EQUIPMENT CRISIS
#BLANKETBANS

Cease the use of Blanket Bans for rationing equipment

BLANKET BANS - THE PROBLEM

In November 2018, through a Freedom of Information Act request, we revealed 83% of councils in England were refusing to provide specialist car seats.

Blanket bans are set at a local level and are often used to ration budgets; but they force frontline health and social care professionals to deny disabled children specialist equipment, even if a qualified professional has assessed and identified a need.

The most common use of a blanket ban on equipment for disabled children is in relation to specialist car seats. Car seats are not luxury items; they can tilt to stop children with compromised airways from choking to death, they can have side and head supports to keep a child safe if having a seizure, and they can have a swivel base to help parents move the child in and out of the car safely – often to attend vital medical appointments.

THE FIX

An end to blanket bans and ‘We don’t do’ mind-set. Every local authority and health service must have an identified, transparent process for reviewing equipment requests. Where children do not meet the formal criteria, there must be a way for their request to be reviewed by clinical professionals and exceptionality determined at a special panel meeting.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS: Barristers advise that local bodies that apply a rigid one size fits all policy that refuses to allow for exceptionality are likely to be acting unlawfully (Newlife barristers advice 2018 available online at newlifecharity.co.uk/fixthefour).

“THIS COUNCIL DOES NOT ASSESS FOR, NOR DO WE FUND SPECIALIST CAR SEATS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN.”

One local council, 2019
WHAT WE’VE DONE

More than 69 councils who have previously told us that they didn’t provide car seats are now able to since we set out to tackle the equipment crisis just one year ago.

As a result of our calls to end blanket bans on the provision of specialist car seats to disabled children, the number of local authorities imposing such a ban in England has decreased by a third, meaning half of the UK’s councils can now provide the equipment when a need is identified.

For a full list of areas which can now provide specialist car seats, visit: newlifecharity.co.uk/fixthefour

HOW WE’VE DONE IT

We have actively challenged the councils with a rigid ‘one size fits all’ policy that refused to allow for exceptionality. In some cases, we have also worked with the local authority to implement new procedures for provision.

WHAT’S NEXT

We want to see a complete end to blanket bans on specialist equipment and a ‘we don’t do’ mind-set.

We congratulate those councils that have reviewed their policy following the first year of our #FixtheFour campaign but approximately 302,223 disabled and terminally ill children could still be affected by this postcode lottery so we will continue to campaign over the next year.

What we’ll be doing in the next 12 months:

1. We will continue to challenge potentially unlawful blanket bans across the UK.
2. We will enable families, to cut through local authority and NHS red tape and request funding for their children’s equipment through statutory services.
3. We will support disabled children to travel safely by providing specialist car seats to children and families in crisis.
AREAS THAT CAN PROVIDE CAR SEATS FOLLOWING #FIXTHEFOUR IN 2018

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Bedford Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Blackpool Council
Borough Council
Brent Council
Bristol City Council
Bromley Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Cardiff Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
Ceredigion County Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council
City of London Corporation
City of Wolverhampton Council
City of York Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Cornwall Council
Coventry City Council
Cumbria Council
Darlington Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Derby City Council
Doncaster Council
Dorset Council
Durham County Council
East Ayrshire Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
East Lothian Council
East Renfrewshire Council
East Sussex County Council
Enfield Council
Essex County Council
Falkirk Council
Glasgow City Council
Gloucestershire County Council
Halton Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Haringey Council
Herefordshire Council
Hillingdon Council
Hull City Council
Isle of Angelsey Council
Isle of Wight Council
Kent County Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Lancashire County Council
Leicester City Council
Lincolnshire County Council
London Borough of Bexley Council
London Borough of Hackney Council
London Borough of Hounslow Council
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Council
Luton Borough Council
Middlesbrough Council
Milton Keynes Council
Moray Council
Neath Port Talbot Council
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Newport City Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Lincolnshire County Council
North Somerset Council
North Yorkshire County Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Peterborough City Council
Plymouth City Council
Reading Council
Redbridge Council
Renfrewshire Council
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Rutland County Council
Selton Council
Sheffield City Council
Slough Borough Council
South Ayrshire Council
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Tyneside Council
Southwark Council
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Stoke on Trent City Council
Sunderland City Council
Surrey County Council
Sutton Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Torbay Council
Tower Hamlets Council
Trafford Council
Wandsworth Borough Council
Westminster City Council
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

For a full list of areas which can now provide specialist seats, visit newlifecharity.co.uk/fixthefour
ABOUT #FIXTHEFOUR

All children have the right to be safe and live without fear or pain. A right to learn, to develop skills, talents and abilities and a right to live a full life, without disadvantage.

Yet every day, right here in the UK, disabled and terminally ill children are failed and routinely let down because of a hidden equipment crisis. Thousands of the most vulnerable disabled children are denied equipment that could change lives. Children refused essential equipment are left to suffer in pain, their safety compromised, isolated from the world. They are repeatedly denied the chance to go to school, unable to develop vital skills for their future, while their families face insurmountable barriers in giving their child the opportunity to be the best they possibly can be.

In our 2018 #FixTheFour report we identified the key barriers preventing disabled and terminally ill children from having the right kind of specialist equipment at the right time, and outlined a comprehensive four-point-plan that aimed to improve equipment services for disabled children and their families.

KEY FACTS

- 8% of children in the UK are disabled (total = 1.1 million)
- 3x It costs three times more to raise a disabled child than it does to raise a non-disabled child.
- 15% increase in the number of disabled children in 2018 since 2017.

WHY EQUIPMENT MATTERS

- Reduces pain and suffering.
- Stops conditions from getting worse.
- Removes risk of injury or death.
- Improves treatment success.
- Better quality of life.
- Keeps families together.

#FIXTHEFOUR - see and hear more at newlifecharity.co.uk/fixthefour