



Occupational Therapy Services
for Independent Living



TGA WHILL Model C Powerchair: an Occupational Therapist's perspective

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COTSSIP member

Executive summary: Ailsa Reston has been a qualified OT since 1986 and is co-owner of RKS Occupational Therapist Services in Cheshire. She supports the mobility product supplier TGA with clinical expertise and guidance regarding product provision – ensuring occupational performance is maximised for clients. As part of her private practice, she assesses client needs and prescribes appropriate assistive products such as the WHILL Model C powerchair.

The WHILL Model C is a contemporary electric wheelchair that is transportable. Ailsa, in her professional capacity, regards this product as an effective mobility solution from an occupational performance point of view. Her outlined opinions are documented below.

TGA WHILL Model C can improve mental health and well-being

The clients I have been involved with who use WHILL Model C like the look of the product in that it is stylish and does not look like a powered wheelchair. They feel confident and more accepted as the appearance of the wheelchair is not clinical. This leads to the powered wheelchair being used in everyday situations and improving their well-being and quality of life. It's all about the 'feel good factor'.

TGA WHILL Model C is ergonomic

The controls on the WHILL Model C are akin to a computer mouse and so can be used with the palm of the hand – making manipulation easier for people with arthritic fingers or limited hand function. The WHILL

Model C has a small footprint and can turn on its own axis, hence providing easier access to environments where space is limited.

TGA WHILL Model C can enhance occupational performance

The use of WHILL Model C has benefited my clients greatly and has led to them being involved in more activities outside of their home – improving their social interaction with other people, enabling them to participate in pastimes and hobbies. As the powerchair is very transportable it can be used for traveling by car, train or plane making holidaying more accessible. The ability to participate in these activities improves a person's self-esteem and self-confidence leading to greater psychological benefits.

Postural benefits are provided by TGA WHILL Model C

Seating alterations are limited and are not suitable for users with complex postural needs. However, the ergonomic back rest and padded cover are effective for many individuals with appropriate upper body strength and stability. The angle of the back rest is adjustable and so can be altered to provide comfort and good postural positioning for those clients who need support in the lumbar region of the back. The ability to fit a more prescriptive cushion on the seat base also helps if suitable for a client's individual needs.



Justification of grant funding for TGA WHILL Model C

It fulfils the need for people who feel conscious of being in a powered wheelchair which can compromise outdoor independence. These individuals consider being visible in an unattractive medical device will provoke negative attitudes and reactions from able bodied people. In contrast WHILL Model C has a contemporary design and helps owners remain positive and confident. Its looks are perceived as more in keeping with modern society and allows inconspicuous mobility in the outside world.

Most appropriate user types for TGA WHILL Model C

The TGA WHILL Model C is appropriate for those people who do not have complex postural needs and require mobilisation over

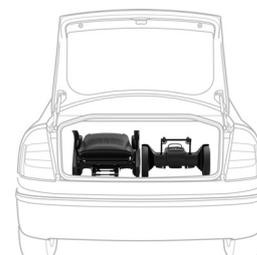
longer distances. It provides independence over various surfaces in urban and semi-rural environments such as tarmac, grass and gravel. It is not a product for surfaces with extreme undulations such as rugged and rocky off road tracks.

The clinical advantages of owning TGA WHILL Model C

From a mental health perspective, the design and styling of this powered wheelchair provides users with greater self-confidence and self-worth. They feel they are using attractive equipment that fits into their lifestyle and is not embarrassing. Therefore, this enables those users, who previously would not use a traditionally styled product, independent mobility in a powerchair that is modern, attractive and non-medical looking.

Summarising the suitability of TGA WHILL Model C

The TGA WHILL Model C is a quality product that is ideal for semi-ambulant users who value product style and usability. It is not the answer for all users and their varying needs, especially individuals with complex seating requirements. This product resolves many barriers to independence through design that is viewed more positively resulting in greater inclusion within society.





About the Author: Ailsa Reston, Occupational Therapist

Ailsa Reston qualified as an OT in 1986 from St. Andrews School of Occupational Therapy. She initially worked in the NHS in the field of adult physical medicine and then specialised in neurology and treatment of Stroke. In 1999, alongside fellow OT and COTSSIP member Bev Kelly, she set up the independent OT Practice, RKS Occupational Therapist Services based in Cheshire. RKS recommends a range of TGA products to its clients including the WHILL Model C powerchair, Strongback wheelchair and TGA Wheelchair Powerpack range.



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