

Family Fund News

Summer 2011

family fund
helping disabled children

www.familyfund.org.uk

More families than ever are asking us to help

The families we help live on the lowest incomes and often struggle both emotionally and financially to care for their children. It is no wonder as the country tightens its belt that the Fund is receiving more requests for support than ever before.

Last year, the Fund gave essential practical help to over 56,000 families, with grants worth £33m. My thanks go to the four UK governments and to my team for their effective work in realising more from the valuable funds we receive.

This year we face a greater challenge. In two out of the four UK countries, we must try to help more vulnerable families with a reduction in funding.

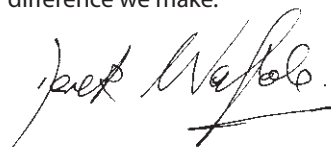
In England, we are delighted that the Department for Education has recognised our "essential work" with "at least" £27m of funding every year for the next four years. We are also pleased the Scottish Parliament is maintaining our funding at £3m for one year.

This is reassuring news for families in these countries.

The picture is less rosy in Wales, where we have had a 5% cut in funds.

In Northern Ireland, we are gravely concerned that a cut of 11% will mean our funding running out before year end and fewer families receiving our help.

Families tell us constantly that our grants are a lifeline to their children. We continue to be very grateful to all those who champion our cause, including the politicians across all parties who have met some of the families we help and have heard at first hand the difference we make.



Derek Walpole Chief Executive



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Hidden army of grandparents raising disabled children

At the House of Lords, a packed meeting of MPs, peers and charities heard about the unbearable hardship grandparents face raising their disabled grandchildren.

The event, hosted by Lord Rix, launched the report "I wish I could just be Grandma", which is part of the Fund's work to raise awareness of the needs of

families with disabled children. The report draws upon a survey which revealed the plight of this hidden army of grandparent carers, who are experiencing significant financial hardship, health problems, isolation and lack of support.

More than half of those surveyed experienced their own health problems. Four in five said they needed more financial help, with half having had to give up work or reduce their hours to take care of their grandchild. A third needed a break from caring.

One of those grandparents, Elke, told MPs and Peers "There is no support available, it is just me and my granddaughter each and every day." Helen, whose son died after a battle

with drugs, showed the spirit driving so many grandparent carers when she said, "With or without support, I feel my grandchildren are my responsibility. I owe this to my son. Someone has to pick up the pieces."

The report 'I wish I could be Grandma' can be downloaded <http://www.familyfund.org.uk/news/research-and-reports>

"The Family Fund understood the help I needed and took action. No one else had done that. As grandparents we don't get much help, and we can't afford the increased bedding and clothing. I cannot put into words what you do for families – please always be there!"



