

SUBMISSION FROM MARTIN RODGER

1. I was diagnosed two years ago with asperger's syndrome at a time when I had been out of work for a time, unable to work through problems with anxiety and such.
2. I have since then not found work, but I have been struggling to live independently (throughout adulthood I have depended on my now elderly parents to a very great extent).
3. I am also struggling now with the challenge of going back to college after a long period of volunteering for many organisations. I am also struggling with time management, and being able to say 'no' to requests for my involvement as a volunteer. My life is in great, great disorder although I was hoping to access support which would help with this, prior to my starting at college.
4. Because of my present state, I am finding it difficult to focus on the issues surrounding the Autism (Scotland) Bill, and I am having difficulty communicating in present circumstances (in noisy college library right now - having had an accident in a college corridor, with a glass bottle and a flimsy carrier bag, which has shaken me).
5. I think it's worth saying that the 'guidelines' I've looked at for sending you evidence would seem custom made to put any autistic people off replying! I get muddled just looking at the headings, trying to think how this relates to what I need to say to you.
6. What I can tell you is that I have nobody to send my evidence on my behalf; this is because I have had great difficulty in accessing support. This is despite the fact that staff at the Autism Resource Centre (ARC) who have agreed to try and help me are convinced that I am in great need of some assistance (ie social work) to at least check up on me regularly, and to consult with about how I should go about daily life with my lack of life skills and poor decision-making. They became convinced I need this help after visiting me to see how I live. I am muddled about who I have already attempted to contact myself, to seek support. I have been passed from pillar to post and am greatly confused about the whole situation. I am sure I did contact social work personally and have certainly received no help from them. I recently had reason to look for the post-diagnostic report which the psychologist prepared after diagnosing me; I found there was still a reply slip from social work attached to it, so they must have looked into my situation and decided not to do anything for me. I was also passed on to the Adult Learning Disability Team, but they were at a loss as to how to help me. I don't think I qualify as having a learning disability, as I did manage to scrape a degree by the end of a deeply traumatic university experience (pre-diagnosis; I was on anti-depressants by the end).

7. I have remained in contact with the NHS professional who was dealing with me through JobcentrePlus's condition management programme. She has kindly made herself available to occasionally meet to try and advise me on overcoming difficulties in finding support. She is of the opinion that I am also in need of psychotherapy or something of the sort, due to mental problems arising through the problematic period in which I have been coming to terms with my diagnosis. I have also become muddled in the last two years during the process of trying to access something of this sort. I still have received no psychiatric or psychotherapeutic attention, but I do think that I have been involuntarily assigning that role to unqualified people, such as the stress and relaxation expert who kindly listened to me over a few weeks and helped me to begin homeopathic treatments.
8. Another problem which has not been addressed is the problems I have with neighbour noise, this despite the housing officer with the housing association assuring me and my parents before I agreed to the tenancy that noise was never a problem in the high-rises as the concrete walls are so thick (a barefaced lie). I should point out that I did also fill the application (post-diagnosis, and with the assistance of the ARC) to the housing association for special medical grounds to be considered, but this was rejected without explanation or possibility of appeal.
9. Although I am not receiving support which I do require (presumably because I am ostensibly a 'socialised' and apparently functioning adult) I must say that the ARC has offered a service of overall great quality; unfortunately they are too limited in what support they can offer and so many vital support needs are not provided to people such as myself.
10. I hope this information is a worthwhile addition to the evidence you have been receiving.

Martin Rodger
7 October 2010