

## **EVIDENCE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – DISABLED PERSONS’ PARKING ACT**

At Tesco, we want to serve our customers a little better every day. At the heart of everything we do are our customers.

Customers tell us our car parks are important and we take great care to ensure their design provides safety and convenience. Our car parks provide a range of services to help our customers, from cycle storage to parent and child parking and disabled bays. We operate 39,000 parking spaces in Scotland over 200 stores, from central Glasgow and Edinburgh, to our stores in Shetland, Orkney and Stornoway. Of these, approximately 2100 are disabled spaces.

Historically we have used a number of enforcement measures in our car parks, including third-party parking marshals, who are still operating in a few sites with the most complex parking situations. However developments in technology has now enabled us to begin rolling out a store by store self-monitoring approach to disabled bay enforcement, providing all stores with the technology to report suspected bay abuse ‘live’. This new scheme revolves around handheld devices (mobile phones with a specially designed app) used by Tesco colleagues, whereby colleagues can respond to any breaches they identify or our customers report. Colleagues then take pictures and record details of offending vehicles using the handhelds. As with the current parking enforcement arrangements of fixed cameras and marshals, a £70 charge is applied, (£42 if paid in 14 days), and we are currently investigating the most effective approach to pursuing repeat offenders further.

Our new handheld technology based approach has received positive feedback from customers, colleagues and the media and yielded positive results; delivering a reduction in offences where handhelds are operative. All funds raised are reinvested back into enforcement and we roll out the devices to all Scottish stores by the end of this financial year.

While reactively we are making enforcement easier, we are proactively trialling Disabled Parking Accreditation. This is in partnership with Disabled Motoring UK, who we are in regular contact with, as they channel their membership feedback on our carparks (including any breaches of disabled bays).

We want to make sure all our customers and colleagues recognise that everyone is welcome at Tesco. It is vitally important that disabled customers and colleagues have the support they need to feel confidence in their shopping trip or job role. We are a silver disability-confident employer, meaning we always interview disabled applicants for roles when they meet the minimum job criteria and regularly review our support for existing disabled colleagues. More broadly we have undertaken a variety of initiatives, including dementia-friendly checkouts, store ‘quiet-hours’, and updated signage on our toilets, to make our stores as accessible as possible for customers with a wide range of disabilities.

I hope this gives the committee a sense of our approach to disabled parking enforcement and our broader support for disabled customers and colleagues.