

Submission  
No 6

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICES PROVIDED OR FUNDED BY  
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGEING, DISABILITY AND  
HOME CARE**

Name: Name Suppressed  
Date received: 21/07/2010

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*Partially Confidential*

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept the following submission re ADHC for your perusal.

Our son/family was left without behavioural support for our 8 year old son who who has autism, intellectual disability and is totally non-verbal. At the time he was at risk of being suspended again from school and possibly losing his place entirely that we had worked so hard to find.

We were abandoned after I objected to the use of what I contended to be an aversive behaviour modification method suggested by his then behaviour therapist.

I suggested at the time that if there was any doubt whatsoever that the method she promoted may be aversive then we should agree to disagree and find an alternative method. However the behaviour therapist and I had a lengthy debate about the matter in front of the other ADHC staff and our son's advocate and eventually the meeting ended with the matter un-resolved. We came to argue about this matter for a number of reasons, one of which is that the ADHC therapist has a degree in psychology whilst I have a masters in Behavioural Science. The main reason however in my view is that her style was simply not to take seriously the real and very distressing concerns we had regarding our son's well-being. It has since transpired that the restrictive procedure has in fact been abused on at least one occasion that we have written evidence of. The therapist in question certainly could never ever be described as family-centred or even flexible in my view.

In addition, after the meeting, the convenor asked the advocate and I to consider another behaviour therapy service. Needless to say I was shocked however, I did agree to call the service in question and find out more about them but I warned the manager that it would be unlikely that I would want to change from ADHC to ASPECT as to do so would mean that all the observations of my son that had occurred for months prior by the therapist would have to begin again by a different service. I asked, in front of the advocate for reassurance that if I did not wish to swap therapists that we our son's family would not be "dumped by ADHC" and we were told that this definitely would not occur.

In spite of this reassurance from the ADHC manager that we would not be dumped by the ADHC service, shortly afterwards, we were sent a letter by the acting director and told that because I had refused to have ADHC staff in my home for some time, (because they had previously made me so upset it had had a profound physical effect on my health so badly), that the ADHC behaviour therapist in question would not be working with our son any longer however, the other two therapists were willing to work with us and that we would be provided upon request with the names of other service providers. I was also told that the discussion would not be entered into.

As it happened, to spite numerous phone calls by myself, our advocate and emails, I was not even provided with a list of other services, In short, I was coerced into choosing ASPECT or go without any help for my son. In addition, this also caused us to lose our son's advocate because I refused to talk to the manager whose word meant so little and it also set back our son's behaviour therapy assistance by more than 6 months and still

counting. We have only just been able to find a replacement advocate 6 months later and his therapy has been set back as I said by months and months which is quite serious as at the time he was at risk of being suspended from school as a result of his behaviour and the absence of behavioural support. (And still is at risk as he has already been suspended once and so many things have had to start all over again.

It seems that the behaviour therapist went over the manager's head as the manager was happy to leave a decision about the aversive practice open.

Lastly, I am really opposed to the way that many ADHC staff are helbent on providing things that are not needed or wanted by families who after all do all the hard day to day care and are more interested in their own ideas of what they think our son/family needs. I implore you to direct ADHC to listen to and practically and emotionally support families of people with disability that we love so very very much.

Thank you for this opportunity to put forward my submission.

Yours sincerely,

PS if you would like a copy of the acting director's letter and the email from the advocate to us, I can dig them up and supply it upon request