Public Petitions Committee
Thursday 19 November 2026
6th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

PE2254: Provide funding for Under 3s as part of the Accessible Vehicles Scheme

Introduction

Petitioner	Elaine Davis on behalf of Kindred Advocacy
Petition Summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to urgently provide funding for families raising a disabled or seriously ill child under three years old with significant mobility need to access a suitable car to make transport for the child and vital equipment easier and more practical, so families can take their child to medical appointments, and get around day-to-day.
Website	https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2254

1. This is a new petition that was published on 16 September 2026.

2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.

3. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 307 signatures have been received on this petition.

4. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.

5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered.

6. The Committee has received submissions from the Scottish Government, Family Fund and the Petitioner which are set out in **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

7. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
November 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2254: Provide funding for Under 3s as part of the Accessible Vehicles Scheme

Petitioner:

Elaine Davis on behalf of Kindred Advocacy

Date published:

16 September 2026

Petition summary:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to urgently provide funding for families raising a disabled or seriously ill child under three years old with significant mobility need to access a suitable car to make transport for the child and vital equipment easier and more practical, so families can take their child to medical appointments, and get around day-to-day.

Background information:

Children over 3 who receive the high mobility rate of Child Disability Payment can access the Accessible Vehicles and Equipment Scheme. Children Under 3 cannot receive the Mobility component of Child Disability Payment so are not eligible for this scheme, but until recently these families could apply for funding through the Family Fund Scotland.

Children were eligible if they:

- could not travel without substantial equipment such as a mobility aid, oxygen or monitoring equipment; or
- could not travel on public transport because it would compromise their immunity; or
- experienced high levels of pain or a physical condition making mobility difficult; or
- had to attend a significant number of medical appointments at multiple treatment centres; or
- had an unstable condition and may have needed unexpected emergency inpatient treatment.

There is now nothing in place for these children as this scheme has closed.

Annexe B: SPICe Briefing

Scottish Parliament Information Centre
Ionad Fiosrachaidh Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2254: Provide funding for under 3s as part of the Accessible Vehicle Scheme, lodged by Elaine Davis on behalf of Kindred Advocacy

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petitioner highlights the closure of a charitable fund that provided access to Motability vehicles for certain families of disabled children aged under three years.

It is unclear whether the petitioner wants to extend eligibility for the mobility component of Child Disability Payment to children under 3, or whether the aim is to secure funding to re-instate the Family Fund grant scheme.

Child Disability Payment

Child Disability Payment has a mobility component and a care component.

The higher rate of the mobility component is available from age 3 and the lower rate is available from age 5. There are no age restrictions on the care component.

The higher rate of mobility (currently £80 per week) is available to children, aged 3 or older and either:

- unable to walk
- unable to walk outdoors
- whose health would get worse from walking
- has no legs or feet
- has a severe visual disability
- is blind and deaf
- has a severe mental disability with severe behavioural difficulties
- has a terminal illness

Those with the higher rate mobility component can use it to access the Accessible Vehicles and Equipment scheme provided through Motability.

The same rule applies to child Disability Living Allowance in the rest of the UK.

Background to the age limit

The age limit of 3 was set in 2001 for child Disability Living Allowance (it had previously been 5). The reasoning for setting the age limit was based on the age at which children usually begin to walk a reasonable distance. Further background is available in this House of Commons Library briefing.

In 2019, the Scottish Government consulted on the eligibility criteria for Social Security Scotland's disability benefits, including Child Disability Payment. The policy proposal included keeping the same lower age limit as child Disability Living Allowance.

The consultation asked a general question about agreement with the eligibility criteria as a whole. At the time the benefit was called Disability Assistance for Children and Young People (DACYP). Nine out of 137 respondents disagreed with some aspect of eligibility. Of these, one example of a comment noting disagreement was:

"Criteria for the higher rate of the DACYP mobility component needing to be altered for under 3's who require bulky medical equipment."

A third sector organisation suggested that when a child is born with an impairment that will affect their mobility and / or support needs, they should be immediately eligible to apply rather than having to wait three months for the care component or three to five years for the mobility component (Scottish Government analysis of DACYP 2019 consultation).

The Scottish Parliament legislated for Child Disability Payment in 2021, keeping the age limit of 3 years for the higher rate of mobility component and 5 years for the lower rate.

Family Fund Mobility Support

Between 2018 and 2026, Motability and the Family Fund delivered a scheme to "support families with their mobility needs" in recognition of the fact that some families with severely disabled children under the age of 3 may face particular difficulties getting around. Criteria included being on a low income and either:

- unable to travel without bulky medical equipment, or
- unable to travel on public transport as it would compromise child's immunity or experience high, or
- experience high levels of pain or a physical condition making mobility difficult, or
- has to attend a significant number of medical appointments at multiple treatment centres, or
- has an unstable condition and may have needed unexpected emergency inpatient treatment.

The scheme helped more than 1,800 families across the UK. Motability Foundation's annual report 2025-26 noted that the foundation had awarded

"£15m in 2021/22 (over three years to 2024/25) to Family Fund to support the mobility of families with children under three years old."

As this funding was for a UK-wide scheme, reinstating the scheme in Scotland would be a proportion of this.

Key Organisations and relevant links

- Motability Foundation
- Family Fund
- Together for Short Lives
- Contact Scotland
- Inclusion Scotland

Camilla Kidner
Senior Researcher
14 October 2026

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C: Written Submissions

PE2254/A: Provide funding for Under 3s as part of the Accessible Vehicles Scheme

Scottish Government written submission, 19 October 2026

Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.

The Accessible Vehicles and Equipment Scheme in Scotland helps disabled people to lease a range of vehicles and equipment, including cars, scooters, powered wheelchairs and specially adapted vehicles. These can be leased by a parent or guardian on behalf of a child receiving the higher rate mobility component of Child Disability Payment.

An individual must be at least three years old to qualify for the higher rate of the mobility component. This is a part of the regulations for Child Disability Payment, which were introduced with Scottish Parliament support. This difference regarding at what age mobility support is available through Child Disability Payment relates to the different needs young children have and specifically that very young children are not independently mobile, whether disabled or not. In this way it differentiates from the mobility support disabled older children may need in excess of their peers versus support which very young children would naturally be expected to require based on their age.

As part of the design and development of Child Disability Payment, the Consultation on Disability Assistance in Scotland engaged stakeholders and disabled people with lived experience of the benefit system. The proposed eligibility rules for the care and mobility components for Child Disability Payment were supported by a significant majority of respondents.

Until earlier this year, separate funding for accessible vehicles for disabled and seriously ill children under three years old was available UK-wide via the Family Fund Mobility Scheme (FFMS). The Scottish Government was not responsible for either funding or administering the FFMS, which was funded by the Motability Foundation, the charitable arm of Motability. The Scottish Government understands that the latest one-year grant that the Motability Foundation awarded to support the delivery of the FFMS ended in January 2026.

Providing new funding to address the ending of FFMS only for people in Scotland would place additional pressure on the budget available for social security expenditure in Scotland. Also, further work would be required to consider whether such an arrangement would be practical.

Eligibility for Child Disability Payment in Scotland and for Disability Living Allowance for Children in the rest of the UK provides individuals with automatic entitlement to various reserved benefits and premiums, which is often known as ‘passporting’. It is essential that disabled people continue to seamlessly receive the vital reserved support they’re entitled to, which can include Child Tax Credit, Universal Credit and exemption from the benefit cap. There is a risk that, should eligibility rules for Child

Disability Payment diverge significantly from current Disability Living Allowance for Children rules, Child Disability Payment may not continue to be recognised for automatic passporting.

Changing the age at which children are eligible for the higher rate mobility component could therefore have considerable legislative and cost implications, as well as a risk to 'passported' support, which is essential for many families. Furthermore, it would not align with the underlying rationale for the eligibility rules determining the Child Disability Payment mobility component as set out above.

What, if any, action is the Scottish Government currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

There is existing financial support available for some travel costs that disabled or seriously ill children incur by needing to travel to medical appointments.

A child under 3 years may be eligible for support under the Young Patient Family Fund (YPFF). This fund is generally available to patients under 18 years of age receiving inpatient treatment. The parents, primary carers and/or siblings (aged under 18 years) of the young inpatient could claim under YPFF if they are ordinarily resident in Scotland and have incurred allowable expenses as a result of a hospital visit. YPFF does not provide financial support to the inpatient themselves. Full YPFF terms and conditions can be found here - https://www.mygov.scot/young-patients-family-fund/help-and-support.

A young patient attending an outpatient or day patient appointment may be eligible for travel expenses support under the Patient Travel Expenses Scheme (PTES), the Highlands and Islands Travel Scheme (HITS) or as a result of Health Board discretion.

PTES is a Scotland-wide means-tested scheme where patients on qualifying benefits are reimbursed reasonable travel costs for attending hospital for treatment. HITS recognises the difficulties and expense involved in travelling to and from hospital for those who live in remote communities. This scheme reimburses the travel costs of everyone resident in the Highlands and Islands area required to travel more than 30 miles to a hospital by road or 5 miles by air or land, less the first £10 (unless in receipt of certain benefits). Finally, Health Boards also have discretion to provide a contribution to patient travel expenses where deemed appropriate.

In respect of the application of HITS, PTES or Health Board discretion, the cost of travel for an escort can also be included where there is a medical requirement for an escort. All patients aged 16 and under automatically qualify for an escort. In the first instance, costs for only one escort would be eligible; however, where there is a medical need for more than one escort this can be covered. There is no time limit on costs so eligible costs can be covered regardless of treatment duration.

Disability Benefits Policy Unit, Social Security Policy Division

PE2254/B: Provide funding for Under 3s as part of the Accessible Vehicles Scheme

Family Fund written submission, 7 October 2026

About Family Fund

Family Fund helps families raising disabled and seriously ill children to build a better life by easing financial pressure, stress and isolation. For more than 50 years, we've provided grants, information, digital skills and opportunities for families to be heard. As the UK's largest charity providing this kind of support, we work towards a society where every family has what they need to live well and thrive.

Family Fund Mobility Support (FFMS)

Family Fund's Mobility Support programme provided grant-funded access to Motability vehicles for families with disabled children under three who were not yet eligible for the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component. Piloted in 2018 and later expanded through £18 million of Motability Foundation funding, the scheme supported more than 1,800 families from its inception through to its closure to applications in January 2026.

Eligibility was based on clear indicators of need, including use of substantial medical equipment, immune-suppressing conditions, high levels of care, unstable conditions, and frequent medical appointments. The programme enabled families to access suitable, adapted vehicles during a critical period before they could qualify for DLA or Child Disability Payment mobility support.

To promote the scheme to families, Family Fund developed a multi-stranded promotional strategy with regulated promotion by Introducer Appointed Representatives, one of which was Kindred Advocacy.

The programme is no longer operating because Motability Foundation ceased its funding, after a change on strategic priorities. Its current strategy focuses on supporting disabled people with the most complex needs to access the main Motability Scheme, alongside investment in programmes that help disabled people make journeys within specific funding themes. As a result, there is currently no equivalent source of support for many families with disabled children under three who have significant mobility needs. This is particularly concerning considering that there are an estimated 6,000-30,000 disabled children aged 0-3 experiencing mobility problems across the UK[1].

We have clear evidence that the programme achieved strong positive outcomes for the families it supported. We believe the programme aligns closely with Scottish Government priorities to support disabled people and their families.

For many families, access to appropriate mobility support is not simply about transport. It can be the difference between isolation and participation, between

[1] University of York analysis of 2019/20 FRS data)

additional caring pressure and greater family resilience, and between short-term crisis and more sustainable support.

> "[The Motability grant] gave me so much freedom to travel, clear my head, spend time with my other children as well as my special needs daughter. I was not worried in the slightest about car breaking down or any other cost related to car. As a parent carer I have too much to deal with in regard to my children and my own health but Family Fund took away a great worry both financially and physically. I will forever be grateful!" Mum to Abby, aged 2

Family feedback and outcome data show that the support had practical, financial and wellbeing benefits across several areas of family life:

Accessing support

- 99% of families were better able to take their children to hospital/GP appointments
- 84% of families could better access support services
- 66% of families could more easily take their children to nursery.

Social benefits

- 75% of families could spend more quality time together
- 55% of families reported their children were able to play and have fun more regularly
- 78% of families reported they could see friends and family more often.

Financial wellbeing

- 81% of families could travel for less cost
- 70% of families said the vehicle enabled them to have more of the essential items they needed
- 66% of families were able to keep up more successfully with their household bills.

Health and wellbeing

- 96% of families reported improvement in their disabled child's health and wellbeing as a result of the vehicle
- 94% of non-disabled siblings also showed improved health and wellbeing.

The programme demonstrated the significant impact that access to a suitable car had in making transport for the child and vital equipment easier and more practical. Family Fund's evidence shows improved access to healthcare, reduced financial

pressures, participation in everyday family life and improved wellbeing outcomes for both the children and their families.

We therefore ask the Committee to consider the evidence from the FFMS programme, recognise the current gap in support for disabled children under three, and explore how future provision could ensure that families with significant mobility needs are not left without support at a critical stage in their child's life when access to suitable transport is essential.

PE2254/C: Provide funding for Under 3s as part of the Accessible Vehicles Scheme

Petitioner written submission, 12 November 2026

1. Kindred's position

Kindred's priority is that families who need accessible vehicles because of their child's disability receive appropriate support. In the absence of the Family Fund Motability Scheme (FFMS), the Scottish Government must act to ensure that disabled children under three are not disadvantaged by the current gap in provision.

The FFMS operated successfully for many years. Kindred therefore supports its reinstatement. If a more cost-effective solution were identified, Kindred would support that also.

2. Why a suitable vehicle is essential

We understand the rationale for setting the qualifying age for the Child Disability Payment (CDP) mobility component at three, based on the expectation that children will generally be walking a reasonable distance by that age.

However, this does not reflect the transport needs of many disabled children under three. Disability and medical needs can mean that travel requires substantial specialist equipment and essential supplies such as:

- Oxygen cylinders
- Suction machine
- Nebuliser
- Ventilator
- Monitoring equipment
- Pulse oximeter
- Portable resuscitation equipment
- Feeding pump
- Feeding pump and stand
- Syringes and extension sets
- Spare tubes/catheters
- Feeding bags
- Spare feeding tubes
- Water / flushes

- Pump batteries and charger
- Emergency medication
- Regular medication
- Specialist buggy
- Standing frame
- Portable specialist seat
- Positioning cushions
- Postural supports

A standard family car is not designed to accommodate a child who requires life-sustaining equipment leaving families little choice but to purchase or lease a larger vehicle.

This is not a lifestyle choice. It is a direct consequence of a child's disability-related needs and places a substantial financial burden on families for the higher purchase/ lease prices, increased fuel consumption, insurance and maintenance.

Public transport can also be impractical where families must transport large amounts of equipment. For children who are immunocompromised, there may also be additional concerns about the suitability of public transport leaving families entirely reliant on their own vehicle.

3. The difference support makes

The FFMS made a fundamental difference to some families supported by Kindred:

> "Kindred helped us apply to get a car that was big enough to accommodate Leo and all of his equipment. The car we had physically wouldn't allow us to have Leo or his equipment in it and we definitely didn't have the assets to get a bigger car.."

> "We would have struggled so much more than we did… Kindred helped us apply to get a car that was big enough to accommodate our child and all their equipment."

4. Existing support does not close the gap

Current support does not address the specific need for access to a suitable vehicle.

- The Young Patients Family Fund is available only to families whose children are inpatients.
- The Patient Travel Expenses Policy can assist some families with the cost of travelling to healthcare appointments, but it does not address the practicalities of the journey itself or families' wider everyday transport needs.

Financial assistance for individual journeys cannot resolve the underlying problem faced by families whose vehicles are physically unsuitable for their child's needs.

Families need to travel not only to hospital appointments, but also to nursery, support services, family activities and ordinary childhood experiences in an appropriate vehicle.

5. Implications for children's rights

The lack of access to a suitable vehicle raises important issues under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Article 23 recognises disabled children's rights to a full and decent life, with dignity, self-reliance and active participation in the community. Article 3 requires that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in decisions affecting them. Decisions on vehicle support should therefore take account of each child's individual disability-related needs, rather than relying solely on age or whether a family already owns a car.

Articles 6, 24, 27 and 31 are also directly relevant. A suitable vehicle can be essential to attending medical appointments, accessing rehabilitation and benefiting from services that support health, development and wellbeing. For children who require significant amounts of equipment, an unsuitable vehicle can make travel unsafe or prevent access to healthcare.

Disability can also create substantial additional transport costs, particularly where a child needs a larger or adapted vehicle. Without support, families may be unable to meet these costs, limiting children's access to services, opportunities and ordinary childhood experiences.

Article 31 protects children's rights to play, leisure and participation in cultural and recreational activities. Without suitable transport, disabled children may be unable to attend nursery, clubs, family outings or other everyday experiences, contributing to social isolation and exclusion.

Taken together, these rights show that access to a suitable vehicle is essential to disabled children's health, development, participation and wellbeing. It is not a discretionary addition to support, but a practical means of ensuring disabled children under three can enjoy their rights, participate fully in family and community life, and enjoy the same opportunities as other children.

6. Recommendation

Kindred therefore calls on the Scottish Government to:

- Reintroduce the Family Fund Motability Scheme or establish an equivalent scheme for disabled children under three.

- Consider reinstating the previous Family Fund model, where the infrastructure exists, enabling families to access support without unnecessary delays or legislative change.

- Ensure eligibility is informed by the individual child's disability-related transport needs, rather than age alone.

- Recognise that the need for a larger or specialist vehicle can arise directly from the requirement to transport essential medical equipment.

- Ensure financial support reflects the significant additional costs families may face in obtaining and maintaining a suitable vehicle.

Ultimately, no disabled child should be prevented from accessing healthcare, support services, family life and ordinary childhood experiences because their family cannot afford a vehicle that meets their disability-related needs.

The age threshold for the CDP mobility component does not reflect the additional transport requirements of many younger disabled children. Reintroducing this support for children under three would be a practical and meaningful step towards reducing inequality.