

Proposed Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to establish a Disability Commissioner for Scotland

The consultation runs from 12 May 2022 to 3 August 2022

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 which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

No Response

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).

Dyslexia Scotland aims to inspire and enable people with dyslexia to reach their potential in life, learning and work. We aspire to create a dyslexia-friendly Scotland that values the skills and talents of dyslexic people.

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 Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).

(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).

Dyslexia 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 - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (Please note that this question is compulsory.)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We believe the establishment of a Disability Commissioner would help provide a stronger voice for the 1 in 10 dyslexic people in Scotland (around 545,400 people). Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities. These difficulties often do not reflect an individual's cognitive abilities and may not be typical of performance in other areas. Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is hereditary, life-long, neurodevelopmental condition. People with dyslexia will benefit from early intervention, appropriate intervention and targeted effective teaching, enabling them to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Q2. Which of the following best expresses your view on whether there is a need for a specific, dedicated commissioner focussing solely on people with a disability?

Fully supportive

Please give the reasons for your response

We have seen how the establishment of a Scottish Children and Young People's Commissioner has raised the profile of the rights of this section of the Scottish population, including the development of legislation and policies. We believe a Disability Commissioner could have similar value to the rights of disabled and dyslexic people in Scotland.

Q3. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

We believe that legislation is required, as it would provide a strong framework ensuring that disabled people's rights are developed and maintained. We can see how the Disability Commissioner could complement existing bodies without detracting from the work of these bodies.

Scope of the Disability Commissioner Role

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view of the Disability Commissioner role covering all disabilities; physical, mental, hidden and fluctuating conditions?

Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your response, including how the commissioner could co-ordinate with the work of existing bodies/organisations who support people with these conditions.

Dyslexia is a hidden, hereditary, lifelong, neuro-developmental specific learning difficulty. It is important that this type of hidden disability is included in the scope of the Disability Commissioner. We know through the work of our services that dyslexic people are often not provided with the help and support that would enable them to learn, live or work in a way that is suitable for their needs. Our vision is that Scotland should be a dyslexia-friendly country that values the skill and talents of dyslexic people. We believe that the Disability Commissioner could work alongside the work of Dyslexia Scotland to help support dyslexic people to become successful learners and confident individuals.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of the Disability Commissioner having a role in reviewing laws and policies that might impact on disabled people?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Dyslexia Scotland works in partnership with the Scottish Government and although many policies and strategic priorities are relevant to the support of dyslexic people, we know that more work is needed to strengthen the rights of dyslexic people. We believe the work of the Disability Commissioner could support these rights.

Q6. Which of the following best expresses your view of the Disability Commissioner promoting best practice and learning from service providers, key stakeholders and third sector?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including how you envisage this work being undertaken?

A majority of our work involves raising awareness of dyslexia. We do this in a number of ways - working in partnership with education bodies at a local and national level; providing training to teachers and employers around dyslexia awareness; providing supportive services to parents, young people and adults. We believe the Disability Commissioner could support the promotion of best practice around dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions.

Q7. Which of the following best expresses your view of encouraging involvement of disabled people and DPOs (Disabled People's Organisations) in the work of the Disability Commissioner?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response. Please discuss how you think this would work in practise – would this be through focus groups, internships, paid roles etc

One of our strategic aims is "to give people with dyslexia a strong individual voice". We believe this aim would fit well with the proposed role for the Disability Commissioner.

Q8. Who should the Disability Commissioner be allowed to investigate?

Both Scottish Public Bodies and service providers

Please explain the reasons for your response

We believe that the Disability Commissioner should have as many powers as possible. We know through the work of our services that discrimination is experienced across a variety of sectors.

Financial Implications

Q9. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

some increase in costs

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including who you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.

We would expect the role, over time, would lead to:

- savings for individuals with disabilities as well as society as a whole;
- in terms of the long term positive impact on workplace productivity, we would hope the role would lead to increased access to services by disabled people, improved impact on mental health and well-being, and a reduction in costs related to offending - as e.g. at least 50% of offenders have learning difficulties including dyslexia.

Equalities

Q10. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? If you do not have a view skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your answer and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

One of our aims is "to influence and achieve positive change at a local and national level". We believe a Disability Commissioner could assist with giving the estimated 545,400 dyslexic people in Scotland a more powerful and effective voice on the issues experienced by dyslexia people.

Sustainability

Q11. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? (If you do not have a view then skip to next question)

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

In addition to providing services and information to the dyslexic community, we engage with those who live with, work with and educate dyslexic individuals. These are parents and carers, employers, educators, service providers, volunteers and others striving to make a difference in their setting. In turn, thanks to our input, these changemakers will reach and make a difference to thousands of dyslexic people, including those who may not know they are dyslexic yet. We believe the work of the Disability Commissioner could assist in our aim to create a more dyslexia-friendly Scotland for future dyslexic generations.

General

Q12. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

We campaign (and would wish the Disability Commissioner to do the same) for equitable access to dyslexia assessment for adults. Being identified as dyslexic can be a positive and life-affirming experience which can help to support a more positive future for dyslexic adults, healing the self-esteem and self-confidence issues experienced in their early life and schooling careers. Not only is the amount unaffordable in itself but also, in comparison to other disabilities or conditions where people seeking medical 'diagnosis' do not have to pay, adults have to pay £300-500 to find out if they are dyslexic and then be eligible to access services and support that are available to others who are disabled.