

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)

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).

MS Society Scotland

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.

We are fully supportive of establishing a duty to provide a wheelchair to anyone who has been assessed as having a short-term need for one. For those with MS, in particular those with relapsing, remitting MS, having access to short term wheelchair can have a positive impact on their day to day life, during a relapse. With RRMS you have a pattern of relapses (symptoms getting worse) followed by recovery ('remission'). The disability of the person with RRMS doesn't get worse between relapses so therefore are not always eligible for a long term wheelchair. According to the 'Maintaining mobility: understanding the unmet need for short-term mobility aids' report by the British Red Cross 90% of those who borrowed a short-wheelchair found that it was helpful in enabling them to manage day-to-day activities. Nearly half of those who got access to wheelchair also reported that having access to one helped with their recovery time. The report also highlighted the issues faced by those who did not have access to a wheelchair within their daily lives, particularly related to employment and recovery. We strongly believe that access to a wheelchair can support individuals to lead independent lives and support them while managing their MS.

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 48 hours (where practicable)

Please explain the reasons for your response

We believe that those requiring a short term wheelchair should receive one as quickly as possible. A shorter waiting time for a chair would allow for quicker exit from hospital, if they are well enough to do so.

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, but with a requirement to delegate it to Integrated Authorities (Health & Social Care Partnerships)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We believe that NHS Boards, but with a requirement to delegate it to Integrated Authorities would be best suited to make sure the need is met. As they already provide long term wheelchairs and would be undertaking assessments for those in the community or in a hospital setting. It would also mean that there would be a level of accountability if the duty lay here.

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.

We believe that if a uniform approach is the intention of the Bill then leaving it to individual NHS Boards or Integrated Authorities to develop criteria will not achieve this. There should be clear guidelines and criteria to ensure accountability for the delivery of the duty.

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 three years

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We feel that this time period strikes the right balance, of ensuring standards and quality outcomes and not being too tedious.

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) | | | | X | | |

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

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| and voluntary bodies supporting those with mobility issues) | | | | | | |
| Individuals (including people with mobility issues and their relatives) | | | | X | | |

Please explain the reasons for your response.

If the Scottish Government funds the anticipated costs, as it has done so with 'Frank's Law' then there will be minimal costs to NHS Boards/Integrated Authorities. Although there will be some cost savings with people being able to exit hospital earlier and their recovery will be quicker. We are unsure by what is meant by 'Business' but if there is an increase in demand for wheelchairs this should be a positive for wheelchair manufacturers. We would like to see charities/voluntary organisations to be reimbursed at full costs for their services, which should have a positive impact for them. We have supported individuals in the past to purchase their own wheelchair for short term use, so if this need was met elsewhere it would free up time and funding to support others with MS.

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.

We feel like this Bill to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics who require a short term wheelchair as they will be able to access one more easier than previously due to social and economic factors.

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

n/a

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.

We feel like the Bill could be delivered sustainably if the equipment is returned and maintained regularly

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?

and to a high standard. The provision of wheelchairs on the short term would also be helpful in preventing remittance to hospital and keeping costs down as mentioned previously.

General

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

We speak to many people with MS who are impacted negatively by not being able to access a wheelchair both short and long term. This proposed Bill would go some way in making the lives of those in need of a short term wheelchair much easier, by giving them one less thing to worry about while managing their MS. The benefit of this Bill will have a wider impact on health and social care across Scotland if passed and implemented correctly.