I am writing following Bill Scott’s oral evidence on access to voting last week, regarding the inclusion of assistance for physically disabled and blind people.

We were pleased to note that Schedule 3, Rule 23 on page 58 of the Bill covers blindness and inability to read. However, we remain concerned that this may exclude visually impaired people. There is certainly scope for their inclusion though as there is currently no definition of blind within the Bill. We suggest that anyone registered with their local authority as blind or partially sighted – and thereby in receipt of support services, passported benefits and/or reduction of payment for some services, from social work – could be included in a definition of blind/unable to read within the Bill.

This would provide easy clarification for those who need additional support to make their vote. This allowance is very unlikely to be abused as only those in need of this support would be likely to ask for it.

We hope you take on board this point and include a definition within the Bill as an amendment that would ensure that no discrimination takes place against people with a visual impairment who wish to vote.

Inclusion Scotland
3 June 2013