

28/1/11

080-Can. Res. Wf



DLA Reform Team
1st Floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

26 January 2011

Dear Sirs/Madam

I am writing with a certain amount of sadness but mainly anger that you have gone back on your promise to look after the most vulnerable within our community. Our son who is a full time wheelchair user with learning difficulties and registered blind, now lives in a Seeability home in [REDACTED]. He attended [REDACTED] as a weekly border and after he left we knew we had to find a home for him that would continue the excellent education, social and care provided by this fantastic school.

You may appreciate that after looking after our son for the first twenty years of his life we were anxious about his future and basically broke, so could not afford private care for him. He is one of the many who were not damaged due to someone's provable negligence but is simply unlucky to be born disabled. We have had fantastic support over the years from 'the people of this country via benefits and paid for help' but this has in no way covered the full costs of his care. Part of this has been bridged by charities but the bulk has been provided by us not just financially but by being his prime carers.

This role has been at the cost of a reduced ability to earn a living by not having the time available but during all of the last twenty two years we have managed to work and just about keep the roof over our heads. This has left us with large debts but we still can manage to live here in [REDACTED] although we will never be able to stop work. This is our problem and is not the reason for my responding to this consultation.

The problem you are about to give us has come from our determination to find the right place for him, for what is going to be the remainder of his life. These were far and few between and after twelve months we managed to find this fantastic home for him in [REDACTED].

This is a little over 180 miles away from where we have lived for the last thirty plus years and we are not in a position to move closer as we have an eleven year old son who attends our excellent local school and our businesses which make us a living (as we are both self employed running one person businesses) are based on our local clients so are not transferrable.

This leaves us 180 miles away from our son, [REDACTED], he doesn't mind as he is having a great life and loves being driven in his car and is not aware of the problems we have in getting to see him and bringing him home. We have bought ourselves an old caravan and tow it back and forward during the spring, summer and autumn months. Winter means the expense of hotels and a long home visit over Christmas. We can only transport him in his wheelchair accessible car.

The only way he can continue to fully enjoy the life he has had for the last fourteen months is by having his own transport available. Public transport is completely inaccessible and this does mean that without his own personal wheelchair accessible car he will not be able to visit us at what was his home and when we go and see him we will be restricted to accessing what is available by walking or should I say pushing his wheelchair.

The home obviously has a wheelchair accessible bus available but this in one vehicle between seven residents. This is the reality of life in such a home. You have decided even before this consultation to stop his mobility allowance and you have no idea of the harsh treatment this will mean for us as a family.

Our son should no longer be in a position to visit us at his old home and to be stuck in [REDACTED], as lovely as it is, for the vast majority of his time. No longer will he have the freedom to attend college weekly in [REDACTED] (which he loves) or for him and his carers to be able to go out to the local shops and seaside. The only way he access these is in his own car. He needs the extra money personally to keep this vehicle on the road. If he was not a full time wheelchair user this would not be a problem as an ordinary vehicle could transport him, you are substantially narrowing his life by this decision and it applies to all wheelchair users. This heartless way of saving money leaves us so very angry.

This will not happen immediately but will occur over the next few years when the removal of the mobility allowance he now receives starts to reduce his little bit of capital to zero. This will then mean he will loose his car and his little bit of true independence.

My wife asked me that what else do I expect from politicians who see the removal of such a trivial, to them, amount of money will not have any political repercussions, your only motive for making such a decision. I don't like to think what she will say when she discovers I've bothered to write to you as it is so unlikely you will ever change your minds on this, I am sure I am safe in that she will never discover that I've done so.

You may think the saving of this money is so very important and I know you cannot understand the pain and joy of having a seriously disabled child. You cannot understand the constant money worries and the feeling of despair that we have to rely on the generosity of our fellow citizens as tax payers to provide [REDACTED] with the level of care he currently and all his life has received. We are not ungrateful and are not asking for more but that there should be no reduction in his current benefits. We receive the mobility allowance on his behalf and make sure this is used for his car and general transport needs.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]