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Welcome to our January 2026 newsletter!



A message from our CEO

As we start a new year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on all the great things that have been achieved in 2025, thanks to all the support and commitment given to the Wheelchair Alliance – from wheelchair users, sponsors, partners, funders and of course our dedicated team.

I think it is safe to say that 2025 has been a year which has projected us forward at pace and strengthened our cause considerably. Some highlights from our ten-year anniversary year include:

- Our third report launched at the end of 2024 - *'Wheelchair Provision: How to Drive Effective Change'* - with this report and the resulting recommendations for change, we headed into 2025 with a robust set of asks for Government.
- Launching our three-year strategy for 2026-2029, focusing on the strategic aims of listening, championing and innovating.
- Working with NHS England to launch the Wheelchair Quality Framework, co-produced by the Alliance and with wheelchair user input. In December we also gifted you a simplified version of the Quality Framework – the Wheelchair Quality Framework Guide for Wheelchair Users.
- Receiving three years of funding from the City Bridge Foundation to continue our growth.
- Growth of charity partner membership of the Alliance to 26, with close to 600 direct wheelchair user members! Please help us to grow further by sharing this newsletter to your networks and encouraging sign up to our membership.
- Receiving funding from the Rugby Football Union Injured Players Foundation to launch the first national wheelchair user council, which will be launched this year.
- Expansion of the team to support our projects, including two new project managers, Lizzie and Phil. Our team is growing and we very much welcome them to the Alliance family!
- Our Patrons, led by our amazing President Tanni Grey-Thompson, has grown. We're proud to have Nick Wilson, Lord Philip Hunt and Mo Belal championing our cause.
- The Alliance was specifically mentioned in the House of Lords in a parliamentary question by Lord Hunt and through a one-hour debate, also led by Lord Hunt with contribution by nine Peers, outlining the issues faced in wheelchair provision and an ask for a national strategy and senior ownership.
- Championing the cause for changes in legislation for wheelchair users with wheelchairs over 150kg, meeting the Minister for Roads, Simon Lightwood, resulting

in the Government's commitment to review the legislation. This work will continue in 2026.

- After a year of effort, the Alliance is proud to have launched with MPs an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) dedicated to wheelchair user voice. This group allows a voice at the highest levels of Parliament and continues to focus on the need for leadership and better data to improve commissioning.

- Amazing awareness-raising media opportunities in print, on screen and in person, and my thanks go to Ballyhoo PR for their support.

- Our website also continues to grow, with work on updating the site happening alongside the launch of some brand new pages which reflect the work that we have undertaken.

These are just a few highlights as a result of the hard work and dedication of the team and those that support us – most of which you can read in this newsletter.

We have a number of exciting projects in the pipeline for 2026 which gives me confidence that we will be able to move our organisation forward even further and, most importantly, drive much needed change for wheelchair users.

So, thank you to each and every one of you for your support.

Until next time.

Nick Goldup, chief executive officer at the Wheelchair Alliance

**** STOP PRESS ****

As we went to press on this newsletter, we received some incredible news that the government has launched a 12-week consultation to seek views on modernising laws on powered mobility devices, including electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Having worked closely with Simon Lightwood MP, Minister for Local Transport, for over a year, we are beyond proud that our campaigning has secured this commitment to change.

Current legislation dates back nearly 40 years and doesn't reflect the technological advances that have transformed these essential devices. This has left many individuals using modern wheelchairs over 150kg feeling anxious about breaking the law, as they have had legal limitations on where they are allowed to drive. For too

long, wheelchair users have been side-lined by outdated legislation and offensive terminology such as 'invalid carriages'.

Throughout the consultation, wheelchair users, accessibility organisations, industry, and the public are being invited to share their views on a variety of areas critical for updating these laws. These include:

- updating terminology in law, replacing outdated terms such as 'invalid carriages' with language that reflects modern attitudes and respect for users
- clarifying where powered mobility devices can be used – on roads, pavements, or other spaces
- reviewing size, speed, and age requirements for larger devices
- considering whether 2-person tandem devices should be permitted on UK pavements and roads
- exploring whether other devices, such as powered transporters, should be allowed on public roads or pavements when used by disabled people or those with reduced mobility

The Alliance will continue to amplify the voices of our community to ensure this review delivers a fairer, more inclusive future for all.

But now is the chance for you to have your say. Click the below link to make your voice heard. The consultation runs for 12 weeks and will close on **31st March 2026**.

[Click here to have your say on the consultation](#)



New roles help drive our agenda for positive change

Recently we welcomed two new project managers to help carry out our work in ensuring wheelchair users get the right chair, at the right time.

[Lizzie Hawkins](#) joins as project manager for two days a week, following the announcement of a three-year funding partnership with the [RFU \(Rugby Football Union\) Injured Players Foundation \(IPF\)](#) at the end of last year.

She will be responsible for leading The Wheelchair Collective project which aims to establish a strong, unified national voice for the estimated 1.2 million wheelchair users across the UK to improve services and access.

Lizzie will also work on the project management of work arising from the Alliance's specialist interest group for innovation (SIG).

Also joining the Alliance team is project manager [Philip Hoare](#). An inclusive creator who campaigns for disability inclusion, he is also a co-founder of The Purple Collective, a community platform designed to unite activists and drive positive change in the disability space.

As a wheelchair user himself, Philip will spend one day a week in his new role utilising his experience in creating content and design to lead on the development of

the Alliance website, ensuring it remains accessible for all while aligning to our values.

[Click here to read more](#)



Launch of new national council to shape wheelchair provision

Wheelchair users in the UK are being invited to join The Wheelchair Collective – the first national council of wheelchair users.

Led by the Wheelchair Alliance, the initiative will give wheelchair users with lived experience the power to influence how wheelchair services are designed, delivered and improved.

Backed by funding from the RFU (Rugby Football Union) Injured Players Foundation (IPF), an independent charity that supports players who have sustained an acute life-changing injury whilst playing rugby union in England, this pioneering council will bring together passionate wheelchair ambassadors from every nation and region of the UK. Together, they will use their experience, insight and voice to spark real, lasting change in wheelchair provision and ensure services finally reflect the needs and realities of the estimated 1.2 million wheelchair users who use them.

Recruitment for the voluntary regional representatives is now underway in the East of England, London, Midlands, North East and Yorkshire, North West, South East, South West, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. In addition, The Wheelchair Collective will also appoint a Youth Leader and Chair.

Applications close on Friday 6th February.

[Click here for more information and to apply to be a council member](#)



Wheelchair Quality Framework Guide for Wheelchair Users

In the lead up to Christmas, we delivered a vital gift to your email inbox: our **Wheelchair Quality Framework Guide for Wheelchair Users**.

Wheelchairs provide a significant gateway to independence, wellbeing and quality of life for thousands of adults and children. They play a substantial role in facilitating

social inclusion and improving life chances through work, education and activities that many people who do not need wheelchairs take for granted.

That's why we believe it's vital that wheelchair users, commissioners and providers alike have the right tools at hand so that every wheelchair user gets the right chair, at the right time.

Our Wheelchair Quality Framework Guide for Wheelchair Users is a simplified version of the detailed Quality Framework document which was published earlier this year in collaboration with the NHS. The latter addresses the wide variation in wheelchair service provision and supports integrated care boards and providers in delivering high-quality provision that offers improved access, outcomes and experience for wheelchair users.

The new simplified user guide provides users with the knowledge to understand what level of service they should expect while helping commissioners identify gaps in local provision and assisting providers in maintaining high standards of person-centred care.

By using this guide at your next NHS wheelchair service visit, you will help us promote nationwide adoption and standardise care across services to drive change for the better.

[Click here to access your copy of the guide](#)



Two new patrons join the Alliance

2025 was a very busy time for the Alliance as we announced both the Rt Honourable Lord Philip Hunt of Kings Heath OBE and consultant urological surgeon Mr Mo Belal as our newest patrons.

Having previously served in a number of ministerial positions including Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, Minister of State at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and as a minister in the Department of Health, Lord Hunt was the first chief executive of the NHS Confederation from 1996 to 1997 and director of the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts since its formation in 1990. In 1993 he was awarded an OBE for services to the NHS.

For the past 28 years, Mo has worked in the medical profession, with the last 14 years spent working at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham performing reconstructive surgery for patients with urological conditions, including spina bifida and spinal cord injury.

He will also draw on his lived experience, having become a wheelchair user in 2020 following a cycling accident in which a falling tree left him seriously injured. This led to an intense period of treatment and recovery to aid his return to the job he loved, operating on his patients using a standing front wheel drive powerchair which enables Mo to stand while in theatre.

This exciting news follows the announcement last year of Nick Wilson, speaker, disabled adventurer and content creator, becoming the Alliance's first patron.

[Read more about Lord Hunt as patron here](#)

[Click here to read Mo's story and why he became a patron](#)



Our patron sparks debate in House of Lords on wheelchair provision

Late last year, our Patron, the Rt Honourable [Lord Philip Hunt](#), gave an impassioned speech to the House of Lords to start a debate about why there is an urgent need for a strategy for wheelchair and community equipment provision in this country.

In his speech, Lord Hunt labelled the provision of wheelchair and community equipment in this country 'a disgrace'. He also highlighted the experience of Dr Paul Seager, who was paralysed in a climbing accident and described his experience of wheelchair provision as 'inconsiderate, illogical and incompetent' as well as having 'bureaucratic barriers and organisational inflexibilities'.

Lord Hunt also referenced a conversation with a physiotherapist, the evidence provided by the Wheelchair Alliance, and work by the All-Party Parliamentary Group

(APPG) for access to disability equipment - all of which point to how inconsistent and under-resourced wheelchair services are.

He said: “As it currently stands, there are no consistent standards for wheelchair provision, no independent regulation, and few clear paths for users seeking repairs, reporting faults or making complaints. As a result, many disabled people experience long waiting times, delays in hospital discharge, loss of independence and an avoidable deterioration in health and wellbeing.”

Lord Hunt also welcomed the Wheelchair Quality Framework, which can be used to assist integrated care boards and wheelchair service providers to deliver high-quality provision. However, he acknowledged that this is only guidance and not mandatory.

His speech concluded by calling for a national strategy that needs to be underpinned by a comprehensive vision of what a high-quality wheelchair and community equipment provision should look like.

The speech started a debate that lasted almost an hour and featured contributions by Baroness Gillian Merron, Lord Kamall, Baroness Brinton, Lord Blencathra, Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho, Baroness Clare Gerada, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Chris Rennard and Lord Shinkwin.

This is such an important conversation to have, and we can't thank Lord Hunt and everyone who contributed to the debate enough.

[Click here to view the debate](#)

Partner spotlight



Spinal Muscular Atrophy: Supporting, informing, advocating

Here at the Wheelchair Alliance, we are proud to have Spinal Muscular Atrophy UK (SMA UK) as one of our valued partners.

Spinal Muscular Atrophy is a rare, neuromuscular condition which causes progressive muscle wasting (atrophy) and weakness. It may affect crawling and walking ability, arm, hand, head and neck movement, breathing and swallowing. How severely people are affected, and in what way, varies greatly.

Their mission is to be a leading advocate for individuals and families and to ensure timely access to diagnosis, effective treatment and best management for all affected, while removing barriers that prevent full inclusion in society.

As part of its commitment to supporting the SMA community, it:

- Listens to and support its community to make informed choices, bringing together skills, knowledge and resources in the UK and beyond, in its quest to optimise the future lives of all affected by SMA
- Produces reliable, timely information on SMA for the SMA Community as well as health care professionals, education providers and the general public
- Provides personalised practical and emotional support services for all those affected by SMA.

- Connects the SMA community across the UK through social networks and face to face events.
- Advocates on behalf of the SMA community to authorities that regulate access to drug treatments, care and services and campaigning on issues that matter to people affected by SMA.
- Funds and supports research into the clinical development of drug treatments that understand the complexities of SMA and the underlying disease mechanisms and improvements in the clinical care and management of people affected by SMA.

[Click here to find out more about SMA](#)

Our Partners



Membership of Alliance continues to grow

As a community interest company, we rely on the support of our wonderful partners and sponsors.

Support for the work that we do continues to grow and we're incredibly grateful to every organisation who has come onboard to support us.

A very warm welcome and a big thank you goes to [Phab](#), [Buckinghamshire BuDS Disability Service](#), [Action Duchenne](#), [Difference](#), [Multiple System Atrophy Trust](#), [Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea](#), [Capability Scotland](#), [Ruils Independent Living](#), [Just4Children](#) and the [Bridgeman Community Foundation](#) who have recently signed up as partners of the Alliance.

Partner spotlight



Newlife: providing a lifeline for families

In the UK, there are over 1.6 million children with disabilities.

Newlife, the Charity for Disabled Children is one of the UK's largest charitable provider of specialist equipment, who work to ensure that children with disabilities get the best possible start in life and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Founded over 30 years ago, it offers a lifeline for families, providing life-changing and life-saving equipment when and where it's needed.

Alongside equipment, Newlife campaigns to improve the outlook for children with disabilities and positively change lives by providing support to parents, working with health professionals and striving for a future where all children with disabilities get the equipment and support they need and deserve.

"All children deserve the right to live a life free from pain and to fulfil their full potential," says Ceara Chamberlin, campaigns and public affairs manager at Newlife. "Yet too many of the 1.6 million disabled children in the UK are being

routinely let down as they lack access to crucial support and specialist equipment such as wheelchairs, buggies and beds.

“For many, they are denied the opportunities we all take for granted, including the chance to go to school, develop skills and independence for the future or to even leave the house safely.

“By partnering with the Wheelchair Alliance, we hope that together we will make life better for children with disabilities and their families.”

[Click here to find out more about Newlife](#)



Follow us on Facebook!

As part of our mission to elevate the voice of wheelchair users across the UK, we have launched a dedicated Facebook page!

Designed to keep you informed about the latest developments in wheelchair provision, policy changes, and resources that can make a real difference to everyday life, it will act as a central hub for wheelchair users across the UK.

By using a widely accessible platform like Facebook, we aim to reach as many individuals as possible, ensuring that important updates are easy to find and share.

Beyond providing information, the page is intended to foster conversation and collaboration. Wheelchair users and their families often have valuable insights and experiences that can help shape better services and influence decision-making. The Facebook page offers a space where these voices can be heard, enabling members to contribute ideas, raise concerns, and share practical advice with others in the community.

You can already find us on [LinkedIn](#). However, we hope that as followers of the new Facebook page grows, it will empower users, strengthen advocacy efforts, and build

a supportive network that drives positive change. Ultimately, our goal is to create a more inclusive and responsive approach to wheelchair provision in the UK.

[Click here to follow us on Facebook](#)



Successful sponsored walk in aid of the Alliance

A sponsored walk at Redcar tarn Keighley by members of Bradford People's Parliament, Turning-point, Bradford has raised £127.50 in aid of the Alliance.

A big thank you to all who took part as well as those who provided support on the day, it is greatly appreciated.



National media coverage highlights work of the Alliance

2025 has been a fantastic year of media coverage for the Alliance.

In just 12 months we have secured 78 pieces of coverage in major outlets including BBC Breakfast, ITV News, This Magazine, MSN, Living with Disability, London Post, National World, Daily Record and London Daily News, reaching an incredible 12.5 million people!

The coverage has enabled us to raise the national awareness of our mission while attracting new sponsors and partners. As a result, we have also seen an increase in our membership base, further amplifying the voices of wheelchair users at the highest levels of policy and service delivery.

Can you support us?

Our volunteers work tirelessly to pursue the vision and the mission of the Alliance, with the aim of improving the lives of wheelchair users everywhere.

However, we can't do this work alone.

We are lucky to have the support of our wonderful partners and sponsors but any contributions made will help us to do more to get the voices of wheelchair users heard.

If you are able to donate, please do so. We thank you in advance for any support you may be able to provide.

Make a donation



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Disclaimer: *To support wheelchair users in finding the information they are looking for, the Wheelchair Alliance will at times provide links to websites that we believe may be of interest. The Alliance does not endorse any particular organisation, service or product that may be advertised on third party websites. The Alliance assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of these third party websites.*

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