

Extended Scope for Equipment Prescribers: navigating change to address patient needs, workforce challenges and clinical governance

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WHY?

- Opportunity to streamline a patient journey, providing care at the right time, in the right place
- Innovation and changing models of care including an increase of inter/transdisciplinary teams
- Workforce and recruitment challenges in regional and rural areas
- Informal extended scope of practice in equipment prescription is already occurring with minimal and varied clinical governance
- Occupational Therapy (OT) is a clinically broad profession, with increasing patient demands, therefore must work flexibly and focus on high value care



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Efficient patient-centred care that is safe, accessible and coordinated
- Consistent approach and improved clinical governance
- Increased clinician confidence and competence in prescribing equipment currently out of scope
- Patients can access equipment faster, with less need for input from multiple clinicians
- Improved clinician job satisfaction as working to top of scope
- Enables OTs to focus on complex equipment prescription



RISKS IF NOT IMPLEMENTED

Assistive equipment being prescribed by clinicians lacking skills in equipment prescription principles and inconsistent governance resulting in:

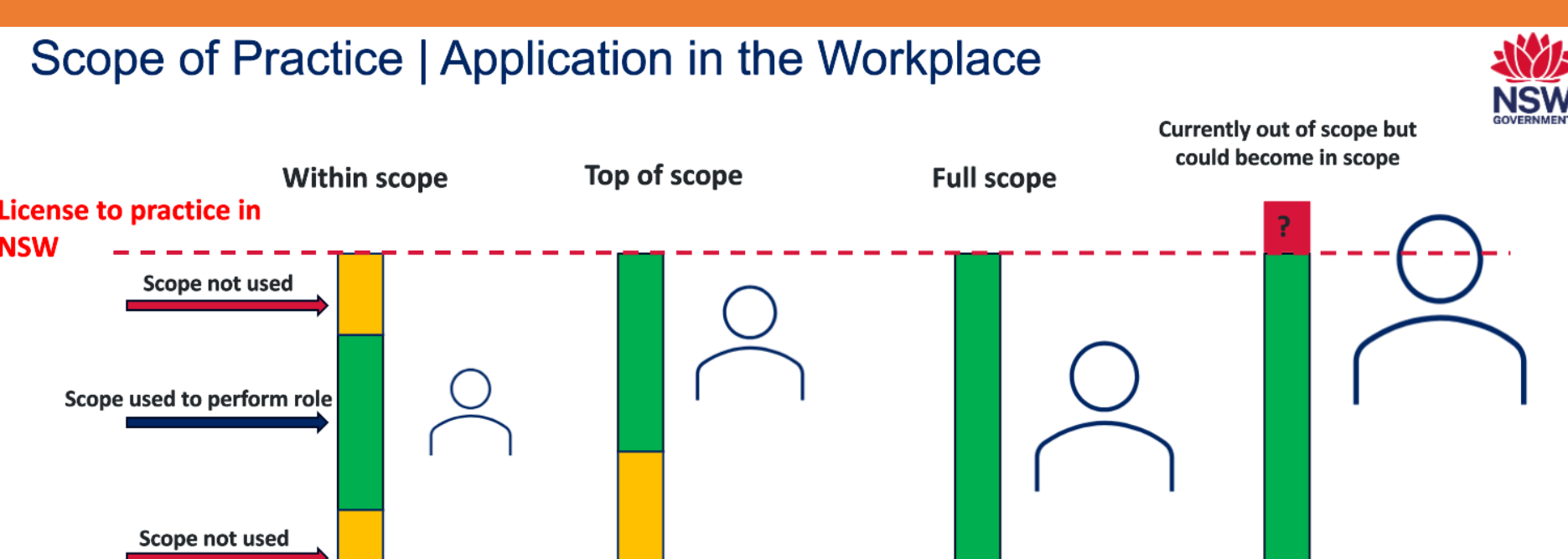
- Equipment not meeting patient needs
- Introducing risk of injury to patient, carers and clinicians
- Equipment being discarded at the cost of the patient and health service

CONTEXT

There is a focus at the State and Federal level to ensure clinicians are working towards their top of scope to meet patient needs

NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022-2032:

- 3.1 Expanded scopes of practice for clinicians to suit local community need
- 3.2 Consistent use and scope of multidisciplinary teams across the system
- 3.3 Better patient outcomes derived from existing and new ways of working



Unleashing the Potential of Our Health Workforce: Scope of Practice Review, 2024. QR Code



HOW?

- Consultation with key stakeholders including state networks (OT, Physiotherapy, Community Nursing, EnableNSW, Ministry of Health)
- Identifying concerns and exploring apprehension within professions regarding role identity and protection of clinical scope
- Reviewing existing Equipment Loan Pools (ELP) processes to identify opportunity for low-risk equipment prescription across clinical professions e.g. OT prescribing mobility aid & nursing prescribing over-toilet aid, Physio prescribing shower chair.
- Developing a consistent list for in-scope assistive equipment such as;
 - Foundational equipment - basic self-care items e.g. shower chair
 - Out of scope equipment - complex and high-risk items e.g. forearm support frame, swivel bather

Note- extended prescription is not mandatory however empowers those inter/trans-disciplinary/community clinicians with capacity and competence
- Developing a state-wide, evidence-based e-learning resource to upskill clinicians
- Streamlining equipment resources for clinicians and patients to ensure appropriate prescription and safe use

Example of Extended Scope Foundational Equipment List

Toilet Surround

Prescription: (Occupational Therapist, Physio, Nurse)

Suitable for patients:

- Who need armrests to push off/lower onto the toilet
- With balance or upper limb weakness

Risks:

- Risk of tipping if not correctly positioned or on uneven surface
- Should be combined with raised seat if indicated



NEXT STEPS

- Implement and evaluate a multi-LHD pilot across NSW
- Partner with EnableNSW to embed implementation and ensure governance
- Monitor the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Commonwealth Assistive Technology (equipment) Aged Care Loan Scheme Trial
- Working with NSW Health Chief Allied Health Officer to ensure a state-wide coordinated response
- Support development of e-Learning training module 'Foundational Equipment Prescription' through NSW Health education pillar, HETI
- Continued collaboration with key stakeholders, including clinicians and patients



Future Goal: Implement a consistent, state-wide approach to extend foundational equipment prescription across NSW Health