

Letters to the Editor

June 18th 2015



Threat to disabled

Sir, Over the past 60 years campaigners have fought so that people with learning disabilities can make their own choices in life and be part of mainstream society. Now it seems that we are about to go backwards on decades of hard-won victories that secured disabled people's rights and inclusion in society.

There have been great strides since the 1950s, when I was advised to "put away and forget" my late daughter Shelley, who had Down's syndrome. However, expected cuts of £12 billion to the social security budget, combined with huge reductions in funding for local government, and therefore social care, are causing fear and anxiety among the 1.4 million people with learning disabilities.

Support through welfare and social care allows people with a learning disability to leave their homes, be active in the community and seek employment. For family carers, it recognises their vital role, and supports their immense contribution to their families and to society.

If we make the wrong decisions now we threaten the basic rights of disabled citizens in a way that no civilised country should be willing to contemplate.

LORD RIX, president, Mencap
 Additional signatories: KALIYA FRANKLIN and GARY BOURLET, People First England; DR SIMON DUFFY, Learning Disability Alliance England; KAREN FLOOD and CRAIG HART, National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities; VICKI RAPHAEL, National Valuing Families Forum