

## **PE1576/B**

Petitioner Email of 30 December 2015

I would like to make the following points/recommendations after having read Transport Scotland's response to the petition

1. It is absolutely essential that being in receipt of the higher rate of mobility is removed as a qualification criteria for children with Autism and Down's syndrome as at present this is being used as an automatic excuse to deny one by Local councils. This is of utmost importance because at the moment local councils are just quoting this criteria and applying it with no consideration.

2. I am very concerned by the statement that an extension of the scheme may lead to the scheme becoming overwhelmed. This is a poor cop out and very very lame excuse if this indeed were to be the case. Just because extending the scheme may lead to additional workload this cannot and must not be used as an excuse to deny these children blue badges to which they are entitled.

3. If Transport Scotland are having trouble in deciding qualification criteria for the extension or indeed how to implement the extension why do they not simply look to the Welsh handling of the same situation and follow their example. If it can be implemented in Wales then how can Transport Scotland fail to implement it in Scotland?

4. In terms of qualification criteria can I make some simple suggestions in order for a child with Autism/Down's syndrome to be granted a blue badge they can simply be asked to obtain three independent pieces of supporting documentation i.e. from their GP/School/After School club/Physio/Occupational therapist etc each stating that the child has issues on the grounds of personal safety. Once these three independent sources of proof are provided then a blue badge should be issued. I am also still concerned that local councils will still be involved in assessing and deciding who gets a blue badge. I suggest that if the applicant has provided three pieces of supporting documentation as suggested above then a blue badge should be automatically granted thus negating the need for council assessment and putting no further strain on workloads. I understand that there will be fears of fraud but surely GPs/Teachers/Physio's/Occupational Therapists etc are all professional people who can be held to account should they help anyone with a fraudulent claim.

5. I would also like to point out that a failure to put any extension of the blue badge scheme in place to cover children under 16 with Autism/Down's syndrome could be construed as a form of discrimination. I have not to date checked this point but there may well be grounds for taking this argument to the European court of human rights and let them decide.

Thanks

Owain Martin