

# 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.

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

*No Response*

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

**Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).**

Newlife the Charity for Disabled Children is the largest charity provider of specialist equipment to disabled

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

children across the UK. Newlife operates the only national emergency equipment service, delivering specialist equipment to children in crisis anywhere in the UK within 72 hours.

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).

Newlife the Charity for Disabled Children

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.

cdangerfield@newlifecharity.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.**

wheelchairs and specialist buggies should be provided to patients based on their assessed needs and not on an arbitrary time-frame. Newlife is regularly called upon to provide equipment to children whose needs are considered "short-term" such as those receiving cancer treatment.

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 72 hours (where practicable)

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

The time-frame is realistic, does not put undue pressure on the service and allows for a plan for discharge with the equipment.

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

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Our experience is that if the duty is not placed on the NHS Board, confusion arises over responsibility. This is particularly true for children where some NHS Services argue that wheelchairs and specialist buggies for children are for the benefit of the parent, and as such its a social care 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?

Ministers should have power to make regulations, give directions, and guidance

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Access criteria should be standardised across Scotland. Assessments should be person centric and outcome led.

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.**

NHS England has a mandatory dataset that requires quarterly submission. This information allows wheelchair services to address concerns as they arise, implement strategies to support improvement and report back within the next quarter.

## 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)				X		

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

<b>supporting those with mobility issues)</b>						
<b>Individuals (including people with mobility issues and their relatives)</b>					X	

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Provision of short-term wheelchairs will increase the cost to services that provide this equipment. However, this needs to be measured against the savings. For example, Newlife provides emergency equipment such as wheelchairs, specialist buggies, beds and hoists to children who are ready to be discharged from hospital, but cannot return home because of a lack of suitable equipment. These children can spend days, weeks and sometimes even months in hospital waiting for funding to become available for suitable equipment. In these cases, the cost of not providing the equipment significantly outweighs the cost of making provision.

## 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?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

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

Provision of short term wheelchairs will require extra capacity within services. This needs to include additional therapists to assess and funding to purchase and supply equipment. There is a risk that failing to do this will result in adults and children with long term needs waiting even longer for assessments and more requests for support being declined. We recommend the implementation of maximum assessment waiting times for long term provision to reduce this risk.

## 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

## General

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

We understand that this bill is not intended to address the difficulties that long term wheelchair users have in accessing suitable equipment. However, it must be noted that disabled children with long term needs are struggling without this essential equipment. Newlife currently has applications for powered wheelchairs totaling more than £24,000 for children in Scotland. Wheelchairs that cannot and will not be provided by local NHS services. Newlife fully supports the extension of services to adults and children with short term needs, but we ask that children with long term needs are not forgotten.