

### RNIB Scotland Response to “Scotland’s Pavement Parking Prohibitions - Consultation on Pre-Implementation Directions and Regulations for Local Authorities”

#### Introduction

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland is the country’s leading charity working with blind and partially sighted people. We support children and adults with sight loss and help them to live full and independent lives, campaigning for their rights.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to “Scotland’s Pavement Parking Prohibitions - Consultation on Pre-Implementation Directions and Regulations for Local Authorities”.

#### Consultation Questions

This consultation seeks views on a wide range of issues. We have confined this response this to Question 1 on exemptions from the pavement parking prohibition.

#### Question 1

**Do you agree or disagree with the proposed road characteristics that would allow local authorities to consider an exemption order from the pavement parking prohibition? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.**

Blind and partially sighted people face daily challenges getting around their local area. Parking, including on pavements, at dropped kerbs and double parking is a problem.

We have many reports of blind and partially sighted people experiencing ongoing nuisance from parked vehicles and other unnecessary obstacles on and across footways. It can be difficult to find a space to cross because of parked cars. Where pavements are narrow any cars parked on the pavements leave very little room to get around and people may have to go on to the road to get around a parked car. This poses clear dangers not solely for people who are sight impaired, but for older people, people with pushchairs and walking toddlers, wheelchair users, mobility scooter users and other people with mobility and cognitive impairments.

RNIB Scotland responded to earlier consultations on pavement parking and strongly welcomed the proposed ban on parking on pavements, dropped kerbs and double parking.

However, implementation has been delayed and, like many other organisations, we are now concerned that the proposed guidance for local authorities could mean many streets being excluded from the ban. The Directions and Regulations as they stand may not have the desired outcomes.

The consultation paper set out that “To be considered for an exemption order, a footway, or the carriageway with which it is associated, must have the following characteristics.

“Either;

* + 1. “the footway is of sufficient width to enable 1.5 metres (down to an absolute minimum of 1.2 metres over a short distance to take account of street furniture) to be available for the passage of non-vehicular traffic (including pedestrians, wheelchair users and mobility scooters) when a vehicle is parked on the footway,

“Or:

* + 1. “the carriageway associated with a footway is of sufficient restricted width or access that it would be rendered unpassable by emergency vehicles when one or more vehicles are parked on the carriageway, but would be possible to access if vehicles were permitted to park on the footway.

“Point (a) would allow a local authority to consider an exemption order for an area of the footway where there is deemed to be sufficient space to maintain non-vehicular traffic flow whilst still allowing space for vehicles to park safely on the footway. Point (b) would allow a local authority to exempt an area of footway from the prohibition to allow safe passage of emergency vehicles on a carriageway.”

Regarding Point (a), this is a broad exemption. Responses to a recent Disability Equality Scotland survey found concerns “about how this distance could differ depending on the size of vehicle and how much of it is parked on the pavement. There are also variable factors, such as street furniture and overhanging hedges, which may reduce the width of the gap and prevent disabled people from safely accessing the pavement.”

On Point (b) it is important that there isn’t a blanket exemption given to narrow streets, due to unwarranted fears about access for emergency vehicles. This issue was not raised as an issue when the Transport (Act) 2019 was debated in parliament.

Local authorities should use their extensive powers to manage parking (e.g., signing and lining) to ensure emergency access rather than effectively legalising pavement parking on narrow streets. Exemptions should not be considered where the street is already wide enough to allow emergency vehicles to pass even where a car is parked on one side of the carriageway (e.g., is wider than two average car widths and room for a fire tender).

Consultation around exemptions is vital to balance the desire for parking and accessibility. We echo other disability organisations and support calls to review the evidence and ideas presented by Living Streets Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland, and other disability charities to ensure the approach taken meets the aims of creating accessible and safer streets for everyone.

Implementation of the parking prohibitions should include a public education and encouragement campaign whilst effective enforcement of the ban will be essential if it is to be a success.

#### Contact

For further information, contact Dr Catriona Burness, Parliamentary & Policy Manager, RNIB Scotland - catriona.burness@rnib.org.uk.