

# 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

Other (e.g. clubs, local groups, groups of individuals, etc.)

**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).**

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

This response is on behalf of the Health and Social Care Partnership. The Occupational Therapy teams were consulted to input into the 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).

Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership

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)?

Partially opposed

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

There are very valid reasons for the consideration of this proposal as the needs of individuals with short term conditions affecting mobility at times are difficult to meet. The concern is how this service would be funded, managed and who would have the responsibility for overseeing the service and ensuring clinical governance and liability. Who would have the responsibility for the assessment, provision and maintenance of the wheelchairs as part of this service as this potentially has huge implication for existing services? There would need to be very clear eligibility criteria as there is a risk that the service could be inundated. There is also the question of when a short term need becomes a long term dependency and the impact that this has on other service provision such as provision of ramped access to properties. I feel that in certain cases the provision of short term wheelchairs could encourage more dependence rather than promoting independence, encouraging self management and an enabling approach to care and interventions.

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?

Unsure

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?

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

It is difficult to set a target without knowing the specific criteria and who is to provide the service. Targets may need to differ dependent on the situation.

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?

Other (please specify)

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

Some areas have access to organisations such as Red Cross who already provide a good short term loan wheelchair service. This is not consistent nationally but if resourced and standardised then individuals requiring short term loan wheelchairs could be signposted to here. This would be about enhancing an existing service rather than creating a whole new service in each area. Organisations such as this already have the infrastructure, IT system, insurances, knowledge, buying power already in place.

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.**

Guidance and standardisation is always welcome but some specifics may need to be left up to individual areas based on local services and existing processes already in place.

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?

Unsure

## 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
<b>Government and the public sector (including the NHS, local authorities)</b>	X					

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

<b>Businesses (including makers and suppliers of wheelchairs)</b>	X					
<b>The third sector (including charities and voluntary bodies supporting those with mobility issues)</b>	X					
<b>Individuals (including people with mobility issues and their relatives)</b>				X		

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

This is the introduction of a service that currently doesn't exist and therefore will have cost implications for the set up, purchase of equipment including the wheelchairs themselves, staff to manage the service and to assess and review individuals requiring a short term loan wheelchairs, maintenance and repair of equipment, administration of the service etc. The cost to individuals may be reduced as some people currently may choose to purchase a wheelchair if required short term. Wheelchairs are now available from a variety of retailers for as little as £50.

## 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)

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

As long as there is a consistent approach applied then there is no impact on Equality.

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?

No

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?

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

There will need to be robust criteria and guidance for the introduction of this service and also an allocated/ring fenced budget for its delivery for each area. There is significant risk that already stretched services and resources will be further stretched by the introduction of an additional service such as this and I think that the use of 3rd sector organisations may be the only way to manage this.

## General

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

The proposal is well meaning and certainly for a number of individuals will be beneficial following accidents or surgery. The concern is that the service has the potential to be abused by some individuals in order to access other services and support such as adaptations that are only given to wheelchair users, the ability to document on applications for benefits and re-housing that they have been issued a wheelchair and the question of when a short term loan becomes a long term need? There are also concerns that significant funding and robust monitoring would be required to achieve this service. Using organisations such as the Red Cross who already have processes in place and experience of running a short term loan wheelchair service would make more sense than starting from scratch. Another option would be to expand the remit of Westmarc who currently supply wheelchairs to a number of authorities in Scotland. Having a standardised, centralised system would mean a reduction in cost as bulk buying could mean better value for money.