

News

[NEWS]

New study highlights 'fragmented and inadequate support' for disabled parents

Disabled parents have welcomed the publication of a report by the social care watchdog which shows that very few councils in England provide proper support to disabled parents. The report provides objective proof of what disabled parents have been saying for years and called for the government to require local authorities to consider the needs of disabled parents as a specific group.

Disabled Parents Network was one of the partnership organisations consulted by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in putting together the report. The report highlights the 'gap' between council services for adults and children into which disabled parents often fall. Only 12% of councils looked at needs on a 'whole family' basis and less than a fifth of councils even collected information about disabled parents living in their area.

Two-thirds of councils had policies focusing on the separate needs of adults and children, even when the adults and children were in fact part of the same family. Disabled Parents Network, a charity run entirely by disabled parents, provides a support service for disabled parents all over the UK. Chair of the charity, Simone Baker, said:

This report is a wake-up call for central and national government. It highlights how disabled parents are being very poorly served by social services and it makes key proposals for improvement which we very much support.

The report can be found on [CSCI's website](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

[NEWS]

Disabled Parent becomes CBBC Presenter

Disability charities have expressed anger after a number of parents complained that a one-armed children's TV presenter was frightening their kids.

Cerrie Burnell, who was born with one arm, began co-presenting Cbeebies 'Do And Discover' slot with Alex Winters last month - she's attractive, dynamic and a good presenter. But for parents, the fact of her visible disability is too scary for them to accept, so they 'believe' this will scare children.

Children are not stupid, and they have to be taught to fear disability, so the campaign says more about parental attitudes and real discrimination.

CBeebies in recent years has been exemplary in including disabled people - it is important that we have disabled people on kids TV.

One of the crucial ways disabled people are changing the world, is simply by being seen in public roles and being ourselves.

This is one of the ways we grow a society which is not afraid of disabled people because they are kept

out of sight. We change the minds of our youth by just presenting a truer picture of society and who is in it.

So, we need to make sure that those who support her outnumber those who have a personal problem and real fear of disability.

Secondly, we need to show the BBC that although a few people have 'complained' Cerrie is a good presenter and those of us who support her outnumber those who would rather disabled people were hidden away.

Given the continuing use of the BBC 'Extend' scheme, we must make sure that the BBC get it right by being an equal opportunities employer.

Cerrie is helping show our youngsters that we live in a diverse world and that it is real equality.

Please contact your local BBC or TV stations to support Cerrie and to ensure that our children have more positive role models like Cerrie. Write to the BBC TV Centre at Wood Lane London W12 7RJ or e mail via the website www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies

[NEWS]

Disabled Parents Network Advocacy service officially began on the 1st of April.

Our service aims to empower disabled parents to access the services they are entitled to around a wide range of parenting issues. The service is free and is open to all disabled parents in England.

To find out more information on when an advocate can be referred to, different meanings of advocacy and how to contact our advocate <[a href="/site/advocacy "](/site/advocacy)>click here.

[NEWS]

Would you like to be part of a TV documentary?

Marc Lewis says:

I work for Ricochet TV, makers of Channel 4 series Born to be Different. I am currently developing a new documentary series about disabled parents and the challenges faced by parents who have additional needs.

I am interested in speaking with parents and parent-to-be. I am particularly interested in speaking with those thinking of starting a family, expecting their first child or those in the early months of parenthood

At this stage I am simply hoping to talk to people who are directly affected by this issue to gain a greater understanding about the subject with no pressure to commit to any filming.

I would like to welcome anyone to call me on 01273 224 800 or email me at marc.lewis@ricochet.co.uk

[NEWS]

Membership fee scrapped

The Full Membership fee has been £10 a year for some time now, or £2.50 a year to those on means-tested benefits, but at our AGM on 28 March 2009 it was agreed to remove the membership fee in an attempt to make membership accessible to more people. There is still a cost incurred to us for each member, however, so we will continue to ask members to make a voluntary donation wherever possible. The website will be updated this week with new membership forms and information.

[NEWS]

DPN introduces new phone number to save callers money

DPN now has a new phone number for enquirers to contact us on, costing less than the previous number. Calls to our new number - **0300 3300 639** - should be charged at the same rate as standard landline calls (ie, numbers beginning 01 and 02), and as such should also be included in any 'inclusive calls' package or bundled minutes.

Our old number - 0870 241 0450 - continues to operate alongside the new one, and we will be updating all our publicity and publications over the next year to reflect the changes.

We have also introduced a menu enabling selected calls to be routed directly to the most appropriate person, but if no key is pressed calls will still be placed directly into the main helpline queue as before.

We hope that the change will encourage disabled parents who are concerned about call costs to contact us still, and improve the speed and efficiency with which we handle calls.

[NEWS]

New Volunteer Packs and Leaflets running off the press...

DPN relies on disabled parent volunteers for much of the work and networking that goes on. We have recently rewritten the volunteer packs and these are now available for anyone interested in volunteering some time to support DPN. For further information please talk to Steve or Sam or email volunteering@disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk

We have also reprinted our general leaflet to reflect some of the recent changes to DPN, with the new 0300 number on.

[NEWS]

DPN Welcomes New Staff

We are very pleased to be busy training our three new staff members, and look forward to being able to extend the hours of the Support Service.

Sam, Hamah and Vikki have settled very quickly into their new roles within the Support Service, and from early next year they will between them ensure that the helpline is (wo)manned from 10am until 4pm Monday to Friday. We will be advertising for one part-time and one full-time family advocate in the new year, as well as for a new fundraiser. Further details will be posted on the website as soon as they are available.

[NEWS]

Cheaper Phone Bills

BT has introduced a new tariff primarily for those on low incomes (in receipt of Income Support or equivalent), Their information pages also state that

"If you're registered as being chronically (long-term) sick or disabled, you may be eligible for BT Basic and some of the restrictions won't apply to you."

Further details of BT Basic can be found at

www.btplc.com/inclusion/phoneservices/services/btbasic/faq.htm

[NEWS]

ESA & changes to benefits

The long-discussed Employment and Support Allowance - ESA - has come into force, replacing both Job Seekers Allowance and Incapacity Benefit. Whilst DPN does not normally get too involved with benefits information, one of our Trustees does in another life, and will be sharing a summary of the changes shortly. The important bit of information for now, though, is that if you currently receive JSA, IS or IB, your benefit is unlikely to change or be affected for a few years yet.

[NEWS]

Big Lottery Fund announces grant to DPN

The Big Lottery Fund have announced their grant to DPN in a recent press release which can be seen [here](http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/opinion-former-index/communities-and-local-gove)

<http://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-formers/press-releases/opinion-former-index/communities-and-local-gove>

The four-year grant of £499,635 will enable us to expand our work and employ new staff to take the work of DPN forward. The next few months will be very busy ones for the Trustees, and the new Executive Committee that has been formed from the Trustees.

We'll be sharing more news on this very shortly.

[NEWS]

Supermama Video

DPN Trustees and volunteers have been discussing the following video found on YouTube, which we felt was worth sharing:

```
<object width="425" height="355"><param name="movie"
value="http://www.youtube.com/v/IzqqaJdwWtw&hl=en"></param><param name="wmode"
value="transparent"></param><embed src="http://www.youtube.com/v/IzqqaJdwWtw&hl=en"
type="application/x-shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="425"
height="355"></embed></object>
```

We're always keen to hear (or see) examples of how Disabled Parents have adapted.

[NEWS]

THE HEALTHCARE TRAVEL COSTS SCHEME

Around 1.4 million people every year turn down or miss healthcare appointments, or choose not to seek health care, because of transport problems. For people on low incomes, the reason is often that they cannot afford the cost of travelling to hospital and other places of treatment.

The Department of Health has been working on extending the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme to help more patients to access the care that they need. These changes will come into effect from 1st April 2008, and to reflect its broader scope, the scheme will be renamed the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme.

From this date, some people on low incomes may qualify for help with travel costs under HTCS, including those in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit, Child Tax Credit*, Working Tax Credit* with Child Tax Credit*, Working Tax Credit* with a disability element* (*subject to an income ceiling)

[NEWS]

DEAN THOMAS -

WINNER OF THE ICT HUB'S "INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS" AWARD

Trustees of DPN are proud to announce that former Trustee and website co-ordinator, Dean Thomas, has been selected as the ICT Hub winner for the 'Individual Contribution' Award 2008. The judges were very impressed with the work he has done and is continuing to be involved with, not least for co-ordinating an ICT strategy for Disabled Parents Network.

Dean has invested many hundreds of hours of his free time each year as a volunteer and Trustee for DPN. He has been instrumental in coordinating all aspects of our ICT strategy from setting up our original website to converting it to CMS in 2007 with greater functionality including: integrated login system with the enquiry log, newsletter facility and feedback facilities.

Dean also played a key role in designing DPN's online enquiry log which allows all our disabled parent helpline volunteers the freedom and flexibility to work from home. Most recently in 2007, he implemented enhancements to the enquiry log system including improved: security and data protection compliance as well as an improved monitoring facility.

Dean has recently resigned from his position as Trustee due to personal circumstances but remains a dedicated and helpful volunteer for the organisation.

Having a website and online enquiry log has made a huge difference to DPN's work. Dean has designed both with good accessibility and in consultation with other disabled parents to ensure the facilities are fit for purpose. The enhancements he made to the website in 2007 have meant it is easier to maintain/update and easier to navigate. Enhancements to the enquiry log system have meant that DPN's data can be recorded more easily and more accurately allowing for improvements in monitoring and evaluation vital to the future of of DPN's work.

Dean travelled to London to be presented with the award at the ICT Hub National Conference in London on March 11th 2008.

[NEWS]

Disabled Parent Supernanny Expert!

DPN's Vice-Chair, Simone Baker, is now featured as a "Supernanny Expert" having written an item for the Supernanny Website. The item on "Parenting with a disability" outlines some of the issues facing disabled parents and promotes the existence of Disabled Parents Network :

Visit The Supernanny Website.

The Supernanny Website is the official online community for the successful Channel 4 TV Show, and features parenting advice, video clips, a discussion forum and even has reward charts which can be downloaded!

[NEWS]

Born Survivors: Looking after Mum

This BBC documentary looked at how 12-year-old Melissa and 14-year-old Ryan support their disabled mum.

The two girls have also kept a diary which can be read on the BBC website.

[NEWS]