Carers (Scotland) Bill

Autism Rights

I would like to make the following submission on behalf of Autism Rights, in respect of the Carers' Bill.

Autism Rights would like the Scottish Parliament to legislate to modify existing legislation or the Carers' Bill to make it a legal requirement for the Carers Assessed Statement Of Need to be given a guaranteed budget.

Two further initial points we wish to make:-

1. Previous legislation required that all Carers had a legal right to have their Needs Assessed.

2. The major problem with previous legislation, like almost all the Acts, is that they have no technical standards and choice. But worse, under previous legislation is the fact that, although you have a 'Carers Statement Of Need', COSLA Members have no legal requirement to provide a budget to deliver the Needs statement.

To quote one of our founding members:-

`No-one has actually measured the Parliament's performance in whether their traunch of Legislation has delivered its intent in benefiting the people/disabled. In most cases just a soup of talking shops all mixed in with intermittent 'drum roll' launches then quietly withering on the vine as they fail miserably again.`

In Answer to the committee's questions:-

1. What do you think about the proposals to offer adult carers a support plan and to offer young carers a young carer's statement?

It will come to nothing, unless STANDARDS for public services are established that put in place standards of service both for people who are cared for and for those who care for them. Unless there are standards, there is no genuine possibility of achieving rights for carers or for those who are cared for, nor for the accountability of public servants.

2. What do you think about the proposal that councils must consider, in particular, whether the support they provide should take the form of a break from caring for those with caring responsibilities?

It will come to nothing, unless there are STANDARDS that can enforce rights to services that are specific to a person's and families' needs - e.g. generic disability standards are useless, they need to be specific to impairments or disability.

3. What do you think about local councils being given the responsibility to establish information and advice services for carers?
Responsibility without enforcement is useless. You can try, but most misinformation from public servants is done orally, so it is very difficult to prove this. Our own experience is that some of the worst misinformation is committed at the start of contact, when you are trying to establish a relationship of trust. That is precisely when public servants then accuse you of mistrust and threaten to withdraw even statutory services unless you accede to their wishes - basically, unless you capitulate to their bullying.

4. What do you think about councils setting local criteria for those who would be eligible for support?

Government will then become even bigger hypocrites in claiming that there is a `postcode lottery` of provision. As government has not even been willing or able to establish national standards of education or healthcare for specific disabilities, thus leaving families completely vulnerable to the whims of local financial gatekeepers, local government has simply not bothered to equip itself with the skills or overall competence to assess, let alone deliver services.

5. Is there anything you think should be changed or added to the Bill?

Please see above text. I don't have time to go into further detail. Without STANDARDS (as noted above), there can be no ENFORCEMENT, and therefore no RIGHTS, nor any ACCOUNTABILITY of public services or of the servants who are supposedly there to `deliver` them.

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Autism Rights