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## B11: Towards Sustainable Wheelchair Provision on the Island of Ireland: Understanding Place, People, Pace and Policy

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### Learning objectives:

1. To understand contextual issues towards building sustainable wheelchair provision systems.
2. To discuss historical and cultural nuances which have impacted on service development.
3. To consider the importance of mutual understanding among stakeholders when building sustainable wheelchair provision communities, focusing on engaging and empowering wheelchair service users, personnel and policy makers to work collaboratively within the system.
4. To engage the audience in discussion and debate about wheelchair provision within their own context.

### Session description:

Introduction: Wheelchair and seating provision services internationally face enormous challenges to provide appropriate wheelchairs for the 70 million people who need them. The complexity of service delivery systems is evident throughout the literature, with users, providers, educators and researchers reporting on different aspects of the process from wheelchair design, assessment and delivery, education and training to outcome measures. Particularly concerning, is that wheelchair users are often left with limited choice and control within the wheelchair provision system, leaving people vulnerable and powerless, undoubtedly impacting on their essential freedoms. Despite much effort globally, evidence suggests a lack of uniformity across the board with poor infrastructures to support the wheelchair provision process to adequately meet people's personal mobility, as a basic human right.

Workshop: This workshop will present the concept of applying a sustainable community of practice model to understand the value placed on wheelchair services within context, the vital meaning of wheelchairs services to the people or key stakeholders involved and the viability of the system to ensure it flows well and responds appropriately. Wheelchair provision on the island of Ireland, which is made up of two countries the Republic of Ireland (Ireland) and Northern Ireland (NI), provides a historical overview of wheelchair services in two differing jurisdictions, social, economic and political. Utilizing the SCOP model provides a stakeholder-centred platform, enabling active participation of wheelchair service users and promotes collaboration. Given this, solutions are proposed to work toward an all-Ireland strategy through collective action and ownership to build a sustainable wheelchair and seating provision system as a community of practice.

Conclusion: Workshop participants will be given the opportunity to apply the sustainable community of practice model within their own contexts, compare practices and find solutions to provide appropriate wheelchair and seating assistive technology meeting this primary need now and in the future.

### Content references:

1. Gowran RJ, Casey J, Daly J. 'Utilising a Sustainable Community of Practice Model to build best practice in Wheelchair provision on the Island of Ireland' in Pollard N, Sakellariou D. Occupational Therapy Without Borders: integrating justice with practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Elsevier; 2017
2. Gowran R J, McKay EA, O'Regan B. Sustainable solutions for wheelchair and seating assistive technology provision: Presenting a cosmopolitan narrative with rich pictures. *Technology and Disability* 2014; 26(2-3): 137-152. doi:10.3233/TAD-140408
3. World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines for the Provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings. Geneva: WHO; 2008