



Moving Health Forward

Patient Centred Care: Benefits of appropriate postural support chair to enable a plus-size patients rehabilitation programme

Background

Sue* was admitted to hospital with a T4 spinal cord injury and loss of sitting balance. She weighed 145kg on admission, and had several comorbidities:

- Medically unstable.
- significant impact on her rehabilitation and quality of life.
- Issues with postural stability.
- Constant pain
- which is also impacting on her functional engagement as positioning in bed is not optimal to allow this.

Prior to admission she had no package of care at home, and it was deemed she would be an in-patient for some months to come due to functional engagement and Issues with postural stability. Sue was bedbound for her admission due to being medically unstable and a complex discharge, however this was now beginning to significantly impact on her rehabilitation and quality of life.

Patient Objectives e.g.

- Achieve “medically fit for discharge” status
- Mobilise as early as possible to prevent complications of immobility
- Prevent skin damage
- Make a difference to her rehab trajectory and quality of life whilst an in-patient

Clinical Challenges

It was established it was safe to hoist Sue, and therefore availability of appropriate seating was the only thing preventing her from being able to sit out. Sue began to feel uncomfortable and in pain during her rehabilitation sessions and did not want to cooperate with the team – not being able to sit-out was impacting her functional engagement as positioning in bed was not optimal to allow this.

Equipment Specification

A bariatric Hi-Lo tilt-in-space chair was deemed appropriate by the Trust Lead Moving and Handling Adviser to allow Sue to sit out of bed providing physical and psychological benefits. The chair was specifically designed to be used as the first step from bed to chair for high dependency patients. The chair also offered the capability and functionality of a bed with full electric opening and a high-dependency castellated foam surface and was also used to assist with sit-to-stand exercises during early stages of a patient’s rehabilitation. – the chair seat height was set at Sue’s popliteal height for safe mobilisation.

Whilst the Hi-Lo chair was deemed appropriate, there were none in store at the local depot. Given Sue’s condition and decreasing engagement, the Hi-Lo chair was required urgently and a request was made by the Trust Lead Moving and Handling Adviser to the local team.



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Outcomes

DHG's team quickly reacted to source a Hi-Lo tilt-in-space chair. A chair was located in the North of England and transport arrangements made to deliver the chair to the patient.

UHS Trust Lead Moving and Handling Adviser commented that:

"We experienced some truly exceptional customer service from DHG. UHS had a plus-size patient who required a Hi-Lo tilt-in-space chair, however there were none in stock at our local depot. After my request to the local depot explaining the situation, and that this issue was affecting the patients quality of life. Sally contacted me a few hours later and had made arrangements for a chair to be delivered from the North of England – the whole operation took less than 12 hours which I personally find an amazing service! These actions have led to the patient experiencing more comfort during her rehabilitation, therefore improving recovery and pain score. DHG's above and beyond actions have truly improved this patients' outcomes."

Following the delivery of the equipment, Sue was able to sit-out which made a huge difference to her rehabilitation trajectory and quality of life whilst an in-patient. Whilst sitting out Sue engaged with staff members and was able to maintain good, seated posture.

Sitting out has a range of health benefits for patients such as:

- Shift pressure points to prevent skin damage
- Promote lung expansion to breathe easily
- Strengthen trunk muscles and mobility
- Easier and safer to eat and drink
- Increase activity to decrease the risk of deep vein thrombosis and bone demineralisation
- Prepare the patient for mobilisation
- Comfort
- Better digestion
- Improved the patient's wellbeing, and enable her to interact more comfortably with staff

Sue recovered with no complications and advancing her rehabilitation programme enabled a faster discharge.