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Dear Editor,

During 17 years of living in various institutions of the disabled, and in the 2 years since I left, certain questions have nagged insistently at me. What can be done to improve residential centres, homes and hospital units for the physically handicapped? What alternative forms of care might be devised which could prove more satisfactory? What changes in society are required if severe disability is either to be eradicated or to become no bar to full social participation?

In discussion recently a friend suggested that what was needed was to have the views of disabled people who are themselves actual or potential recipients of institutional care. Their ideas on the situation are more important than anyone else's, but are often least taken account of by administrators, planners and politicians. If severely handicapped people were able to get together to work out proposals for change, they could obtain national publicity and say whenever their future was being discussed.

I should be very glad to hear from people who are interested in this proposal. The intention is to form a group, made up of past, present and possible future disabled residents, together with their friends, and eventually to hold a national conference to decide on policies, priorities and methods of achieving change.

Paul Hunt