

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below a brief response to the Interim Analytical Report - 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled people'.

I have copied this email to our local Parents Group for Disabled Children - Full of Life as they will also be forwarding their comments.

The Disability Discrimination Act does not provide ample support for disabled people as it refers to 'reasonable adjustments' therefore enabling individual interpretation. An example of this is an employer who puts pressure on a disabled person when they are required to attend regular hospital appointments.

The NHS is not flexible in their service delivery and whilst they may provide outreach clinics these are still on a Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm basis. This can prevent disabled people accessing employment and so exacerbate the dependency on benefits. This also has implications for parents with disabled children as busy clinics may be inappropriate for children with behavioural difficulties.

The barriers to inclusion for Disabled Children are very real including; a postcode lottery with regard to educational & other support services which are presented as extras, when actually non-disabled children access these services without any barriers. This means that parents are often regarded as argumentative & obstructive when in reality this is very real frustration at having to constantly fight for the basic human rights of their disabled child.

The Disability Living Allowance system needs a very urgent review as it does not provide support for individuals whose disability means that they do not fit into a restricted category and can be intermittent in how it affects their daily life. This again means reliance on other benefits and inability to enter employment.

There needs to be adequately trained professionals to support disabled children & their families for each transition stage e.g. 4 years/10 years/13 years and not just as an add on to a person's 'day job'. Also it is essential that each transition stage is led by the child & family NOT the professional making decisions about them.

Finally I think it is essential to centrally & locally have substantial information about children being born & their disabilities so that services can be commissioned appropriately. This could be anonymous to ensure confidentiality but would mean that gaps in services can be based on clear projections not guesswork or anecdotes.

I hope that these comments are helpful & please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further.

Regards

Denise Airey

Children & Families Development Officer