

Dear Deputy Southern,

The new system has proved very costly to my parents. Mum and dad are in their eighties; Dad is registered blind and mum has suffered mini strokes before having a massive stroke in September 2008.

Both mum and dad used to receive the disability transport allowance. When the new system came in they were sent a social security application form to complete - it was lengthy and given their disabilities and mum's frailty they decided not to complete it.

They thought that because they had over the savings threshold they would not be entitled to future help, and it seems that they didn't realise that there would be a run-on of the transport allowance. When I realised what had happened we had missed the cut off point for claiming.

Unfortunately mum's stroke has resulted in her being sent to a care home - I do not live in Jersey, my brother doesn't drive and dad is not able to use public transport, as a result he is using taxis dailey to visit his wife of 53 years. As you can imagine this is costing around £200 per week - given that there is no service such as Dial-a-ride in Jersey, taxi costs are prohibitive and people with disabilities do not have the same access to public transport that any other person of limited means has. The means testing of this benefit is a real smack in the face to the disabled who are at a disadvantage in so many ways.

With dad having to pay £1800 per month to the care home for accomodation and food ( a matter in which there is no choice) and having to pay such high transport costs, my parents' modest savings will soon be exhausted and they will have to claim means tested benefits - which in turn will be eventually offset against the home that they worked so hard to get.

This punitive state of affairs, for people in their final years is unjust - they cannot go back to work or do any thing to incease their income - they are not people who expect to be given things, but scraping the universal disability transport allowance flies in the face of 21st century thinking on disability discrimination and equal opportunities, truly a retrograde step.

Please re think this - and as for the cost of care homes and the lack of financial help for nursing care at home- well that's another issue.

yours sincerely

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