

# **PE2138/F: Make publicly owned buildings accessible for people with colour blindness**

## **Petitioner written submission, 30 August 2025**

The Scottish Government's submission of 13<sup>th</sup> June correctly describes colour blindness but fails to mention that it affects at least 8% of Scottish men so it is a handicap for a significant minority.

In both submissions strong reference is made to the recommendations of British Standard BS8300 and its requirement for difference in light reflective values when using colour as a discriminatory factor. But BS8300 also strongly recommends the use of well recognised symbols or words in addition to colour. Thus toilet signage should include 'ENGAGED' or 'VACANT' and trend lines in graphs should be distinguished by symbols. Yet this rarely happens.

The Government states that specific guidance to follow the recommendations of BS8300 is given in the design of Scottish Government estates and NHS estates; it would be interesting to be provided with examples of how this has turned out in practice. But it emphasises that such guidance is not retrospective and that much development is the responsibility of local government or private developers. Moreover the issue of whether colour blindness is a recognised disability is a reserved matter and so the SG cannot comment on the issue.

I find this dismissive stance very depressing. It is my experience that there is a great deal of ignorance about problems experienced by the colour blind and simply explaining them can result in immediate progress. Changing a lock on a toilet cubicle costs around £14 plus the labour; a sports club of which I am a member immediately agreed to do this on my request. It costs nothing to use symbols on graphs or avoid red laser pointers in lectures. And I find it amazing that the situation described by Gordon Macdonald MSP in which a Highers candidate was handicapped by his colour blindness should not concern the Scottish Government on the grounds that disability is a reserved matter.

In summary, there is a great deal of ignorance about the problems of those of us who are colour blind, yet there is a reserve of goodwill to help and that simple, cheap measures exist to ameliorate these problems. I maintain that the Scottish Government has a role in encouraging such measures and ask the Committee to pursue this issue.