

SUBMISSION FROM HILDA MILLAR

1. Only by legislation can people with autism access the services they need. If local services are not breaking the law by not providing the help then sadly it will not be provided. This is my conclusion with my experience throughout the life of my 19 year old son with Aspergers syndrome. An Autism Bill is the only way forward.
2. The support we have received has been a constant fight through the beleaguered school / NHS system and, eventually, a diagnosis. Only tough parents can cope. I know of parents that cannot put themselves through the stress and so receive the minimum of support.
3. It is not right that a child is "written off" because it is so difficult to access the services. The Autism Bill is desperately needed to make it easier to obtain specific help from knowledgeable practitioners.
4. An area of provision that I found totally lacking was leaving school at 18 years. There is no continuity of care. We were left trying to figure out what was out there! Thank heaven for charities such as the National Association for Autism who now support him at college and next year at university. My husband and I are taxpayers, why are we having to rely on a charity for support?
5. An Autism Bill is desperately needed to make sure that there is continuity of care throughout an autistics life, not just at college, but to be able to live independently as an adult.
6. Finally, I would like to point out that people with Aspergers can make a significantly positive input to society. They are intelligent, think "outside the box", focused and have commitment, all of which are good qualities for employment. However only 13% of autistics are employed, and so employers have to be taught how to respond to their social ineptitude and "weirdness" and be rewarded with a very loyal employee.
7. Surely it is cheaper for government to help get them employed rather than a lifetime of enforced unemployment and on benefits.

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