

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

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I would like this response to be published anonymously

If you have requested anonymity or asked for your response not to be published, please give a reason (Note: your reason will not be published):

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).

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.

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.

I am a trainee solicitor in Edinburgh, and have been on sick leave after suffering an injury for almost 2 years. I now have chronic pain affecting my back and legs. I currently use a wheelchair to mobilise long distance and at times short distances, when my pain is bad. After my injury, I originally used crutches to mobilise. My condition and pain worsened and using crutches became too painful, so I had to resort to using a wheelchair. Fortunately, after a waiting period, I was able to obtain a wheelchair from the British Red Cross. Although this was supposed to be a short term loan, it took me a long time to receive a wheelchair from the NHS, and the Red Cross were kind enough to extend my loan until I managed to get a permanent chair. At this time, I had to use the wheelchair for all trips outside of my flat. I was unable to propel myself and my partner would have to take me out in the chair. I cannot explain how helpful having this wheelchair was to me at this time. Before I received the chair, when my pain was too bad to mobilise outside of my flat, I stopped socialising with friends and seeing family. I didn't leave my flat at all, which had a tremendous impact on my confidence, emotional and mental state. I lost all confidence in being outside and suffered from anxiety and depression. Generally, the only people I would see were my partner, mother and medical professionals, which made me feel extremely isolated. When I received my wheelchair, I was very anxious at first to be outside and meet people, even those I was well acquainted with. However, these trips out of the flat really helped my mood and mental state. I cannot express how vital this has been to my recovery. Although the British Red Cross were invaluable in my continuing recovery, I understand that they have extremely limited resources when loaning wheelchairs to the public. When an injury or illness occurs which impacts a person's mobility, this in itself has a dire impact on that person's confidence, mood, anxiety levels and mental state. This can only be worsened by not having the resources available to them so that they may leave their property, be outside and communicate with other members of the community. I know that if I was unable to obtain a wheelchair after my injury, I would be in a much less favourable condition. This is why I believe wheelchairs should be accessible to people on a short-term basis.

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

As previously stated, people suffering from injury/illness leading to the need of a wheelchair need to be able to leave their homes and communicate with others in the community. I believe those people should receive a wheelchair as soon as possible, once a need has been identified.

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?

Unsure

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.

I believe that healthcare professionals/those in Integrated Authorities would be the best to decide who should and should not be eligible/assessment criteria, as they have the required knowledge to make such decisions. Ministers often do not have any experience in such professions and therefore are not best placed to make such decisions.

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?

Duty to report every year

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Accountability is important and imposing a requirement on Ministers to report back to Parliament each year would ensure that the legislation is operating effectively.

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						X

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

(including the NHS, local authorities)						
Businesses (including makers and suppliers of wheelchairs)						X
The third sector (including charities and voluntary bodies supporting those with mobility issues)						X
Individuals (including people with mobility issues and their relatives)						X

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Due to lack of experience in such matters, I do not think I have sufficient information to comment on the financial impacts of the bill.

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?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I have no doubt that this Bill would have an incredibly positive impact on equality. Those living with disabilities face so many barriers, and being unable to obtain a wheelchair in the interim period after an injury/accident is just one of them.

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

No Response

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?

No Response