

Gail Russell

Tuesday 5th August

Letter to the Committee,

My name is Gail Russell and I am writing to you as I have been told that you may be able to help my sister Sharon Salmon and I on behalf of our brother who has been in the DSC System for over thirty years.

He lives in government accommodation in a shared house called "Stratton House" and has been there for approximately fourteen years, before that he was in another shared house for over ten years.

The house is shared by four other men with various disabilities and they mostly have all been together for as long as we can remember.

A couple of his carers have been caring for Shane and his housemates for over a decade.

Our brother considers "Stratton House" his home and his housemates and carers his family and he doesn't like to be away from them for any length of time and when he comes to us at Christmas as soon as he has his goodies he wants to go home - his home - as he is more comfortable being there.

What the Government is proposing to do with the privatisation of these homes and the loss of their long time carers will be devastating to these disabled and vulnerable people our brother included.

Change for our brother and the others will be distressing as they like order and sameness in their lives and they will not understand what is happening and why they are losing their long time carers and

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replacing them with strangers.

We are told .. is being given better choices but in fact he has no choice, because if he had a choice it would be for everything to stay the way it is now.

The choice we want for .. is to be able to stay with DSC as .. has a wonderful life now and we can't see it staying that way with the Privatisation of these shared Homes.

.. goes to a workshop as his place of employment and has been there for twenty years in the same place, he goes on holidays every year, has outings with his Housemates and carers and they get together with other people with disabilities from other shared houses. He also has a dedicated day for a one on one with his carer for shopping, banking and any medical needs he has.

In other words .. leads a near as normal life thanks to the dedicated carers, but he will never have a girlfriend, get married or have children

With the Privatisation of these services he will not get the same level of care that he has now and he does need supervision 24/7. He needs his carers who are qualified and whom he knows and trusts.

.. has been in DSC Government care since before our mother died, 34 years ago. These changes will affect his wellbeing and be devastating for him.

Our brother .. is Down Syndrome and has a speech impediment and it is hard to understand and communicate with him and that is why he likes to be with others like himself as they have their own way of communicating with each other.

My sister and I can not see any reason to change to Privatisation. The system in place now has worked well for ..

We have not been given any good reason for the changes to Privatisation other than its to give better choices.

We feel . . . has the best choice now and that choice is being taken away from him and us.

There has always been the choice of going with a non government provider if anyone wished to do so but we don't want to and we feel its in best interests and wellbeing to stay with the Dsc Government provider. We feel we should have that choice for . . .

We know we are not the only Family who are devastated by the decision of the Government to change to Privatisation against our wishes.

We, my sister and I would like to ask the committee to launch an inquiry into the transition of accomadation services.

Hoping you can help us help our brother life from being pulled apart.

Kind Regards

Gail Russell

and on behalf of my sister

Sharon Salmon.