

Statement from Mr & Mrs Evans

We are writing to complain about the planned changes to cut to taxis and transport for children with special educational needs.

We have a child that is on transport from Wareham to Dorchester every day and is transported in his manual chair which he can't self-propel very far, he has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy and is mobile but requires wheelchair for some of the day especially at the end when he absolutely shattered.

The first thing we would like to point out is that at no point where we informed by either the travel or SEN team at Dorset County Council. We only found out by chance seeing something on social media.

This is absolutely disgusting, it could affect us directly and we haven't been given any consultation.

We have since read the Dorset Echo article dated 30th November and see that you want to introduce independence to children like ours by making them go to a nearest pick up point, with possible taxis to and from bus point. What a waste of money and quite frankly narrow minded. How will this enable independent living if you can't get yourself to a bus stop without help? Or if you need a taxi to a bus stop then a bus, how will this save money, what about the PA? Will they all lose their jobs? How can we trust our child in a taxi on their own to a bus stop? Surely there is safeguarding issues?

How about asking the parents who know their children how to enable independent living?

Or the fact it will make even longer travelling time to already vulnerable children who tire easily.

Also and we quote from echo that Nick Jarman thinks:

"There will undoubtedly be real impact on children and their families. They will perceive this initiative as an unnecessary reduction in the service offered by the Council. It may cause hardship for those with more than one child (in terms of getting one to the pick-up point whilst the other stays in the home) but it will level the playing field and, will in many cases, be an important step towards independent living. It is, however, important to note that independent travel training will be a key element of the offer to any family affected by these changes."

How absolutely disgusting and utterly patronising of Nick Jarman, of course it will cause hardship! How are we meant to be in two places at once if you need to get one child to bus and others to other schools? Especially if you don't have transport and need to walk children to another school which is in the opposite direction to designated bus stop?

Can we ask what 'level the playing field' actually means? We didn't realise that our children were in competition or being used as Pawns in the council need to recover money that it's over spent .

Medical teams, teachers, parents and ourselves or the children, have not been consulted at all and can be very damaging to everyone involved. The report in the Echo even states that

Nick Jarman knows this as he'd be prepared for parents to take out legal action and expects judicial reviews from this outcome.

We do not understand why a council would be prepared to use tax payers money to fight parents through judicial reviews as this can cost a lot of money to everyone. Surly the best way to go about this is to vote this proposal down and work with parents, health professionals and teachers to find a better outcome in which can save money rather than causing a high level of anxiety to parents who are already struggling on a daily basis just to get their children to school. Parents like us would love nothing more than to see our children be independent as possible and going off to school by themselves or even leading a normal life like other children, but sadly this is not to be. Why are they being punished for having medical conditions and disabilities? Please can we ask that the council officers and Councillors be reasonable in their decision making of this issue.

Mr and Mrs Evans