

### **1. Introduction**

This standard operating procedure (SOP) relates to the availability of Wheeled Zimmer Frame (WZF) for all adult inpatients in University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL). Currently inpatient wards have a responsibility to provide the necessary Wheeled Zimmer Frame for all patients who require them. Each patient requiring one must have one within reach and accessible for their individual use. This is based on the Royal College of Physicians inpatient recommendations.

### **2. Scope**

The purpose of this SOP is to support clinical staff with the provision of Wheeled Zimmer Frames (WZF) to patients who would normally mobilise with a WZF or patients who require temporary support with their mobility in order to reduce risk of falling.

Ward areas will have access to and provide storage for the equipment when it is not in use. This is in line with the Royal College of Physicians recommendations that all hospitals should have a workable walking aid policy, to enhance patient safety, prevent deconditioning and reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls by providing the correct Wheeled Zimmer Frame and ensuring ward areas remain clutter free.

### **3. Recommendations, Standards and Procedural Statements**

- Patients are assessed by the ward staff delivering their immediate care.
- A baseline history will be taken to indicate if a patient uses a walking aid at home.
- If a patient uses a WZF or has an immediate need for using a WZF then one can be accessed from the ward store prior to mobilising the patient.
- Unwell patients can often have a reduction in their pre admission levels of mobility, being increasingly unsteady and requiring additional support.
- For patients requiring additional support staff will assess them for a WZF. These are simple stable walking aids that can be provided at ward level by ward staff. Guidance on how to measure for a WZF is available via the Falls Safety Team training video found via the QR code on the training poster.
- Staff must assess the safety of the WZF prior to allowing a patient to use it and ensure it is cleaned in line with trust policy. (See appendix 2)

- All patients requiring a WZF should have one to hand that is labelled with the patients name on it and clearly labelled for the ward use only. (See appendix 3)
- Staff must instruct the patient to use two hands when mobilising with a WZF to reduce the risk of a fall.
- If a patient requires a walking aid on discharge and has not previously been issued with the equipment, please refer to the Therapy team.
- Once a patient has finished with the necessary aid it must be cleaned with Clorclean or Clinelle wipes and returned to the ward store area immediately to reduce the risk of it being a trip hazard.

All Trust WZF are to be labelled property of UHL and must not be sent home with the patient on Discharge (See appendix 4)

- In the event that a WZF is damaged and should not be used, a condemned label must be completed and Porters notified to take the equipment away.
- Individual areas are responsible for highlighting if there are not enough walking aids. This must to be escalated to Ward Manager and Matron and reported through Datix.

#### Positives

- Standardises the provision of WZF for patients
- Reduces the risk that patients will suffer a fall due to not having a WZF to hand.
- It will encourage patients to mobilise and reduce deconditioning
- A provision for ward storage will allow for inpatient ward areas to remain clutter free

#### 4. Education and Training

- The Deconditioning group skilled members will deliver education to clinical staff
- Therapy team will deliver the competency based Train the Trainer session (one off training)
- Cascade trainers: Competent trained staff, Ward link nurses and Falls Safety Team.
- Training video QR code available on poster (Appendix 2) for refresher purposes.

#### 5. Monitoring and Audit Criteria

- Patient who required a WZF as per baseline will be provided and have easy access to WZF during hospital admission.
- Each clinical area to have sufficient WZF available for inpatient use.
- Individual ward areas will be responsible for the purchase of the WZF replacement, including various sizes for inpatient use.
- Any damage of WZFs to be removed from inpatient use appropriately.

Key Performance Indicator	Method of Assessment	Frequency	Lead
WZFs availability, compliance and safety.	Audit	Quarterly	Ward Sister/ Charge
Patient uses a WZF for mobility will have accessibility to a WZF during their hospital stay	Audit	Annual	Fall Safety team
Ward team to be competent in measuring WZF for patients	Face to face or Training video Record of completed competence	As required	Falls Safety Team Physiotherapist

## **6. Supporting Documents and Key References**

Appendix 1 – Flow chart of Wheeled Zimmer frame (WZF) provision

Appendix 2 – How to measure for wheeled Zimmer Frame (WZF)

Appendix 3 – Example of label for Wheeled Zimmer frame ward use only!

Appendix 4 -Label for all trust Wheeled Zimmer frame property of UHL

## **7. Key Words**

Wheeled Zimmer Frame, WZF, Mobility, falls, risk assessment.

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This table is used to track the development and approval and dissemination of the document and any changes made on revised / reviewed versions

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## Does the patient use a Wheeled Zimmer Frame (WZF) at home normally?

**YES**

Patient requires a WZF for use on the ward

Ward staff to measure patient for WZF as per guide

Ward staff to provide from stock on ward

Patient uses WZF whilst an inpatient

WZF returned to ward stock once patient finished using or discharged

**NO**

Providing a ward Zimmer frame to prevent deconditioning for patients who may be more unsteady than usual is likely to help them



- As a ward you have Zimmer frames that can provide support to the patient
- You can follow the walking aid guidance to prevent deconditioning.
- If patients have a change in mobility due to being unwell, they may need a different walking aid.
- If, so then ward staff to feedback to discharge co-ordinator and inform Physio/OT that patient may need some therapy input before discharge?

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## Measuring and adjusting the heights of a Wheeled Zimmer Frame (WZF)

- Check for rust and that there are no loose components
- Ensure the two front wheels and two back feet are in equal contact to the floor and the WZF does not rock side to side.
- Ensure there is tread on the ferrules (*rubber feet at the back*)
- Push the WZF along the floor and ensure it moves smoothly forwards without deviating to one side and that the wheels turn on both sides.
- Ensure the WZF is clean and appropriately labelled with the ward number to avoid it being lost
- Patients with an aid that is too high or too low will add to their risk of falling.
- Ensure the handle of the WZF is measured to the patient's ulna styloid (*please see diagrams*)



### Ulna Styloid

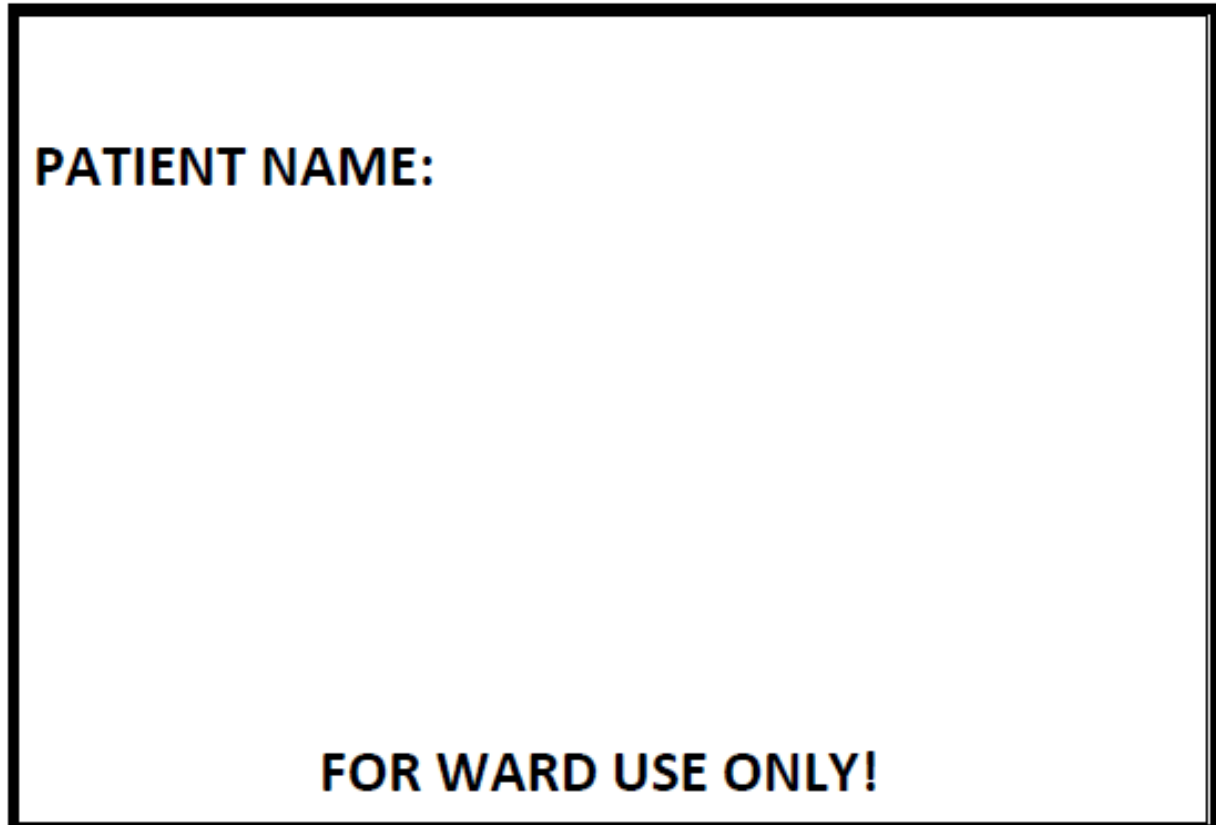


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### APPENDIX 3

An example label for Wheeled Zimmer Frame when in use by a patient, this should be printed on A5 sized paper and laminated. Label to be attached to the WZF with grip ties.



Example of WZF with label to be used by patient on the ward.



**Appendix 4**

An example of a WIPE CLEAN LABEL for all Trust Walking Zimmer Frames (WZF)



Ward areas to ensure all Trust WZF are appropriately labelled.

Labels can be ordered via the Print Room.