

Proposed Wheelchairs (Short-term access) (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to ensure the provision of wheelchairs to anyone assessed as needing one on a short-term, as well as on a long-term, basis. The consultation runs from 8 April 2019 to 30 June 2019. All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response. Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded. Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here: [Consultation document Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

My son required to use a wheelchair and mobility aids after surgery.

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Andrew Stevenson

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

as@hennessybowie.co.uk

Aim and Approach

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of establishing a duty to provide a wheelchair to anyone who has been assessed as having a short-term need for one (defined as less than 6 months)?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

It should be regarded as a vital element of NHS care that anyone assessed as needing a wheelchair should have one provided, regardless of that person's whereabouts in Scotland or ability to pay for the use of one. In fact, before reading this consultation document I had assumed that this was already acknowledged and that wheelchairs would already be provided by the NHS. I am surprised that that is not the case.

Q2. What is your view on setting a target for providing a wheelchair to a person who (a) has been assessed as having a short-term need for one and (b) is otherwise ready to use it?

Target of 24 hours (where practicable)

Please explain the reasons for your response

I cannot see any good reason why somebody cannot be helped with a wheelchair within 24 hours. That is a reasonable time to get one from another location if it is not immediately available in the person's immediate location.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view of where the Bill should place the duty to provide short-term access to wheelchairs to people assessed as needing them?

Duty placed on NHS Boards

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view of where the Bill should place the duty to provide short-term access to wheelchairs to people assessed as needing them?

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I believe that it keeps matters simple to place the duty on Boards. How they discharge that duty is up to them, but they ought to have ultimate responsibility.

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view of how further provision about wheelchair access (e.g. assessment criteria and eligibility) should be made?

It should be left to NHS Boards or Integrated Authorities (as the case may be) to develop criteria for themselves

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Again, to simplify matters the Boards should be given both the duty and the responsibility to see how it is met. Ministers should not get involved in micromanagement.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of requiring Scottish Ministers to report back to the Parliament on the operation of the legislation?

Other (please specify)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Rather than spending public money on this reporting exercise I would prefer to see my taxes used to buy wheelchairs for those who need them. That seems to me to be a more useful way to proceed.

Financial Implications

Q6. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have?

	Significant increase in cost	Some increase in cost	Broadly cost-neutral	Some reduction in cost	Significant reduction in cost	Unsure
Government and the public sector (including the NHS, local authorities)		X				
Businesses (including makers and suppliers of wheelchairs)						X
The third sector (including charities and voluntary bodies supporting those with mobility issues)				X		

Q6. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have?

Individuals (including people with mobility issues and their relatives)						X	
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Please explain the reasons for your response.

I do not think that anyone should be making an issue of the cost. If wheelchairs are needed they should be provided at public expense. Also, it should not be up to charities to fill the gap left by inadequate funding of the NHS (including wheelchair provision). Further, people needing a wheelchair should not have to worry about how they are going to be able to afford to hire or buy one; presumably they have enough to cope with as it is.

Equalities

Q7. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I am not sure of the relevance of this. Wheelchairs should simply be made available if needed. The person's gender, age etc does not seem to me to matter at all as regards that need. People should be treated as individuals.

Q8. In what ways could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

I do not understand the question.

Sustainability

Q9. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Because in my opinion the need for people to get around, rather than being immobile or having to worry about paying for the use of a wheelchair outweighs the environmental impact of manufacturing and transporting more wheelchairs.

General

Q10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

Yes. Nobody wants to be immobile. It is demoralising, inconvenient and can be unhealthy. It is hardly expecting too much for society to take reasonable steps to help those in such a situation, and providing wheelchairs as is proposed would be a great step in assisting people and their friends and families. It is obviously the right thing to do.