

Dear Sir,

My wife suffered a stroke (unknown cause) of the brain-stem at the age of 32. We have two young children who were 11 months and 2 1/2 yrs at the time of her stroke. The stroke was extremely severe and has left her severely disabled.

Since then I have been attempting to find support for us but this has proved extremely difficult. I contacted Social Services, Carer's Organisations, Charities, and many more. I have had comments such as "you just have to cope or consider giving up your children for adoption!"

I have searched through various government policies and acts and very surprisingly discovered that there is nothing to support the needs of disabled parents. Yes there is support for disabled individuals and disabled children but what about people in our circumstances? Are we the only ones in the Country?

We have had to cope with my wife's sudden disability and the (emotional) trauma associated with it, trying to raise 2 young children and the many issues associated with it (school runs, after school activities, etc), being a carer, looking after our home, being the primary breadwinner, finding holidays suitable for both children and disabled at a suitable price, etc. etc. Note that we do not have family support either.

Do I give up work and be a carer for my wife and children? We would have to rely totally on benefits and this certainly is not enough for me to provide the same level of upbringing to my children as other children in normal families. What would you do?

"Fairer Charging for Homecare" and "School Admission Policies" by local councils; again why don't these not consider disabled parents and their needs?

These policies (and many others) must consider the needs of parents with disabilities and this should be done urgently to help the many in our predicament. We are desperate and again shocked that we have been again ignored in the "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" report.

I believe that a joint report that was published in January 2005 states that, by 2025, disabled people should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society. I believe that the report has been agreed as Government policy. However although there are paragraphs dedicated to support for parents with responsibility for disabled children, there is little mention of disabled people as parents. In the few cases where disabled parents are mentioned, there are just footnotes relating to various past reports which have been published on the issues for disabled parents.

I feel that parenthood is an important factor in improving the life chances of disabled people! I write to you to point out this important omission, and urge you to ensure that disabled parents and their needs are not left out of the Government's plans for improving the life chances of disabled people. We would greatly appreciate that you consider people in our situation.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank You. Regards,