, cough assist machines)
- Canadian crutches
- Standing frames

Occupational Therapy

Items kept in the Occupational Therapy Department include:

- Wheelchairs/strollers
- Commodes
- Bath aids, such as bath boards, Rifton, Leckey
- Leg boards & wing boards
- Tumble Form seats and bases
- Cushions- pressure care
- Shower chairs/stools
- Over toilet aids
- Transfer bench
- Hoist and slings
- Ramps
- Slide boards

Home Equipment Lending Pool

Items stored at the Home Equipment Lending Pool include:

- Enteral feeding pumps
- Portable suction units
- Home monitoring equipment

Sleep Medicine

Items stored at Sleep Medicine include:

- CPAPs
- BiPAPs

Cleaning

Each department is responsible for the cleaning of returned equipment.

For infection control reasons all returned equipment must be washed thoroughly using warm soapy water or bacterial wipes. All material items e.g. Car seat covers that have been returned must be washed and dried. There is a washing machine located in the OT equipment storage area.

Inpatient loans:

- Inpatient loans for equipment are to be monitored by individual departments, following their own internal processes.
- If equipment is being used for trial, prior to external hire, it is recommended that the clinician fill in the HELP loan form at time of trial, in preparation. These should be kept separately in the department, until it is confirmed the equipment is for outpatient use.
- The HELP Centre database is to be kept for equipment on external hire only.

Oncology patients

Oncology patients who require equipment in the Local Health District may access equipment available through HELP at the standard rates. Different equipment processes apply for equipment outside the LHD. Speak to the Oncology team for further details.

Wheelchairs (standard)

If arm rests and foot rests (one or more) are not required then those items must be left in the OT store room, suitably labelled. These will then be re-fitted to the hire wheelchair when it is returned to the hospital. The number of armrests and footrests (footplates) on any hire wheelchair must always be recorded on the hire form. This is the issuing therapist's responsibility. Wheelchairs will be assumed to have been issued with 2 armrests and 2 footrests UNLESS otherwise identified on the hire form.