

# Automatic access to blue badge scheme for those with MND given support at Holyrood

Lothian MSP Miles Briggs has given his support to the campaign for people with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) to receive automatic access to the blue badge scheme.

A debate at the Scottish Parliament was secured by Borders MSP Rachel Hamilton whose motion congratulated Doddie Weir on receiving his OBE and called for automatic access to the Blue Badge scheme for people with MND.

Automatic access to the scheme is argued to be the most appropriate course due to nature of the disease, which leads to a rapid deterioration in someone's physical ability.

Miles remembered his friend, the late Gordon Aikman, whose campaign a few years ago achieved so much in raising awareness of MND. Gordon's legacy lives on in many ways, including the improved provision of MND specialist nurses across the country and in the Gordon Aikman scholarships.

He also paid tribute to the significant amount of money for research into MND that Fernando Ricksen and his supporters and the Rangers Supporters Family have raised – and that offers more hope for a cure in the future, which is something, everyone clearly wants to see work prioritised towards helping achieve.

Briggs said: "I warmly congratulate Doddie Weir on receiving

his OBE and commend him for all his campaigning work which is truly inspirational and which I know will make a huge difference to people with MND in the future.

“I fully support the call for those diagnosed with MND – which we know can be such a rapidly progressing condition – to be given automatic access to a Blue Badge without having to go through a bureaucratic and potentially lengthy application process.

People diagnosed with MND fear the loss of their independence and their mobility and providing them with a blue badge has the potential to help significantly by providing them with easier parking and greater accessibility.”

Doddie Weir, MND campaigner and former Scottish rugby internationalist, said: “Not everyone with MND has six months to wait for the blue badge system to kick in and I believe everyone who is diagnosed with motor neurone disease should automatically be entitled to a blue badge, this will enable families to live a dignified and as full a life as possible while coping with this terrible disease.”



Doddie Weir OBE in the front row with MSPs in the Garden Lobby at Holyrood.