



Hello Everyone

I'm passionate about everyone living an independent, positive life. I want you to help me champion this.

From the age of seven I first used a wheelchair, and as a determined and independent young girl the wheelchair was something that I knew could help me achieve my goals and aspirations. It wasn't long before I was already starting to enjoy and excel at sports. Through determination and hours of hard work and effort I achieved my goals with 11 gold, four silver and one bronze Paralympic medals to my name.

Today I have just as much drive and passion, and I currently have a very specific goal, but it's one that I can't do by myself. It's something I need your help with.

We are all aware that wheelchairs enable many people to live happier, fuller lives and yet the wheelchair services provided by the NHS often fall short of meeting the needs of users despite best efforts from clinicians and wheelchair services.

I want to make sure that wheelchair services are not simply forgotten services. These pieces of equipment are life-givers to everyone who needs them.

I want to make sure that everyone in England who needs a wheelchair gets the best possible care and support in making their choice. I want equality of access and more than anything, I want the individual to be at the heart of all and any decisions about their wheelchair needs.

In order to redress this, I, along with a commitment group formed the Wheelchair Leadership Alliance in January 2015. The Wheelchair Leadership Alliance is a group committed to improving wheelchair services across England. Representing wheelchair users, their families, carers and other organisations, the Alliance is working to strengthen connections between key partners in order to bring about positive, lasting change and shape NHS wheelchair services into a system that works better for its users.

A dual approach has been adopted to improve wheelchair service provision: they are the Right Chair, Right Time, Right Now campaign, and the Wheelchair Charter.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of issues in wheelchair services and highlight great practice, targeting those with the power to deliver change to make rapid improvements and also calls upon service users to help demand change by highlighting areas of improvement or by sharing great experiences.

The Wheelchair Charter outlines principles for how wheelchair services should be commissioned and delivered to ensure that people get the Right Chair at the Right Time. We are asking you as service users, manufacturers, providers, voluntary sector organisations, commissioners, clinicians and members of the public to pledge your support for the charter principles and the need for those in power to commit to delivering

But, as I say, I need your help to make sure what we do as the Wheelchair Leadership Alliance is representative of users, carers, providers, manufacturers, clinicians and commissioners.

This is not just important to me, it is important to thousands of wheelchair users across England who need our help and support.

So please take the time to read through the Alliance's Charter, pledge your support for its principles at www.rightwheelchair.co.uk and join me in taking action to help improve wheelchair services.

Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE
Chair, Wheelchair Leadership Alliance

