

Minister for Public Health

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Health and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament



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Dear Convenor

The Committee will know that the Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland 2015, published on 1 September, included a commitment to provide "a right to voice equipment when required".

I am writing to formally confirm my intention to bring forward amendments at stage 2 of the Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) Bill to deliver this commitment. It is our belief that access to voice equipment is vital to children and adults who find speaking difficult, are at risk of losing their voice or have no voice at all. In coming to this decision my officials have worked closely with stakeholders who support a statutory footing for such access.

I intend to bring forward amendments which will require Health Boards to secure the provision of voice equipment for children and adults who find speaking difficult, are at risk of losing their voice or have no voice. As part of this, Ministers will be given the power to issue guidance to support the provision of this equipment on a multi-partner basis.

I am aware that Committee has a busy schedule this session, however the legislation and guidance will support and inform the on-going work necessary to give improved access to this equipment.

I would hope that this does not present a significant increase to your workload and thank the Committee for its work on the Bill so far.



Maureen Watt