COMPREHENSIVE COST ANALYSIS FOR SPECIALIST SEATING PROVISION



CareFlex

Specialist Seating with Care, Compassion & Empathy

1st Edition

FOREWORD

Postural care refers to an approach that aims to preserve and restore body shape for individuals with movement difficulties. Those with complex needs often adopt limited positions for prolonged periods of time, leading to a substantial risk of body shape distortion. It is important to understand that this is not inevitable. The right equipment and positioning techniques, at the right time, can help to protect body shape.[1]

Regardless of the evidence consistently emerging around the importance of 24-hour postural care, the UK continues to engage in a dangerous false economy - saving money by disregarding quality preventative care only to incur costs in the billions of pounds in ensuing avoidable interventions. As a nation we are failing in what should be a collective mission to protect our community from avoidable harm, thus putting individuals at risk of secondary complications including premature death.

The passion for this project was ignited by the stark lack of awareness of specialist seating and was fuelled by our mission at CareFlex to help others understand the profound benefits of postural care in sitting for the individual. While postural care does require an initial investment, it can significantly reduce the need for invasive and more costly interventions in the long term, including emergency department visits, hospital admissions, surgical procedures, home adaptations, enteral feeding, and pain management.[2]

If better provision of equipment resulted in even a modest reduction in the need for treatment, medication and surgery, the costs of the equipment could be recuperated.[3] This project was centred around this theme, providing evidence that strategic investments in postural care equipment not only enhance individual outcomes and quality of life but also lead to significant cost savings. By minimising the reliance on expensive medical interventions, our goal is to demonstrate that the initial investment in quality postural care can be quickly recuperated, ultimately contributing to the financial sustainability of health and social care providers for years to come. Through detailed cost-benefit analyses and real-life case studies, we aim to highlight the far-reaching impacts of improved postural care in sitting on both health and economic outcomes in our care systems.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this project, and those who have shared their story to highlight how specialist seating can profoundly change lives.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As health and social care systems are increasingly focussing on both cost-efficiency and improved individual outcomes, the importance of postural care becomes ever more critical.

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the well-being and economic benefits associated with integrating specialist seating solutions within health and social care. Designed to support key decision-makers in NHS procurement, care homes, community equipment stores, and clinical leadership, the report demonstrates the significant role of postural care in sitting in enhancing personalised outcomes while advancing operational efficiency.

The core assertions underscore substantial reductions in health and social care expenditures due to decreased incidences of avoidable harm. Through a detailed cost-benefit analysis, the report presents specialist seating as a strategic investment that mitigates the risks of body shape distortion, pressure injuries, falls, and respiratory difficulties. Findings reveal that such seating solutions not only enhance quality of life for individuals with complex needs but also significantly reduce reliance on costly medical interventions, translating into marked cost savings. Specialist seating optimises postural support, thereby enhancing comfort, independence, and user engagement, while reducing physical demands on care staff and promoting a safer workplace environment.

Key financial insights reveal that the initial investment in specialist seating solutions can be recouped through long-term savings, including reduced hospital admissions, decreased emergency interventions, and minimised risk of secondary complications. Real-life case studies and return-on-investment (ROI) calculations demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of specialist seating, with potential savings across areas such as pressure injury management, falls prevention, and avoidance of surgical interventions for contractures.

In the case of Mrs. A, an individual living with multiple sclerosis, the initial investment in specialist seating amounted to £3,595. Over a ten-year period, this investment resulted in total savings of £43,440 due to a reduction in falls and prevention of pressure injuries, culminating in an impressive ROI of 1,108%.

These financial projections position specialist seating as a prudent investment. By minimising reliance on urgent reactive care and invasive treatments, it supports sustainable health and social care systems whilst reducing individual distress. Our analysis delineates the significant enhancements in quality of life for users and the concurrent financial advantages for providers that result from the adoption of seating solutions as part of holistic 24-hour postural care.

CareFlex's role in delivering these outcomes is highlighted throughout, with its commitment to quality, reliability, customer support, and British manufacturing. By offering evidence-based, customised, sustainable seating solutions, CareFlex supports health and social care providers in achieving high standards of care, elevating both service delivery and individual user satisfaction. CareFlex further enhances the benefits by offering tailored support, training, and refurbishment programmes, ensuring continued cost-effectiveness and alignment with the highest standards of care.

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Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

The primary purpose of this project is to elucidate the multifaceted benefits of investing in specialist seating solutions within health and social care settings. In today's environment, providers are under continuous pressure to enhance outcomes and simultaneously manage costs effectively. Specialist seating emerges as a strategic investment that proficiently addresses these twin objectives, presenting a crucial opportunity for facilities to optimise both individual care and operational efficiency.

This report is designed to inform key decision-makers within NHS Procurement, Care Homes, and Community Equipment Stores, as well as Clinical Leads, about the human, financial, and operational benefits that specialist seating solutions offer. The insights provided aim to facilitate informed decision-making by illustrating how these seating solutions can significantly improve individual user well-being, reduce health and social care costs, and enhance service delivery.

Specialist seating is not merely an accessory; it is a vital medical component of personalised care that contributes to reducing the risk of complications such as infection, pressure injuries, and falls, which are costly to treat and detrimental to health. By integrating advanced seating solutions, providers can achieve better health outcomes and operational gains, thereby supporting sustainable health and social care systems.

This sets the stage for a detailed discussion of the practical implications of specialist seating, the potential return on investment, and the strategic benefits to organisations. All of these align with the core objectives of enhancing personalised care and managing expenditures efficiently. Through our analysis, stakeholders are equipped with the necessary data and context to make well-informed choices about incorporating specialist seating solutions into their care practices.

Throughout this report, the role of CareFlex in providing these essential products and services will be highlighted. The alignment of CareFlex's offerings with the needs of NHS Procurement, Care Homes, Community Equipment Stores, and Clinical Leads is particularly emphasised, demonstrating how our solutions facilitate compliance with care standards and improve overall service provision.

Section 2: Background and Market Analysis

As societies globally face the challenges of an ageing population and escalating care demands, the provision of appropriate equipment, including specialist seating, becomes crucial. There are undeniably significant challenges within the current landscape of health and social care settings, but opportunities for proactive solutions are available and these challenges do not have to define service provision.

Health and social care providers continually grapple with a myriad of challenges in delivering effective care. Among these, limited resources and high demand stand out, particularly in the provision of specialist equipment. As the number of older persons and individuals with chronic disabilities increases, so does the necessity for seating solutions that can adequately support their complex needs. The strain on resources is compounded

by economic pressures and budget constraints many organisations face, making it difficult to allocate funds for what are often wrongly perceived as non-essential items. Moreover, the diversity of individual needs calls for bespoke seating solutions, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Unique physical requirements demand customised solutions that can accommodate various conditions such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, or rehabilitation needs. This requirement for customisation presents another layer of complexity in resource allocation and inventory management for providers.

The demand for specialist seating is on an upward trajectory, fuelled by a growing awareness of its benefits among professionals and individuals alike, and support is available to implement it. This increased awareness is closely tied to the shift towards preventative care - an effort to mitigate health issues before they escalate into more severe conditions requiring intensive and costly interventions. Specialist seating plays a pivotal role in this proactive approach by providing the necessary support to prevent pressure ulcers, improve posture, and enhance overall comfort and function.

In response to these challenges and the clear demand for effective postural care in sitting, CareFlex positions itself as a key player in the market. With a robust portfolio of innovative seating solutions, CareFlex addresses the nuanced needs of diverse client groups. Our products are designed not only to meet the high standards of comfort and functionality required but also to integrate seamlessly into the care protocols of hospitals, care homes, and other health and social care facilities.

CareFlex's commitment to enhancing care extends beyond mere product offerings. We provide comprehensive support that includes training for health and social care staff on the optimal use of our seating solutions, ongoing maintenance, and consultation services to ensure that our products continually meet the evolving needs of individuals and service providers. By doing so, CareFlex strengthens its role as a supportive partner in the industry, dedicated to improving service efficiency and individual outcomes through tailored seating solutions.

Specialist seating plays a critical role in modern care provision against a backdrop of demographic shifts and increasing expectations. With challenges such as resource limitations and the need for bespoke solutions, CareFlex emerges as a vital ally to health and social care providers, offering products and services that not only meet but anticipate the demands of the market, thereby enhancing the quality and efficiency of care delivered.







Section 3: Service Provision

Investing in specialist seating solutions can enhance the operational efficiency of health and social care services with tangible benefits, including improving caseload management, reducing staff workload, fostering safer working environments, and reducing hospital stay durations, enhancing overall service delivery.

3.1 Improved Caseload Management

By ensuring the 'right first time' proactive approach through effective prevention strategies, specialist seating aids in lowering intervention complexities and reducing re-referral rates. This optimisation of caseloads and waiting lists not only improves service efficiency but also enhances service user satisfaction.

3.2 Staff Workload Reduction

Specialist seating significantly reduces the workload on health and social care staff. By minimising the need for manual repositioning and assisting with transfers, these solutions decrease caregiving time, allowing staff to focus on other critical aspects of care. Resource needs, such as specialist equipment, also become simplified.

3.3 Safer Working Practices

Implementing specialist seating solutions contributes to a safer work environment by alleviating musculoskeletal issues and reducing physical strain on staff involved in manual handling tasks. This will reduce injury rates, prevent work-related harm, and promote a healthier workplace.

3.4 Shorter Hospital Stays

Enhanced postural care facilitated by specialist seating can significantly reduce hospital stay durations for patients. The correlation between improved seating provision and faster recovery times can lead to increased bed turnover rates, thus directly impacting facility capacity and resource allocation.

Each of these points underlines the critical role of specialist seating in enhancing the operational efficiency of health and social care services, not only for individuals but also for the staff and the overall system.



Section 4: The Human Impact

The lack of consideration towards optimum postural care can lead to body shape distortion, with severe and life-threatening consequences.[1] Not providing effective postural care in sitting is detrimental to quality of life – this is the human cost.

The impact of specialist seating on individuals' quality of life is profound. By offering enhanced comfort, support, and stability, seating solutions contribute significantly to individual users' overall well-being. Quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates improvements in daily functioning, reduced pain, enhanced safety, and increased engagement in social and recreational activities.[2]

4.1 Comfort

The challenges experienced by individuals with postural needs can make it difficult for them to sit comfortably. Individuals with complex disabilities can present with abnormal muscle tone and involuntary movements, which are associated with painful spasms and instability. Comfort is equally important for individuals who experience a more sedentary lifestyle, as spending prolonged periods in a seated position can result in stiffness and chronic pain.[3]

Specialist seating that promotes comfort and feelings of safety can enhance an individual's daily life and increase their tolerance of the desired seated position and compliance with equipment. If an individual is not comfortable then they may not use the chair regardless of the clinical benefits.[4] Consistency of use is crucial for achieving outcomes and thus reducing the risk of secondary complications.

The musculoskeletal system endures much of the strain from poor postural habits. Chronic misalignment places uneven stress on bones, joints, and muscles, leading to decreased mobility, inactivity, and an increased risk of injury. Furthermore, it can exacerbate conditions like osteoarthritis and low back pain. Individuals may present with significant pain and discomfort without adequate support, especially those who present with pain related to spasticity. Functional movement is important in protecting the body structure and reducing the risk of injury; movement is important for blood flow and activation and lengthening of muscles. Prolonged sitting can result in soft tissue shortening, and even bony changes, with the development of contractures and deformities.

4.2 Physiological Function

The alignment of posture is far more than a structural or aesthetic concern. It is a foundational aspect of physiological health, influencing various body systems. The inability to sit upright can cause a decline in overall health, primarily reflecting altered physiological function.[5] One of the most significant impacts of postural alignment is on the respiratory system. An upright, aligned posture with an open shoulder girdle facilitates optimal lung capacity and oxygen exchange. In contrast, a slumped posture, as seen with trunk leaning and an increased kyphosis, compresses the thoracic cavity, limiting rib expansion and diaphragmatic movement, and reducing oxygen intake.[6] Over time, this can lead to acute respiratory distress, infection, chronic respiratory conditions, and decreased energy levels due to insufficient oxygenation.

An appropriate seating system can provide the optimum position for respiratory and circulatory function.[7] A protective upright sitting position can facilitate a controlled and coordinated swallowing pattern[8-10] and improve components of eating and drinking behaviour by maintaining good head alignment[11] and allows gravity to help food move easily through the digestive tract. Unsupported postures can increase the risk of aspiration or choking[12] as the swallow is difficult to initiate; the person's airway may not be protected, leading to food and fluid entering the lungs.

Appropriate postural care also plays a crucial role in circulatory health. Efficient blood flow requires unobstructed paths through which blood can travel to and from the heart. Misalignment, particularly in the spine and pelvis, can constrict blood vessels, leading to compromised circulation.[13] The heart must also work harder to circulate oxygenated blood throughout the body. This can result in varicose veins, peripheral neuropathy, and even cognitive impairments as brain perfusion is affected.

The positioning of our body significantly affects the digestive organs too. Good positioning helps support digestion, reducing the risk of digestive tract issues.[14] Destructive postures, especially while seated, can compress abdominal organs, hindering the natural process of digestion. This compression can lead to gastrointestinal discomfort, reflux, constipation, and inefficient nutrient absorption.

4.3 Function and Independence

Independence is crucial for an individual's well-being and is a critical factor in living a fulfilling life. Functional movement is necessary to participate in the activities important to us; it allows us to access our environment and engage with the world around us. Posture underpins our ability to function[15] and provides the foundation for maintaining our centre of gravity within the base of support. Freedom of movement is achieved through effective stabilisation of the pelvis and trunk[16] as the upper limbs are removed from their load-bearing role; proximal stability is a requirement for distal control. An individual unable to maintain sitting balance may naturally seek to provide that stability through their upper limbs, resulting in the hands being unavailable to engage in task performance. A supportive sitting posture can also be effective in inhibiting abnormal movement patterns[17] thus encouraging normal functional movement.

4.4 Engagement

Therapeutic strategies that address postural alignment, such as seating solutions, can have far-reaching benefits beyond physical health. The effects of posture extend into neurological and subsequent psychological health too. An inability to sit out can result in individuals becoming confined to their bed with limited opportunities for socialising. Destructive postures can restrict individuals from completing psychological and psychosocial functions reducing their social interaction, self-worth, and quality of life. Nerve compression and tension from poor alignment can lead to pain, weakness, headaches, decreased concentration, and fatigue. Psychologically, posture influences perception and mood[18], with slouched postures being linked to lower self-esteem and higher rates of depression. Loneliness and isolation are twice as harmful as obesity to physical and mental health.[19] Those aged 80 and over are twice as likely to report feelings of loneliness, and these feelings of loneliness have a strong relationship with low personal well-being ratings.[20]

A stable posture can encourage participation in social activities at home, school or work, and as part of the community.[21] Head control is essential for orientation, socialisation and the development of communication skills.[22] An upright sitting position can offer a better line of vision for interaction and provide an increased ability to achieve cognitive tasks8, all precursors to improved learning and participation.

4.5 Energy Management

Energy management is a critical part of promoting both comfort, function, and engagement. Fatigue can affect all aspects of an individual's life and can significantly restrict their ability to engage in daily living, as well as having a negative impact psychologically and socially.[23] An unsupported posture can cause fatigue by making inefficient use of the body structure. Gravitational forces can also make sitting effortful for those who present with muscle weakness and abnormal muscle tone. Fatigue, if unmanaged, can be associated with significant postural challenges, including kyphoscoliosis, posterior pelvic tilt, and contractures.

Early implementation of fatigue management strategies into daily life is critical and could reduce the impact and the probability of fatigue becoming chronic.[24] The appropriate use of specialist seating can encourage energy conservation, making it easier for individuals to live a meaningful life. Specialist seating systems allow users to be more involved in activities of daily living, including interaction and engagement, due to the opportunity to rest and recuperate, resulting in more energy throughout the day. The ability to stay active can not only improve an individual's health but also their cognition, confidence, and mood.[25]

4.6 Pressure Care

Posture and pressure are inextricably linked; body posture and positioning have a direct influence on the pressure going through specific body sites.[26] Even in the gold standard sitting position, body weight is distributed as follows:[27]

- Through buttocks and thighs: 75%
- Through the feet: 19%
- Through the arms of the chair: 2%
- Through the back: 4%

The body can only withstand high interface pressures for a short period of time, and when loading of tissues is unequal, and/or pressure isn't regularly relieved, pressure ulcers can occur.[28] There are also a number of contributing or confounding factors, including pressure, shear forces, friction and moisture, associated with pressure ulcers. Everyone is potentially at risk of developing a pressure injury.[29] The impact is profound, with individuals being affected physically, psychologically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and financially.[30] Pressure injuries affect overall well-being and can be both painful and debilitating.[31] Alarmingly, pressure injuries in older persons are associated with a fivefold increase in mortality.[32] Their development can also result in longer lengths of stay in hospitals; adult patients who developed pressure injuries had an extended stay of over 4 days, which can have a major impact on their health outcomes.[33]

A key intervention of pressure care is pressure redistribution; regular repositioning is critical for those deemed at risk of developing a pressure injury as it is believed to

be one of the most effective methods for preventing skin damage.[34] The opportunity to sit out can offer a much-needed change of position to encourage blood flow and redistribute pressure. Specialist seating systems aim to reduce the risk of pressure injuries by distributing the user's body weight evenly throughout the chair over the maximum surface area with posture supported as aligned and symmetrical as possible. Appropriate management or, better still, prevention of pressure injuries can improve an individual's outcomes and quality of life whilst also reducing the costs to health and social care services benefiting the wider community.

4.7 Mobility and Falls Management

Generalised weakness from immobility and deconditioning or instability and incoordination from a specific condition can increase the risk of falls. Reduced postural control and involuntary movements can also result in sliding in the chair. Transfers into and out of the chair and staying secure within the chair itself become key factors in postural care. A fall can be devastating; the human cost includes distress, loss of confidence, pain, injury, and increased morbidity and mortality. Falls can become recurrent and result in trauma, including head injuries, hip fractures, and open wounds. Short and long-term outcomes for individuals are generally poor following a hip fracture, with increased one-year mortality of between 18% and 33% and negative effects on participation in activities of daily living.[35]

Specialist seating aims to aid stability and security within the chair by supporting the pelvis in all planes of movement. Chair functions can also ensure safe transfers and promote subsequent independence and mobility.



Section 5: Risk Mitigation

Specialist seating plays a critical role in mitigating health and social care risks. It is also prudent to consider the positive impact on those individuals who present with the most complex of needs. By outlining the potential for profound consequences, including premature death, this section builds a compelling case for the preventive approach offered by specialist seating. Legal liabilities and compliance with relevant legislation and guidelines are also discussed, reinforcing the importance of adopting these solutions to meet health and social care standards and avoid negative outcomes.

The Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities (CIPOLD) established a link between a failure to protect body shape and resultant premature death.[36] A key issue identified in the review was the relative inattention to predicting potential problems. It was recommended that integrated care boards (ICBs) should ensure they commission expert, preventative services, including proactive postural care support.

The Mazars Report stemmed from CIPOLD and once again found that people with learning disabilities were at particular risk from choking and aspiration due to dysphagia and needed more support to eat and drink safely.[37] Once again, this would require the use of effective and timely equipment to maintain an upright sitting position.

The intention of legislation, such as the Health and Social Care Act, the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act, and the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act, is to prevent people from receiving unsafe care and treatment and prevent avoidable harm or risk of harm.[38]

- Providers must assess the risks to people's health and safety during any care or treatment and make sure that staff have the qualifications, competence, skills, and experience to keep people safe.
- Providers must ensure that the premises and any equipment used is safe and where applicable, available in sufficient quantities to meet the demand.[39]
- Medicines must be supplied in sufficient quantities, managed safely, and administered appropriately to ensure people's safety.

NICE Guidelines recommend that care home providers address the specific needs of older people with social care needs and multiple long-term conditions by ensuring that people are physically comfortable and that the environment encourages social interaction and activity.[40] There is also a duty for care homes to meet care needs as laid out in the individual's care plans.[41]

Department of Health guidance on NHS-funded nursing care practice states that ICBs should make appropriate arrangements for individuals requiring bespoke equipment to meet specific assessed needs identified in their care plan.[42] A good practice statement by the EPUAP, NPIAP AND PPPIA international collaboration also states that a seating support surface that meets the individual's needs for pressure care by addressing their body size, posture, mobility, and lifestyle should be considered.[43] A true holistic approach.

Section 6: Return on Investment (ROI)

The return on investment (ROI) from specialist seating is significant and multifaceted, encompassing both direct financial returns and qualitative benefits that translate into cost savings and enhanced service provision over time. Investments in specialist seating solutions yield substantial returns through various channels, from initial costs to long-term savings, risk mitigation, and revenue opportunities. The initial investment in specialist seating and average costs over the chair lifespan is quickly offset by the direct cost savings it facilitates; there is a stark contrast in costs incurred with and without the use of specialist seating. This includes reduced expenditure on management should the risks of ineffective postural care not be identified or, worse, ignored.

The support and value added by CareFlex are key factors in realising these financial benefits.

6.1 Enhanced Home Care

By supporting postural care, specialist seating can delay or prevent the transition to residential and nursing care facilities. Seating solutions can significantly improve the ability of individuals to remain in their own homes by prioritising key seating objectives and reducing the risk of secondary complications. This leads to savings for local authorities and the NHS, as home care is generally less expensive than residential care. This saves money and aligns with the preferences of many individuals who wish to remain in their own homes. Providing family caregivers with appropriate seating solutions for their loved ones can also reduce caregiver strain and enable them to provide care at home for longer. CareFlex can assist by offering free, no-obligation assessments in the home setting to ensure the most suitable seating solutions are provided, further supporting individuals and their families.

6.2 Hospital Settings

Specialist seating solutions can aid in faster patient recovery and discharge, reducing bed blocking. Hospitals can reduce the length of stays and associated costs by minimising complications such as pressure ulcers and falls. This allows hospitals to admit more patients in a given period, thereby improving throughput and operational efficiency, which translates to better use of NHS resources and potential cost recovery through performance-based funding. These financial savings can be reallocated to other areas of care, indirectly generating more efficient use of available funds. CareFlex can support secondary care by trialling seating solutions on the ward and offering an express delivery service, ensuring timely and effective implementation of the necessary equipment to enhance patient outcomes and operational efficiency.

6.3 Care Homes

Risk mitigation is critical to the facilitation of more efficient working practices within care home settings to reduce the occurrence of secondary complications. Specialist seating also promotes safer manual handling, which is crucial for both the safety of residents and professional carers. This proactive management can ultimately reduce the complexity of residents' care plans, meaning less time is needed for 1:1 or even 2:1 care, freeing up staff to focus on other essential tasks. Carers can allocate their efforts more effectively with reduced time spent on managing seating-related issues within a safer working

environment. Increased efficiency and satisfaction lead to better retention rates and reduced costs related to staff turnover and training. Furthermore, CareFlex's expertise in stock management and equipment selection ensures that care homes can optimise their resources, reduce unnecessary expenditure, and improve overall operational efficiency. CareFlex can support care home service providers by understanding the intricacies of working practices and ensuring seating solutions are tailored to meet the specific needs of multi-user environments. This not only improves the quality of care provided to residents but also enhances the working conditions for carers. The combination of these factors leads to a more sustainable and effective care home operation, benefiting both staff and residents alike.

6.4 Equipment Stores

The recyclability of equipment is a principal factor in terms of cost savings. CareFlex provides comprehensive support for stock management and the refurbishing of chairs, significantly extending their lifespan. CareFlex's refurbishment program includes detailed assessments of used chairs, replacement of worn-out components, and updates to meet current safety and comfort standards. This process ensures that refurbished chairs function almost like new, providing high levels of comfort and support to users. The program also includes training for staff on how to maintain and service the chairs properly, further extending their usability and ensuring that they remain in excellent condition over time.

By managing stock effectively and implementing a robust refurbishment program, CareFlex enables health and social care providers to maximise their investment, achieve significant long-term savings, and maintain exacting standards of care. This comprehensive approach to seating provision not only enhances individual outcomes and operational efficiency but also delivers substantial financial benefits, making it a cost-effective solution for health and social care settings by reducing capital expenditure and contributing to sustainability efforts by minimising waste.

6.5 Revenue Generation

Investing in specialist seating offers significant long-term financial and operational benefits. It enhances hospital efficiency by reducing complications like pressure injuries, leading to shorter hospital stays and quicker patient turnover. This efficiency allows hospitals to manage their patient flow more effectively, reducing bed occupancy rates and enabling quicker turnover. Consequently, hospitals can admit and treat more patients without compromising the quality of care. In the community, specialist seating helps in managing individuals with postural care needs to lead fulfilling lives whilst reducing the economic accountability. With fewer individuals experiencing severe complications, health and social care providers can safely increase their caseload without escalating workloads to unsustainable levels. This capability is crucial for maximising resource utilisation and meeting the growing demand for health and social care services. The reduction in severe complications and improved individual outcomes also elevate service delivery and satisfaction rates, boosting the reputation of organisations. By preventing costly health issues and optimising resource use, specialist seating ensures the financial sustainability and operational viability of health and social care services.

Section 7: Cost Analysis of Specialist Seating Investment versus Non-Provision

Investing in specialist seating solutions presents a compelling case for long-term financial savings. While the initial costs are notable, they are quickly offset by significant reductions in health and social care expenses and improved individual outcomes. Below are detailed financial projections demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of specialist seating over a ten-year period. A comparative analysis is presented of the total cost of chair provision against typical scenarios where specialist seating has not been provided despite the situation warranting its application due to significant risk factors.

Specialist seating purchase (per unit average)	£3,000
Assessment	£0
Chair delivery and set-up	£95
Training for caregivers	£0
Review	£0
Annual maintenance (£50 x 10 years)	£500
Total cost of provision	**£3,595**

7.1.1 Pressure Injuries

Treating pressure damage costs the NHS more than £3.8 million every day.[44] Costs vary depending on the grade, from £1,064 for a grade 1 ulcer to £14,108 for a grade 4 ulcer.[45] Staggeringly, it has been found that should a grade 4 pressure ulcer develop it only has a 21% chance of healing fully.[46]

Cost Component	Amount (£)
Combined cost of seating provision over 10 years	£3,595
Estimated cost of treatment per pressure injury[46]	£8,720
Estimated total treatment cost if provision is not implemented (estimated incidence: 2 injuries over 10 years)	£17,440
Total savings through provision (£17,440 - £3,595)	**£13,845**

7.1.2 Frailty and Risk of Falls

Falls are the number one reason older people are taken to a hospital emergency department.[47] Around 1 in 3 adults over 65 and half of people over 80 will have at least one fall a year.[48] Annual costs to the NHS from falls among older people are estimated at £2.3 billion.[49] Hip fractures alone account for 1.8 million hospital bed days and £1.1 billion in hospital costs every year.[47]

Cost Component	Amount (£)
Combined cost of seating provision over 10 years	£3,595
Estimated cost of fall-related injury[50]	£2,600
Estimated total treatment cost if provision is not implemented (estimated frequency of falls: 10 falls over 10 years)	£26,000
Total savings through provision (£26,000 - £3,595)	**£22,405**

7.1.3 Intellectual Disability and the Risk of Hospital Admission

People with intellectual disabilities have a higher prevalence of health problems than the general population, and their health needs are often unrecognised and unmet.[51] Their risk factors are compounded by their postural challenges, primarily reflected through physiological dysfunction. Conditions that may be associated with intellectual disability, such as cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome or dementia, can all make eating, drinking and swallowing more difficult thereby increasing the risk of aspiration, and the subsequent risk of developing aspiration pneumonia.[52] Alarmingly, respiratory disease is one of the biggest causes of death for people with an intellectual disability; over 50% die before they are 65 years old.[53]

Cost Component	Amount (£)
Combined cost of seating provision over 10 years	£3,595
Average non-elective hospital admission cost[54]	£4,409
Estimated total treatment cost if provision is not implemented (estimated number of admissions: 5 over 10 years)	£22,045
Total savings through provision (£22,045 - £3,595)	**£18,450**

7.1.4 Body Distortion and Contractures

People most at risk of body shape distortion are those who are dependent on others to change position; they may also have additional movement difficulties, including hypertonicity. Failure to protect body shape can result in the development of contractures.[55] Contractures are costly to the individual and society; the estimated cost for inpatient treatment and surgery for a single contracture is £18,000.[56] Conservative approaches to preventing and managing contractures are needed; when used for corrective purposes, a specialist seating system can be used as an orthotic device.[57]

Cost Component	Amount (£)
Combined cost of seating provision over 10 years	£3,595
Average management cost for a single contracture[56]	£18,000
Estimated total treatment cost if provision is not implemented (estimated need for surgery: 2 over 10 years)	£36,000
Total savings through provision (£36,000 - £3,595)	**£32,405**

7.2 Case Studies

This section will consolidate the cost analysis through relatable case studies including ROI calculations. These financial projections underscore the significant long-term savings and health benefits of investing in specialist seating. Specialist seating solutions offer a prudent investment for health and social care providers by reducing the need for costly medical interventions and improving individual outcomes. The financial and qualitative benefits enhance the compelling case for the widespread adoption of these solutions, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and effective care systems.

7.2.1 Mrs. A – Older Person with Multiple Sclerosis

Mrs. A, a 68-year-old lady with multiple sclerosis, is at risk of falls and pressure injuries due to neurological impairments and reduced mobility. Specialist seating provision would offer appropriate falls management and pressure care as part of a comprehensive care plan, resulting in fewer falls and no pressure ulcers. The financial savings significantly outweigh the initial investment, demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of the intervention.

Specialist seating purchase (per unit average)	£3,000
Assessment	£0
Chair delivery and set-up	£95
Training for caregivers	£0
First year maintenance	£50
Annual maintenance (years 2 – 10)	£450
Total investment (over 10 years)	£3,595
Total savings (reduction in falls incidents and no reported pressure injuries)	£43,440
Net benefits (total savings – total investment)	£39,845
ROI = (£39,845 / £3,595) x 100	**1108%**

7.2.2 Mr. B – Younger Adult with Severe Cerebral Palsy

Mr. B, a 22-year-old individual with cerebral palsy, is at risk of hospital admission due to dysphagia and pressure injuries due to immobility and impaired circulation. Specialist seating provision would offer appropriate pressure care as part of a comprehensive care plan and reduce the risk of severe respiratory illness requiring hospital admission. The financial savings significantly outweigh investment costs, demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of the provision.

Specialist seating purchase (per unit average)	£3,000
Assessment	£0
Chair delivery and set-up	£95
Training for caregivers	£0
First year maintenance	£50
Annual maintenance (years 2 – 10)	£450
Total investment (over 10 years)	£3,595
Total savings (reduced non-elective hospital admissions and no pressure injuries)	£39,485
Net benefits (total savings – total investment)	£35,890
ROI = (£35,890 / £3,595) x 100	**998%**

The ROI calculations for both Mrs. A and Mr. B clearly demonstrate the substantial financial returns from investing in specialist seating solutions. With ROIs of 1108% and 998 %, respectively, the investment pays for itself and yields significant savings in health and social care costs. These figures illustrate the economic prudence of incorporating specialist seating into health and social care practices, leading to better financial sustainability and improved patient outcomes.

Section 8: How Can CareFlex Help?

CareFlex is dedicated to providing specialist seating solutions that combine care, compassion, and innovation. The company has a continuous improvement ethos. We regularly review all our systems and processes for risk, robustness, and performance to ensure we can offer the highest level of service.

8.1 Industry Experience

Since 1995 CareFlex has been collaborating with Health & Social Care Professionals. With a combined experience of over 150 years in postural care, our Sales and Clinical team brings unparalleled expertise to help our customers achieve the best possible outcomes. This extensive knowledge allows us to thoroughly understand the complexities of postural management and tailor our solutions to meet the unique needs of each individual. Our seasoned professionals are adept at conducting precise assessments, recommending the most effective specialist seating, and providing ongoing support to ensure optimal comfort and functionality. By leveraging our deep experience, we are committed to enhancing the quality of life for our customers through superior postural care solutions.

Additionally, our Product Development and Manufacturing teams boast a combined experience of over 200 years, bringing a wealth of expertise and innovation to the creation of our specialist seating solutions. This extensive background enables us to design, engineer, and produce high-quality, reliable products that meet the diverse needs of our customers. Our experienced team meticulously oversees every stage of the process, from initial concept and design to final production and quality inspection, ensuring that each piece of equipment is crafted to the highest standards. Leveraging our deep industry knowledge and commitment to excellence, we continually innovate to provide cutting-edge solutions that enhance the comfort, functionality, and overall wellbeing of our users.

8.2 Customer Support

- We pride ourselves on going beyond the call of duty for our customers.
- As long-standing members of the BHTA, we abide by an ethical Code of Practice. When dealing with CareFlex, we promise that your interactions with us will be honest and ethical, and we will put the customer's needs first.
- We are also an Approved Code business (Trading Standards). This gives you extra peace of mind by guaranteeing exceptional customer service, no 'hard-sell' tactics, and the best after-sales service.
- Our Customer Charter comprises four pillars and serves as a daily reminder to always do our best: people first, expert knowledge, professionalism, and resolution.

8.3 British Manufacturing

- CareFlex is part of The CliniMed Group which comprises eight companies, all providing specialist products and services to the healthcare market. Privately owned, the CliniMed Group was established in 1982; today, it employs over 750 people and serves healthcare markets worldwide. Our factory and offices are based in the Southwest of England, in Devon.
- All our products are designed and manufactured in the UK, and over 90% of our

materials are sourced from within the UK.

- We are proud to be a British manufacturer that has deployed a strategy for growth and has invested in both our people and facilities, with the ultimate aim of enhancing the lives of our customers.
- We have an established strategy for managing our supply chain and ensuring we keep continuity of supply. We have enviable long-standing relationships with many of our suppliers, which have been built on trust and ethical business practices. As our products are essential for daily living, we have processes in place to guarantee security and mitigate risk within our supply chain. A primary strategy we employ is dual sourcing, meaning that we can obtain supply from more than one supplier for many of our components whilst ensuring we remain competitive.
- Even during the turbulent and challenging times presented by Brexit, the COVID pandemic, and, more recently, the war in Ukraine, we have maintained the supply of our core products due to having an agile, resilient, and robust strategy in place for managing our supply chain.
- Our on-site design team is free to produce innovative customised solutions, whether improving a feature on an existing chair or designing a completely new product. All our products are tested and trialled to ensure they deliver high-quality and proven clinical benefits for end users.

8.4 Regulatory and Quality Standards

- CareFlex products are registered as Class 1 non-sterile medical devices and are registered with the MHRA in Great Britain and the HPRA in Ireland.
- Our European Authorised Representative (EC Rep) is European Healthcare & Device Solutions (Ireland) Ltd, as detailed in our product documentation and on our product labels.
- Comprehensive technical files are held for each product, including results of risk/benefit assessments, clinical and biological evaluation reports, and assessment of the product against GSPR.
- Full post-market surveillance, corrective action and vigilance procedures are in place, which are regularly independently audited.
- Where a UKCA or CE mark is placed on a medical device, it indicates that the product conforms to all requirements as specified in the appropriate regulations, is fit for its intended purpose, and meets all safety criteria.
- ISO9001 is the world's most recognised quality management system standard, established by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). The standard has been adopted by over 1 million organisations worldwide and is used by businesses to continually monitor, manage, and improve the quality of products and services, ensuring customer, statutory, and regulatory requirements are met. CareFlex first achieved accreditation to ISO9001:2008 in 2014 and then progressed to ISO9001:2015 in 2017.
- Independent and rigorous audits are undertaken by the highly regarded British Standards Institution (BSI) twice a year; to assess not only our compliance with the standard but also to ensure we demonstrate a continuous improvement mindset in all that we do.
- Investors in People is a standard for people management, offering accreditation to organisations that adhere to the Investors in People Standard. CareFlex has now achieved accreditation to the Gold level, which only 17% of companies attain.

8.5 Sustainability

- We make every effort to ensure that our processes, from design to sourcing and supply chain through to product distribution and waste disposal, support our commitment to protecting our environment.
- Wherever possible, we aim to prevent the creation of waste. One area that we have succeeded in this is through our investment in reusable stillages that are used to transport our components from our supply partners to our factory in Devon and back again. This approach reduces our usage of single-use packaging, including the reduction and, in some cases, elimination of cardboard boxes and polythene bags.
- We work closely with our supply chain partners to look for opportunities to introduce more environmental ways of working, including reviewing opportunities to introduce increasingly sustainable materials and components to our products.
- Our chosen waste and recycling partners support our environmental efforts by aiming to recycle as much of our waste as possible, with some elements going to incineration to create energy.

8.6 Reliability

- CareFlex chairs are built by a team with a strong sense of responsibility to provide well-made chairs that stand the test of time.
- They are engineered and manufactured to exacting standards, which is why we are proud to offer a market-leading Lifetime Warranty* on the frames of all our specialist chairs.
- CareFlex chairs are supplied with a Lifetime Warranty* on the steel frame and a one-year warranty on the upholstery and all other parts.
- All parts and/or functions proven to be faulty because of manufacture or materials failure, which has occurred despite the chair being used as intended, will be repaired and/or replaced at no charge during the warranty period.
- Our chairs have been assembled using individual components, which can be serviced or replaced separately if necessary. Where possible, work can be completed by trained Technicians without returning the chair to our factory.
- Most of our accessories can be retrofitted to older chairs, and parts such as cushions and covers can be swapped to suit different user shapes or provide support as required.



**This is for chairs manufactured after the 1st of October 2017. AlphaCare is provided with a two-year warranty. The HydroCare is excluded.*

8.7 Customer Satisfaction

As part of our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement, we are excited to share our Feefo reviews, which encompass both service and product feedback. Feefo, a leading trusted customer review platform, provides authentic and verified reviews, ensuring that the feedback we present is credible and insightful.

Over the past year, our products and services have been rated as EXCEPTIONAL by our valued customers. An impressive 89% of our product ratings have been 5 stars, highlighting the high level of satisfaction and confidence our customers have in the quality and effectiveness of our products. The additional 11% rated our products 4 stars, indicating strong overall approval.

Our service ratings are equally commendable, with 87.5% of reviews awarding us 5 stars. This reflects our unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional customer service. The additional 8.3% of four-star ratings further reinforce our dedication to meeting and exceeding customer expectations.

These exceptional ratings demonstrate our relentless pursuit of excellence in both our products and customer service. We are deeply grateful for the trust our customers place in us and remain committed to providing the highest quality offerings and support. Sharing these Feefo* reviews also gives new customers confidence in choosing us as their trusted partner.

8.7.1 Product Reviews

Our product reviews offer valuable insights into the performance, quality, and impact of our specialist seating solutions. These reviews, written by customers including Health & Social Care Professionals who have used our products in real-world settings, provide potential customers with an honest assessment of how our solutions meet their needs and enhance their daily operations. Here is a selection of the most recent reviews:

"The gentleman that this chair was provided for is doing really well in the new chair. He positioning is better and the carers are able to safely transfer and are also pleased with the chair." SmartSeat Pro II date of purchase: 19/03/2024

"Really pleased with the chair and its adjustability to meet the patients needs." SmartSeatPro II date of purchase: 14/03/2024

"My client's posture is supported well and she is very comfortable in her new armchair." MultiAdjust date of purchase: 12/03/2024

"I love this chair. Its so easy to adjust and the quality of the materials are just superb. The variety of different backrests and add on's ensures I can tailor the chair specifically to meet my clients needs. Careflex is always my first choice, these chairs have changed my clients lives." MultiAdjust date of purchase: 05/02/2024

"Expert advice and guidance, perfectly tailored to my clients needs." Date of purchase: 30/01/2024

"Simple process, all issues resolved with accessories, rather than having to replace the whole chair." Accessories date of purchase: 18/12/2023

**All Feefo scores were true and correct as of the 5th of August 2024.*

8.7.2 Service Reviews

Our service reviews reflect the experiences of our customers with our support team, order processes, and overall customer service interactions. These reviews highlight our dedication to delivering exceptional service and ensuring customer satisfaction at every touchpoint. Here is a selection of the most recent reviews:

"Excellent staff - high level of expertise and very friendly and supportive." Date of purchase: 19/03/2024

"Rep was very skilled and comfortable interacting with client and provided therapist with excellent support to chose the correct seating." Date of purchase: 12/03/2024

"The service is always excellent. From the first contact with the chair assessors, right through to the customer service team. Nothing is too much trouble." Date of purchase: 05/02/2024

"Considerate caring assessment well carried out." Date of purchase: 10/01/2024

"Great customer care and support. Very knowledgeable through assessment and never a sales person as the customer comes first. Excellent joint working with other Health Care Professionals . Great communication skills." Date of purchase: 04/01/2024

"Professionalism and clinical competence in prescriptive seating assessment is excellent. Bespoke equipment always meeting the patient's needs when provided. Amazing feedback being received from patients, care teams and family!" Date of purchase: 30/11/2023

8.7.3 Future Customers

Sharing these Feefo reviews allows us to showcase the positive experiences of our current customers, reinforcing the trust and reliability that new customers can expect from our company.

With decades of experience, comprehensive customer support, and a commitment to British manufacturing quality, CareFlex stands ready to assist health and social care providers as a trusted partner in enhancing personalised care.



Section 9: CareFlex Outcomes

In this section, we present compelling real-world examples of how CareFlex has partnered with health and social care providers to deliver significant improvements in quality of life for individuals, while simultaneously addressing financial challenges faced by these organisations. These case studies highlight the tangible benefits of specialist seating solutions, highlighting how strategic investments in CareFlex products have led to enhanced individual outcomes, reduced service costs, and optimised operational efficiency. Through these success stories, we aim to illustrate the dual impact of our innovative seating solutions on both individual well-being and the economic sustainability of health and social care services.

9.1 The Chair

CareFlex chairs are designed with durability and longevity in mind, ensuring they remain effective and reliable even after years of use. This section highlights the exceptional build quality and resilience of our seating solutions by showcasing CareFlex chairs that have been in continuous use for over a decade. These chairs have required minimal updates*, whether to accommodate the changing needs of individuals, repurposing for different users, or periodic refreshes to maintain their effectiveness. This testament to durability not only demonstrates the robust construction and superior materials used in CareFlex chairs but also underscores the long-term value and cost-effectiveness they offer to health and social care providers and users alike.

9.1.1

2011	**HydroTilt Chair**	£1,180.00
	Flat Back	-
	Soft Handgrips	-
	Angle Adjustable Footplate	£180.00
	Footplate Pad	£65.00
	Pelvic Strap	£55.00
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£70.00
	Cost of chair and accessories	**£1,550.00**
2024	Tilt Cable	£26.00
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£104.00
	Flat Back	£174.00
	Seat Cushion	£266.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£570.00**
Total lifetime cost of the chair		**£2,120.00**



9.1.2

2012	**HydroFlex Chair**	£2,550.00
	Pro Control	£630.00
	Contoured Back	£105.00
	Footplate	£90.00
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£70.00
	Cost of chair and accessories	**£3,445.00**
2021	Main Charger	£52.00
	UK Plug Attachment	£6.25
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£58.25**
2022	Padded Pelvic Belt	£132.00
	Soft Shallow Headrest	£99.00
	Tailored Seating Solution Stepped Footplate	£193.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£424.00**
Total lifetime cost of the chair		**£3,927.25**

9.1.3

2013	**SmartSeat Chair**	£2,275.00
	Contoured Back	£70.00
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£70.00
	Cost of chair and accessories	**£2,415.00**
2015	Adjustable Laterals	£310.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£310.00**
2016	Replacement Flat Back	£70.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£70.00**
2017	Footplate Pad	£75.00
	Padded Pelvic Belt	£110.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£185.00**
2018	Actuator Leg Rest	£206.00
	Motorised Bracket for Tilt-in-Space	£7.50
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£213.50**
2024	Main Charger	£58.00
	UK Plug Attachment	£7.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£65.00**
Total lifetime cost of the chair		**£3,258.50**



9.1.4

2013	**HydroTilt Chair**	£1,800.00
	Flat Back	-
	Soft Handgrips	-
	Padded Footplate	£120.00
	Padded Pelvic Belt	£110.00
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£70.00
	Cost of chair and accessories	**£2,100.00**
2017	Contoured Backrest	£155.00
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£80.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£235.00**
2019	Replacement Arms (Seat Width Adjustment)	£280.00
	Wooden Handgrips	£67.00
	Softex Handgrip	£21.60
	Soft Profiled Headrest	£88.00
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£456.60**
2020	Side Cover	£560.00
	Leg Rest Cover	£120.00
	Lever-Tilt Release	£22.50
	Tilt Cable	£22.50
	Cost of parts and accessories	**£725.00**
Total lifetime cost of the chair		**£3,516.60**

**Please note that when comparing the initial purchase price and subsequent updates of CareFlex chairs to today's prices, it is important to consider the impact of inflation and other economic factors over time. Price changes may have occurred due to fluctuations in material costs, manufacturing expenses, and other related factors. Delivery charges and servicing have also not been included. While our commitment to quality and durability remains steadfast, these external variables can influence the current pricing of our products and services.*

9.2 The Individual

The following case studies highlight the profound impact of specialised postural care in sitting for individuals with complex needs. Proper postural care is essential for improving comfort, well-being, and overall quality of life. For individuals like Duncan and Jayne, who face significant physical and cognitive challenges, tailored seating solutions provide critical support. These solutions address their specific postural issues and enhance their ability to interact socially, reduce the risk of injury, and manage fatigue. Through innovative seating systems like CareFlex's AlphaCare and MultiAdjust, these individuals experience increased safety, better health outcomes, and a more engaging and fulfilling daily life.

9.2.1 Duncan, a 61-year-old football enthusiast and avid Rangers supporter, resides in a hospital due to Alzheimer's disease and a history of seizures, requiring 24-hour care. He struggles with severe postural instability, significant movements, limited head and trunk control, and fatigue. Duncan is non-verbal, relies on his family for advocacy, and needs support for all daily activities. He has swallowing difficulties and hypersalivation, necessitating a modified diet.

Historically, Duncan's seating needs were unmet, leading to tipping and damage to chairs. CareFlex introduced the AlphaCare chair to address his challenges, aiming to improve his stability and quality of life. Key features of the AlphaCare chair include:

- Linked seat and back recline for postural stability.
- Pelvic stabilisation to prevent dangerous repositioning.
- A groin harness for improved stability.
- Contoured back support to maintain a midline position.
- Upright head support for safe eating and drinking.
- Block leg rest and sliding padded foot plate for limb support and pressure distribution.
- Integrated pressure management with WaterCell Technology.

The AlphaCare chair significantly enhanced Duncan's comfort and safety, reducing his severe movements and risk of injury. Feedback from Duncan, his caregivers, and the clinical team highlighted the chair's effectiveness.

A testimonial from Duncan's Nurse: "Due to the level of Duncan's stress and distress every chair he previously had ended up torn and damaged within weeks. Duncan also tipped the chairs over which was a huge safety risk and meant he had to be nursed on constant 1:1 observations. The AlphaCare chair has provided much more support which has prevented it from tipping over and Duncan is able to be nursed on general observations which is less restrictive. The material is much more robust as well and less likely to be torn."

The extended two-year trial allowed for continuous improvement and demonstrated CareFlex's commitment to Duncan's well-being, highlighting the chair's profound impact on his quality of life. The holistic approach to specialist seating emphasises finding an individual's optimal posture for a fuller life.

9.2.2 CareFlex recently introduced Jayne, a 55-year-old care home resident, to the MultiAdjust specialist seating system to improve her quality of life. Jayne, who enjoys watching television and socialising with friends, has epilepsy and a subdural hematoma managed via craniotomy. She presents with general weakness, reduced postural control, pelvic instability, thoracic kyphosis, shoulder protraction, and foot drop. Non-ambulant and fully hoisted for transfers, Jayne previously used her wheelchair for all seated activities, leading to fatigue and limited social interaction.

The assessment revealed Jayne needed a seating system that promoted pelvic stability, supported her upper limbs, and allowed for relaxation to conserve energy. The MultiAdjust provided:

- Adjustable seat settings to customise seat depth and width.
- Tilt-in-Space with a padded pelvic belt to promote postural stability and correct kyphotic posture.
- Reflexion foam contoured back support to encourage trunk alignment.
- Back Angle Recline and elevating leg rest to manage weakness and allow rest periods.
- Height adjustable arm rests to support the upper limbs, opening the shoulder girdle.
- Angle adjustable footplate to correct ankle positioning for support and pressure distribution.
- Hoist compatibility to ensure safe and easy transfers.

Care home staff reported that Jayne enjoyed sitting in the MultiAdjust chair daily, interacted more with residents, and felt generally more content. Jayne expressed being "very happy" with the chair, indicating increased comfort and ability to relax.

The trial demonstrated the importance of prioritising user comfort in seating systems. Seeing Jayne smile and relax highlighted the positive impact of the MultiAdjust chair on her daily life. CareFlex looks forward to continuing to support Jayne's well-being.

9.3 The Health & Social Care Professional

Since new sale recording protocols were introduced in 2019, 2,070 Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists have placed at least one order directly with us. This reflects the broad appeal and initial trust our products and services have garnered in the health and social care community.

Of the 2,070 therapists who have made at least one purchase, 1,000 have placed two or more orders. This indicates that approximately 48.3% of our customers have returned for subsequent purchases. The repeat engagement rate of nearly 50% strongly indicates customer satisfaction and loyalty. It suggests that once professionals experience our offerings, a significant portion of them find enough value to come back for more.

From the above data, we can deduce that nearly half of our engaged customer base - those who have made at least one order - go on to place additional orders. This pattern of behaviour highlights a healthy level of ongoing engagement. The high repeat engagement rate is encouraging for future customers for several reasons:

- Customer happiness: The willingness of customers to return indicates that they are satisfied with their initial purchase and trust what CareFlex provides. It signifies a healthy and robust relationship with our customers, highlighting their happiness with the quality and reliability of our products and services.
- Brand loyalty: A repeat engagement rate of approximately 48.3% indicates strong brand loyalty. Loyal customers are more likely to make additional purchases and recommend our offerings to their peers, further expanding our customer base through word-of-mouth.
- Validation of quality: The high level of repeat orders from current customers underscores the quality and effectiveness of our offerings. New customers can trust that they are choosing a provider that is highly regarded by their peers.
- Sustained engagement: Professionals' willingness to return for subsequent orders

indicates that our products consistently meet their needs, fostering a sense of trust and reliability.
- Enhanced customer experience: The positive feedback and ongoing engagement from current customers demonstrate that our customer service and support systems are highly effective, ensuring a smooth and satisfactory purchasing experience.

By highlighting the high levels of satisfaction and repeat engagement among current customers, future customers can feel confident in choosing our products, knowing they are backed by a proven track record of quality and customer satisfaction. It also speaks volumes about our commitment to excellence; we are proud to provide products and services that professionals trust and rely on. All data was true and correct as of the 5th of August 2024.

9.4 The Organisation

In a recent business case, the South Wales & West CareFlex Seating Assessor collaborated with Devon Independent Living Centre (ILC) to optimise the management of their equipment store. This partnership focused on improving stock management practices and refurbishing existing chairs, resulting in significant cost savings.

9.4.1 Background

Devon ILC, which provides essential mobility and seating solutions to the community, faced challenges with managing its equipment inventory. Inefficient stock management and a lack of a systematic refurbishment programme led to increased costs and underutilisation of available resources.

9.4.2 Initiative

The local Seating Assessor worked closely with Devon ILC to implement a comprehensive stock management strategy. Key actions included:

- Conducting a thorough inventory audit to identify and categorise all seating equipment to understand the current inventory state.
- Developing a refurbishment programme to restore and reuse previously deemed unusable chairs, thereby extending their life and reducing waste.
- Establishing streamlined processes for efficient tracking of equipment usage, maintenance, and rotation to ensure that all resources were optimally utilised.
- Training staff on best practices for inventory management and equipment upkeep to maintain the improvements and ensure long-term success.

9.4.3 Outcomes

The collaboration yielded substantial financial benefits and operational improvements. In 2023, Devon ILC achieved savings of £250,981 due to enhanced stock management and the successful refurbishment of chairs. The key outcomes included:

- Cost savings: The refurbishment programme reduced the need to purchase new equipment, significantly lowering capital expenditure.
- Resource optimisation: Improved inventory tracking ensured that all available equipment was effectively utilised, reducing waste and redundancy.

- Extended equipment lifespan: Regular maintenance and refurbishment extended the usable life of existing chairs, providing high-quality solutions without the expense of new purchases.
- Enhanced service delivery: Efficient stock management enabled Devon ILC to meet the community's needs more promptly and reliably, improving service user satisfaction.

9.4.4 Conclusion and Application

The strategic approach taken by Devon ILC in managing stock and refurbishing specialist seating highlights a pathway to substantial cost savings and improved service delivery for health and social care providers. This proactive management model not only optimises resources but also ensures a high standard of support for individuals reliant on specialist seating solutions.

By implementing similar strategies, other organisations can achieve significant financial and operational gains, enhancing their capacity to deliver quality care to service users. CareFlex stands ready to assist equipment providers aiming to replicate these achievements, offering a comprehensive range of bespoke support services. This includes conducting in-depth inventory assessments to identify refurbishment opportunities, designing tailored refurbishment programmes that extend the life of existing seating, and providing training on best practices in equipment management and maintenance.

CareFlex's support empowers organisations to streamline their processes, making the best use of available resources, cutting unnecessary expenditure, and ultimately improving the efficiency and impact of their service delivery. This approach ensures that valuable equipment reaches those in need more promptly and reliably, strengthening the provider's ability to meet community demands effectively.

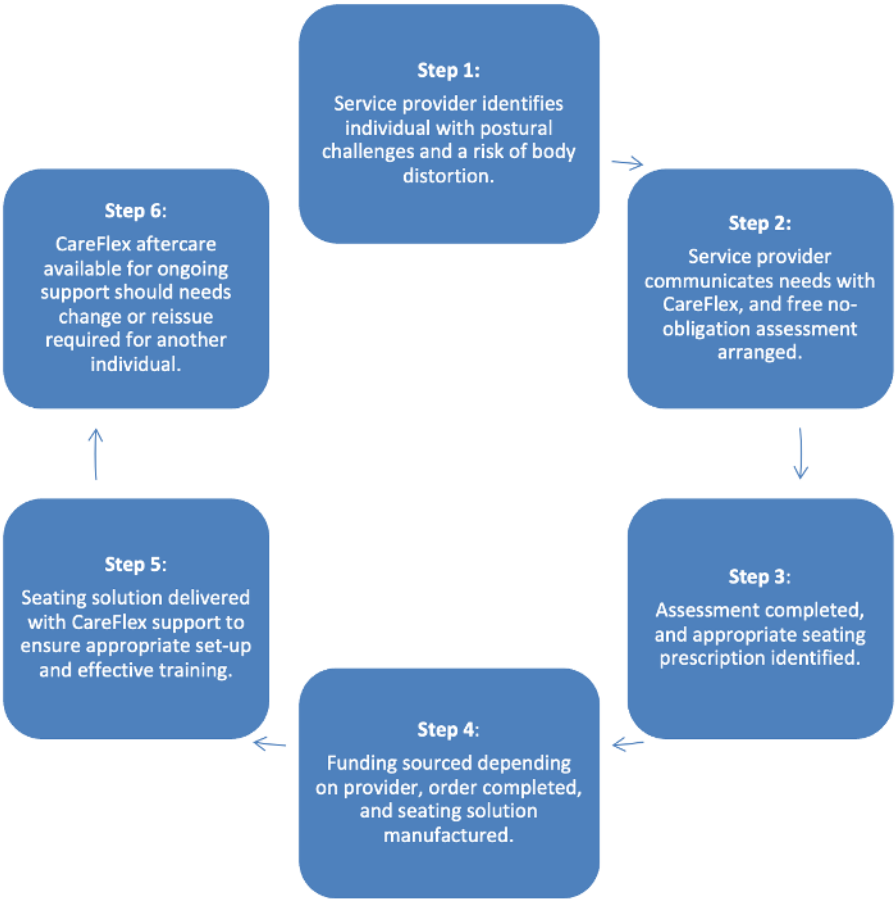
Through CareFlex's expertise, equipment stores can adopt sustainable practices that not only generate significant cost savings but also enhance the quality of service and care. Such targeted initiatives in stock management and refurbishment underline the profound, measurable benefits that can be achieved in the health and social care sector when organisations invest in optimising their equipment management strategies. By choosing CareFlex as a partner, providers can rest assured of a collaborative, results-driven approach that supports long-term operational success and delivers tangible improvements for their service users.



Section 10: Recommendations and Implementation

The following points offer step-by-step approaches to effectively integrating seating provision into the personalised care approach expected of care settings. These step-by-step plans outline the processes recommended from identification to assessment and selection, implementation, and ongoing support, providing a clear roadmap for health and social care providers.

10.1 Individual Assessment



10.2 Equipment Provision Service



10.3 Procurement



Section 11: Conclusion and Key Learning Points

Postural care in sitting provides the dual benefits of improved individual outcomes and financial savings, presenting specialist seating as a prudent investment in health and social care. Key takeaways encourage decision-makers to consider the holistic advantages of provision, advocating for its integration into care protocols to enhance quality of life, reduce secondary complications, and achieve operational efficiencies.

1. **Improved individual outcomes:** Specialist seating solutions significantly enhance the comfort and overall well-being of individuals, particularly those with complex postural needs. By providing tailored support, these solutions help prevent secondary complications such as pressure ulcers, falls, and musculoskeletal issues, leading to better health outcomes and improved quality of life.
2. **Holistic advantages:** Integrating specialist seating into care protocols offers holistic benefits, addressing both the physical and psychosocial needs of individuals. This comprehensive approach supports better engagement in daily activities and social interactions, ultimately reducing dependency on caregivers. By promoting independence and confidence, appropriate seating solutions play a vital role in enhancing an individual's quality of life and empowering community participation.
3. **Financial savings:** Specialist seating offers substantial financial benefits. By preventing complications and reducing the need for costly medical management, specialist seating lowers overall health and social care expenditures. Efficient resource utilisation, less invasive interventions, and reduced hospital stays translate to direct cost savings for health and social care providers.
4. **Enhanced service delivery:** Providers can improve service delivery by proactively ensuring the right seating solutions are in place. This includes better patient throughput in hospitals, safer and more efficient manual handling, reduced need for intensive 1:1 or 2:1 care, and overall more positive outcomes. These improvements lead to a more responsive and effective health and social care system with increased service user satisfaction.
5. **Operational efficiencies:** Specialist seating enables more efficient care delivery by reducing the complexity of care plans and minimising the time required for managing posture-related issues. This allows caregivers to allocate their efforts more effectively, improving working practices and job satisfaction and reducing staff turnover and training costs.
6. **Advocacy and education:** Promoting the benefits of specialist seating requires ongoing advocacy and education. CareFlex is committed to this mission, actively raising awareness among decision-makers about the long-term advantages of specialist seating solutions. By championing this knowledge, CareFlex encourages the integration of these solutions into standard care practices, maximising their positive impact on individual care and resource management.

7. **Support from CareFlex:** CareFlex's commitment to supporting service providers extends across the lifetime of each chair, providing ongoing guidance to ensure equipment remains in excellent condition for the right user. This comprehensive approach not only ensures that equipment is optimally utilised and maintained but also enables sustainable operational improvements and cost savings. By partnering with CareFlex, providers can confidently deliver high-quality solutions that continue to meet the evolving needs of their service users.

By juxtaposing the costs of implementation against the anticipated financial and health benefits, this report provides compelling evidence that supports the adoption of specialist seating solutions as part of the 24-hour postural care approach. Through this strategic project, we can confidently reinforce the value of specialist seating as a critical component in health and social care provisioning, promoting better individual outcomes and more resourceful service delivery.



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Tilt-in-Space and Back Angle Recline should always be prescribed responsibly, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate functions for the user following a comprehensive assessment of posture and risk, with advice sought from the multi-disciplinary team where indicated. In some cases, these functions will be contra-indicated and could also increase shear and friction forces.

An individual's ability to tolerate a leg rest will be dependent on their hamstring muscle complex and knee range of movement; inappropriate elevation of the lower limbs can cause pain, a posterior pelvic tilt, and sliding down the chair increasing shear and friction forces.

All belts and harnesses must also be prescribed, implemented, and monitored responsibly following a comprehensive risk assessment. Please see the following for further information:

- Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) (2015) MDA/2015/018 *All posture or safety belts fitted to supportive seating, wheelchairs, hoists and bathroom equipment* London: MHRA
- British Standard (BS) (2019) 8625:2019 *Selection, placement and fixation of flexible postural support devices in seating* London: BSI

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