

Minister for Transport and Veterans
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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



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Dear Maureen

The Scottish Ferries Plan published in December 2012 included a commitment to set up a Ferries Accessibility Fund to provide support the improvement of facilities for, and the customer experience of, disabled people travelling by ferry.

I am pleased to inform you that I will be announcing the launch of the fund on Monday 18 August.

I am initially allocating £500,000 to the Fund. Awards will be made on a match-funding basis which means that up to £1 million could be spent on accessibility improvements across the ferry network. The fund will be open to bids from the public and private sector from operators of the ferries and harbours covered by the Ferries Plan. Funding will be available to make improvements to existing vessels and harbours that go beyond regulatory standards set for accessibility.

A Fund Management Group to select the successful applicants will be made up of representatives from Transport Scotland and the Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS). The intention is to have simple, effective and inclusive procedures for the application and award of grants whilst ensuring value for money and propriety in the use of public money.

The Fund is not intended for major investments in new facilities but rather in improvements to existing vessels and harbours. So the Scottish Government will continue to make significant accessibility improvements through our other funding streams; for example, our investment in the new £42m vessel the MV Loch Seaforth and through improved facilities at Ullapool, Stornoway and Brodick harbours.

Transport Scotland will be writing to eligible ferry and harbour operators to inform them of this opportunity and to invite them to submit proposals to the first funding round. I anticipate a second funding round early in the next financial year.

Kind regards



KEITH BROWN