Hi, My name is Carmel Hawking,
Firstly I commend you for doing something to assist those of us who have become part of the system of families with a disabled person.

I have a point I wish to make, however, I have just taken a second job to help my family and will not be able to make any meetings for further recommendations.

I would like to say that everywhere that I read anything in this report referred to those with proven long term or permanent disabilities. My point is this.

My son could very likely have come under this category however, due to the amazing work put in by staff at Princess Margaret Hospital, and I mean by everyone that we have dealt with my son may not eventually fit into this category. I say may as he has an "Acquired Brain Injury" as the result of an infection that damaged his organs in particular his lungs and brain. His road to recovery has been very long and extremely painful at times. What I would like to see acknowledged is that families of people who may recover or may not (we were told to always prepare for the worst) do not know what category they fit into. Most often the doctors do not know what category they will fit into. My son has required an intensive rehabilitation program, which has been funded by our family. We have done everything that any therapist or professional has suggested. This has been a financial and time burden however, I look at my son and know that we have done everything in our power to make him what he wants to be. And of course this does not even take into consideration that he would not give up and will try anything that is asked of him.

Therefore, it may not always be a permanent outcome. We are early in saying that there is hope for him to lead a completely normal life, but he has worked at an amazing pace to get where he is today and functions very well on all levels including at an average mental ability for a child his age (he is 8 years old).

To get to why I have mentioned all this. You are trying to cater for all people who may be long term affected by whatever disability they have and financially and in other ways support those people who I agree wholeheartedly with however, if our family and my sons therapists and all those who have been connected with my son had not applied themselves with such enthusiasm, I am sure that my son would have waned and become part of the permanently disabled society for the rest of his life.

So what I would like you to consider is that if you could get more support for people who may not necessarily be in a permanent situation with their loved one, to push them with whatever support we can muster, then we wont have the burden for all of that persons life to support them. There are many who with some extreme support can work through some issues and through an amazing support system can become independent and have no further use of the Disability System.

Would that not be advantageous to all of us. The family would rejoice, society would have another person who it may have supported for a term of impairment, but due to that support, it would not be a full time, for life duty of support.

I would be happy to further discuss any of this further, I would also be happy to supply details of all of my sons therapists and ask them if they would like to contribute information to back up my submission.

So many of the hospital staff have said to us "if only we could get some of our patients to see where they could be if they participated in more therapy and had social support to continue that support and rehabilitation in their home environment, then we would see many more children improving like your son"

Comments similar to this have been said to us on numerous occasions. So many people are in the system because they could not cope with the rehabilitation for emotional, financial or other reasons.

I do not have any government support for my child, I never have had. Yes, at times I have found financially it is a struggle, however, I have been able to cover all our finances and move on, but I know that is not always the case with other families.

I know that because it is a grey area it makes it difficult to encompass in this report but it could be done, with co-operation from the health professionals, forms could be completed to cover levels of assistance required or other recommendations on the care of a particular patient.

Thank you for taking the time to read my printed thoughts.

Good luck with your report, I wish you every success.

Kind Regards

Carmel Hawking