

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
New Enquiry and Call for Evidence
Mobility Scooters

Written Evidence and Submission
by Disability Essex
(The Essex Disabled People's Association Ltd)

1. Is the current legal position clear with regard to mobility scooters and pedestrian use of space?

1.1 In our submission the legal position remains confused, with a range of statutory authorities having some responsibility or duty for the operation and safety of scooters, and monitoring of statistics for accidents or incidents.

1.1.1 The Department of Health, and the agency The Medical and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has a remit for the safety and correct use of mobility scooters (Invalid Carriages). The most recent advisory document is MDA/2006/036 which covers the incorrect use of indoor scooters and powered wheelchairs in the outdoor environment. Limited statistics on accidents involving scooters are also maintained - but these appear to be superficial and random.

1.1.2 The Department for Transport has a remit covering the use of mobility scooters on the Highway. In 2004 it commissioned and, in July 2005 published, a report "Review of Class 2 and Class 3 Powered Wheelchairs and Powered Scooters (Invalid Carriages) PPAD 9/72/89. That report, which in our submission did not engage with the voluntary sector in any meaningful way, remains the only researched overview on the subject. The report contains many interesting and thoughtful proposals, none of which has been actioned. One of the appendices, J, is that of our organisation on the subject of the supervision and introduction of formal driver/user training, public liability insurance, registration, using the substantial expertise and knowledge base of the disability voluntary sector.

1.1.3 The DVLA has a legal responsibility for the registration and annual tax disc issue for Class 3 Mobility Scooters. This is not enforced or even widely known to the general public.

1.1.4 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), through the Office of the Undersecretary of State for Disabled People, admits to an interest in the use and safety of mobility scooters. Funding for the purchase of mobility scooters is covered by the "Motability" scheme.

