

“We want to help people see things our way”
Disabled children and young people, rights and money



→ The Children's Commissioner and her team

Maggie Atkinson is the Children's Commissioner for England. The Commissioner and her team make sure that adults in charge listen to children and young people and protect their rights.



All children have rights. These are in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention was signed and approved by the UK Government in 1991. This means that all laws in the UK should support children's rights.

→ About the work

The Children's Commissioner for England is concerned about the effect living in a poor family has on disabled children's lives. We worked with the University of Central Lancashire to understand disabled children and young people's experiences of living in poor families and the difference that having less money makes.

→ What we did?

The people who did the work met regularly with a group of disabled children and talked about children's rights. Rights are things every child should have or be able to do. We wanted to know if disabled children living in poverty could access these rights. They also met with 77 other disabled children and young people and 17 parents and found out their views.



They looked at three different international laws about children's rights and how having less money affects disabled children's rights under some of these laws. The laws are called:

- 1 **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- 2 **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- 3 **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

→ Some of the things we found out

Money

Some people didn't have enough money and some children didn't have enough control over their money.

Families

Most children felt supported and safe with their family but some children said more time away from families would help them be more independent, like spending time in youth clubs or on short breaks.

Home

Some people couldn't afford to heat their homes properly and if changes needed to be made to houses so children could get around more easily this was difficult to do.

Food and clothes

Three people told us they didn't have enough to eat and two people said they didn't have money for enough clothes.

Travel

Some children didn't have enough personal support to travel and some felt unsafe on public transport.

Some people couldn't afford to travel.

Play and activity

Some mainstream activities and play facilities were good but some were not possible for disabled children to access and there was not enough support. Some children couldn't afford to take part in play activities.

What children and young people told us

It's like you're invisible

I live in my own flat. It is hard to manage 'like your shopping, your bills

My carer lets me have a tenner a week. I am 18. I need to do all sorts of stuff and I know what I want.

"Right now I've got no money for food"

What happens now?

From everything we found out this is what we have told people they should do.

Government should:

- check out what support there is for disabled children and if this is enough
- make sure disabled children's views are listened to when making changes to support that affects them
- publish good information about the rights of and services available for disabled children
- make sure people who work for the Government better understand disabled children's rights
- raise better awareness of disabled children's rights across local services.

Local authorities should:

- make sure the right services are available for disabled children and make sure staff have the right training so they can meet children's needs
- make sure all disabled children who wish to have short break provisions can go to this locally
- make sure disabled children from poor families can access play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities, including through better transport services.

More information

You can find out more about the Children's Commissioner and her office by visiting our website. You can read the full report [here](#).

You can contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner by emailing info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk