

My name is Storm Robbins, I'm 20 years old and I have Cerebral Palsy. Up until recently, I have been receiving a range of disability-related supports which have been very helpful for me. These included physiotherapy, podiatry and support to attend the local gym. Recently having turned 20, I am no longer eligible for supports at my current service and I have been trying to find another service to continue delivering the supports I need. At this stage, I have been told that I am ineligible for another local support service and so far I have been without supports for 8 months.

As people with disabilities get older, changes in what supports we are eligible for creates big problems and means that we miss out on the supports we need.

I hope under a new scheme people with disabilities will be able to get the supports they need for their whole life.

I think there needs to be more employment supports for people with a disability, especially supports and opportunities for young people to get work experience, as well as to be able to get and keep paid employment.

I have been fortunate to have some previous work experience and this was very beneficial to me. It gave me a good understanding of what the real world of work was like and allowed me to take on a range of responsibilities in a workplace. I had a support worker in this workplace and it was helpful to have someone to assist me in explaining some of the tasks I had to do.

I think people with disabilities should get the supports they need to be able to go to a mainstream school if this is what they and their families want.

People with disabilities should have the right to learn where they want to learn to be what they want to be. When I was younger, it was suggested by professionals that I should attend a special school. I was lucky that my parents felt very strongly about me being able to get a good education and they stuck up for the fact that I should go to mainstream school.

As part of the scheme, I think people with disabilities and their families should have access to counseling

I have thought about suicide before. Having a disability is hard and it took me a while to realize and come to terms with the fact that it is permanent. You definitely need someone to talk to away from your family. Making friends can also be difficult. Sometimes as a person with a disability you can feel invisible and like we are a valued person. This leads to you not having much self-confidence.

People should be able to get funding for things like home modifications and for all the supports they need

Most of the supports I access at the moment I have to pay for. This means high costs for my family, or me just not getting the supports I need. An example of this is physio. When this was still paid for as one of the supports I received, I was able to have it regularly. Now I can't have

it at all because it is just too expensive. It's definitely not good for my mobility to have to go without this. Other examples of extra costs to my family and I are for modifications to our house. We had to have the shower modified so I was safe for me to use and also had to put in some ramps around our house. All of this was paid for by us.

People should have enough money for supports so we don't have to rely on our families so much

I still rely on my family to provide a lot of the supports I need. Especially things like personal care and transport. At the moment my mum gives me the most assistance with personal care and I rely a lot on my dad (and sometimes my sister) to drive me places. But my dad is not so well himself at the moment, he has cancer. While I really appreciate all the support my family gives me, I would prefer not to have to rely on my parents so much for supports, they also need to be able to look after their own health. I would like it if my personal support could be provided by someone else. At the moment I don't have any funding for this though, so I need to continue to rely on my family. If I could have some more support with learning to use public transport, this might also help me be able to get around more independently.

I think supports under the new scheme should be individualized.

Every disability is different. You need to be able to access services that work for you.

Apart from the services that I have already mentioned, it would be useful for me to be able to access massage and psychology services. As

well as have some life-skills training. It would be great if there was a service that could help us learn things like cooking and managing money.

People with disabilities should have more opportunities to get out and do the things they want to do. We should have supports to do this

I do go out at the moment, but only about three or four times each month. If I had all the supports that I needed to access the community, I would love to go out more. I'm a movie person and I love to go to the footy. I would also love to go out to more social events. - Just what other people do at my age. I would definitely need to have more assistance with transport if I was going to get out more.

I think there should be more supports for people with disabilities to help us have, and feel more confident about, relationships

I have been in relationships before but I feel a bit intimidated and I feel like I might be taken advantage of or rejected because of my disability. I think a lot of people with disabilities may not feel very confident and I think there should be more supports to help us find relationships and to build our confidence.

If I knew I could have all the supports I needed, related to my disability for my whole life, it would be a huge benefit to me and my family. If that were the case, I would take back all the Christmas presents that my family had ever given me!

