

Licensing Providers of NHS Services
Department of Health
Room 235
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

22 October 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

Protecting and promoting patients' interests – licensing providers of NHS services

As a charity supporting disabled children and their families, we would like to take this opportunity to comment briefly on proposed arrangements for services to this group, specifically paediatric wheelchair and specialist equipment services provided via AQPs (Any Qualified Provider).

We believe that the licensing and monitoring arrangements for such providers should be as transparent and robust as possible. When AQPs were first proposed, we had been given to believe that both Monitor and the Care Quality Commission would be licensing and regulating paediatric wheelchair and equipment services. We were therefore concerned to learn subsequently that AQPs delivering these services would apparently be exempt from the licensing regime and therefore this opportunity for regulation.

We are still concerned that services to disabled children, this most vulnerable group, should be properly licensed and regulated. We would therefore strongly urge that any pre-existing or proposed exemption should be reviewed so that all stakeholders can be given the proper level of assurance.