

Case study – Lauren



Versatile Cross 5 wheelchair delivers enhanced seating possibilities for 11 yr. old Lauren with Cerebral Palsy

Lauren, 11, from Salisbury in Wiltshire, uses an Etac Cross 5 wheelchair that offers multiple options for improved sitting positions and manoeuvrability.

Lauren, an engaging pre-teen, was diagnosed at 4 months old with Cerebral Palsy (CP) and has a history of epilepsy, currently under control with medication. Lauren happily splits family time between her mum Ann’s house and her dad Kevin’s house that he shares with partner Nicola and her children, Tom and Harry, age 10 and 12. The extended family are extremely supportive of each other and determined to provide ideal care for Lauren’s requirements. When Lauren broke her leg falling from a swing in 2015, Kevin took a month off work and he, Nicola and Ann worked together to provide Lauren with vital support in both homes – including carrying her to upstairs bedrooms and endeavouring to maintain a normal routine for Lauren, which is so important to her.

Following this difficult period, Lauren is now happily 90% recovered and the family aim to keep Lauren as mobile as possible. Although she has a right-sided hemiplegia and wears a calliper to keep her ankle straight, Lauren enjoys walking at home and using the stairs. Lauren attends Exeter House Special School where she uses an R82 Crocodile walker, receives physio on a weekly basis and regular use of the hydro pool.



Etac provides a wide range of specialist assistive products for children and adults with disabilities. The light-weight and versatile Etac Cross 5 is an effective and popular wheelchair across Europe.

Lauren requires a specialist wheelchair for longer distances as she has Hypotonia in her trunk, meaning she has low tone. She needs a chair that supports her in an upright seating position, with a 4-point lap belt to keep her hips fixed. Unfortunately, a chair provided by Wheelchair Services, provided inadequate support and caused Lauren to sink into the seat, which in turn has led to rounded shoulders. Lauren also used the fixed footrest plates to push away. The family sought a replacement wheelchair that could provide optimal back support for a growing child and the correct seating position to resolve these issues. Ideally they also needed a wheelchair that could be easily folded and lifted into a car. They were fortunate to meet Etac R82 Product Advisor Sarah Aspinall who was visiting Lauren's specialist school to demonstrate Etac's Cross 5 wheelchair.

Cross 5 – A platform of possibilities

Designed by Bosse Lindquist, a paraplegic and experienced developer of specialist disability products, the Cross 5 is a unique foldable wheelchair that feels rigid due to an innovative crossbar.

A bespoke wheelchair with an enormous range of variation options, the Cross 5 provides maximum comfort and functionality. It can be easily configured to cater for a growing child or adult, and includes 38 wheel positions, adjustable seat depth and castor height. Importantly, the chair's 3A backrest means it can support a range of back shapes including Kyphosis – unlike basic reclining wheelchair backrests. The Cross 5 comes with a seat cushion, swing-away detachable leg rests, flip-up adjustable footrests, height adjustable arm supports and anti-tippers as standard.

Etac also provides a wide range of accessories for the Cross 5, from back, arm and side supports through to leg and foot rests and brake options that suit all user requirements.

Sarah Aspinall felt the Cross 5 would provide Lauren with ideal posture positioning to help with the low tone in her trunk. She explains: "Crucially, the shape of the Etac Cross 5's back rest can supply Lauren with maximum support through her spine whilst still allowing her free movement in the wheelchair. The unique 3A backrest and seat are adjustable in height, angle and shape and the footrests can be set in different positions. So not only can the wheelchair be made bespoke for Lauren's current needs, but simple alterations will allow for growth spurts or changing body shape. The Cross 5 can provide Lauren with enhanced balance and stability, meaning she is less likely to slide forwards in the seat."

Sarah recommended Lauren trial the Cross 5, and arranged a home visit to make the necessary fitting adjustments and personalise the chair for Lauren's frame and requirements. The family immediately noticed that Lauren appeared "more upright and straighter" in the Cross 5.



Old chair

The hard back shelf with lateral supports is not supporting Lauren as intended. The chair is too wide and the laterals are getting in the way rather than supporting her trunk. As the chair is too wide, Lauren easily rotates her pelvis and often remains in asymmetry. The arm supports are too long making it difficult to get close to a table or desk.



Etac Cross 5

The back support is adjusted to support Lauren's back. The lumbar angle is slightly adjusted forward, and with the 6 Velcro straps the shape follows and supports her back. The back is equipped with back wedges that are fitted at a height that provides the little extra support Lauren needs without interfering with her arms. The arm supports are shorter, but without the bulky laterals she can support her trunk in a functional way.

Lauren’s mum, Ann, elaborates: “Lauren’s previous wheelchair was too small for her frame and was not able to cope with low tone requirements. As a result, Lauren appeared to sink into her seat and did not enjoy using the chair. The Cross 5’s adjustable back rest provides the support and stability she needs to sit in a more suitable position. As a result, her posture has improved and she appears far more comfortable.” The additional benefit of adjustable footrests means she can sit in the Cross 5 with 90° in her knee and foot angle. This, combined with the correct seat depth and an upright pelvis/trunk posture, means she is not pushing back and the chair can be placed closer to a table, for example, for easier social interaction at school or during mealtimes.

Lauren’s family are also delighted with how lightweight the Cross 5 is. Ann comments: “The old wheelchair was very awkward to manoeuvre and handle but the Cross 5 is easily folded and the wheels are removable. I can now lift the chair by myself into my Motability vehicle. As Lauren travels to school on the school bus, her wheelchair needs to be suitable for this as well. The Etac Cross 5 can be secured safely on the accessible school bus. Sarah has arranged for a headrest accessory to be fitted so that the chair is fully set up for transportation.”

Following a successful trial, Lauren’s family hope Wheelchair Services will be able to provide them with Etac Cross 5 wheelchair permanently.

Lauren’s dad, Kevin summarises: “It is important to us that Lauren keeps as active as possible and is able to participate in family life. Whilst Lauren can successfully walk shorter distances, she is reliant on a wheelchair for many activities and the Etac Cross 5 ticks all the boxes. Whether visiting the local science centre, which Lauren loves, or walking our dog, Max, the Cross 5 wheelchair makes everything easier and more practical. As it is lightweight and foldable we can easily take it on holiday when we go to Lauren’s favourite caravan park. Best of all, because Lauren is now seated correctly in an upright position and supported through the spine, she can enjoy stargazing with her much loved telescope.”



“Whether visiting the local science centre, which Lauren loves, or walking our dog, Max, the Cross 5 wheelchair makes everything easier and more practical.” Says Lauren’s dad, Kevin.



R82 and Etac

R82 UK Ltd is an Etac Group company supplying R82, Etac, Molift, Immedia and Convaid branded products in the UK and Ireland from a head office base in Halesowen, Birmingham. The extensive range of high quality assistive products for disabled children and adults includes wheelchairs, buggies, standing, walking, toileting and bathing aids as well as manual and mechanical transfer aids. Sales and distribution of these products is supported with service and repair back up from a base in Basingstoke.

The parent company Etac AB is based in Stockholm, Sweden with manufacturing sites across Scandinavia. The Etac Group has a truly global reach with further subsidiary companies in the USA, Europe, Far East and Australia. The most recent acquisition of US buggy manufacturer Convaid has further strengthened the Etac Group’s product portfolio worldwide.