

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).

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

WDCVS are the Third Sector Interface for West Dunbartonshire. We consulted with relevant third sector organisations within the locality in order to form the basis of our 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).

West Dunbartonshire CVS (Third Sector Interface)

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.

WDCVS is fully supportive of establishing a duty to provide short-term access to wheelchairs for those in need. We believe that such a duty will provide a range of benefits to individuals with a short-term need for a wheelchair such as reducing social isolation and preventing further injury. This Bill would ensure consistency in service delivery across the whole of Scotland as opposed to current short-term wheelchair provision which can vary dependent on location. Having consulted with voluntary organisations in West Dunbartonshire, there was a belief that the third sector could play a vital role in this wheelchair provision.

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

We believe 24 hours is a reasonable and achievable target to set. It would allow as limited disruption to people's lives and ensure as quick a transition to independent living as possible for users.

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 Integrated Authorities (Health and Social Care Partnerships)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

WDCVS believes that Health & Social Care Partnerships are best placed to hold the duty for short-term wheelchair provision. The primary reason for this is that they work more locally than health boards and as a result are better placed to engage with local groups. Concern was also raised that less populated regions such as West Dunbartonshire could be negatively impact by being grouped by a larger area as would happen if Health Boards were in charge of provision. There was a belief when consulting with voluntary groups within West Dunbartonshire that the third sector could and should play a vital role in working alongside HSCPs to administer wheelchairs. The third sector is already playing an important role in short-term wheelchair provision in small pockets at a local level and this change in legislation could expand on this further and use the third sector's already established local connections to ensure consistent provision across Scotland.

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.

Ministers should have the power to make regulations, give directions and issue guidance. This will ensure consistency across Scotland whereas delegating this responsibility to individual HSCPs/ Health Boards would likely result in a disjointed approach.

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.

WDCVS agrees that a duty to report every three years strikes a good balance between effective supervision of the measures as well as allowing sufficient time for the impact of the bill to be observed and examined.

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			

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

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.

Government & Public Sector- WDCVS believes that although there would obviously be an initial cost to delivering short-term wheelchair provision, it provides many benefits that could result in cost savings over a long period. In our consultation session there was a belief that short-term wheelchair provision was a method of preventing further injury and thus reducing potential future costs to the NHS. Furthermore, the vitality of access to a wheelchair cannot be understated in regards to reducing social isolation, which cannot only be measured in financial terms. Overall, we believe that despite there being an initial cost of provision, the benefits to individuals will outweigh this as well as providing potential financial savings in the future. These savings could cancel out any costs, or even go further and actually result in overall savings for the public sector. Businesses- In regards to the makers and suppliers of wheelchairs we expect them to incur roughly the same costs. Wheelchair producers will still be manufacturing the same wheelchairs just with the introduction of this bill it would mean they're being purchased by the NHS as opposed to private businesses. Private sector wheelchair providers would experience less demand for their services however this should result in a better and less costly services for short-term wheelchair users. Third Sector- As previously stated, West Dunbartonshire CVS believes that the third sector can play a vital role in administering wheelchairs for short-term use. If this was the case then there would be an increase in cost for the third sector however this could be offset by Government funding. Individuals- We believe that individuals requiring short-term wheelchair access would experience a reduction in cost if these proposals came in to effect. Individuals wouldn't be reliant on private wheelchair providers who are likely to charge more for 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?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

WDCVS fully believes that the proposed Bill will have a positive impact on equality as described in the Equality Act 2010. The Bill would tackle inequality by promoting inclusivity particularly for disabled people and the elderly. A key benefit of the proposals is reducing social isolation and allowing those with a short-term mobility issue to be able to more easily go about their normal day-to-day life and continue to be able to go out freely and contribute to the local economy, maintain social connections and just generally be independent members of society.

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

Ensure a consistent approach across the whole country.

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.

WDCVS believes that the proposed Bill could be delivered sustainably. As well as the obvious benefits to individuals that have been mentioned, there are an array of potential advantages to the wider economy, the NHS and communities. The proposals will allow individuals to maintain independence and therefore put less strain on the NHS and allow them to return to their local community sooner and continue to contribute to the local economy.

General

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

Overall, West Dunbartonshire CVS is fully supportive of this proposed Bill. If implemented it will help ensure consistent short-term wheelchair provision throughout Scotland. The result will be that individuals in need of short-term wheelchair provision will be able to maintain independence during their recovery and continue to maintain social connections and reduce their chance of further injury. These factors will have a positive effect on both individuals as well as on the NHS.

We believe that Health & Social Care Partnerships would be best placed to hold the duty of short-term wheelchair provision as they work more locally than health boards. HSCPs would also be best placed to work alongside the Third Sector who we believe should play an important role in short-term wheelchair provision.