

Dear Sir/Madam

Thanks you for the opportunity to contribute to this enquiry.

Rather than focus on all the issues raised, I have focussed on my family as a case study.

I have a severe to profound hearing loss, and I wear a hearing aid and cochlear implant.

I also have two hearing impaired teenagers with moderate hearing loss, who wear two hearing aids each.

My son is unemployed, and my daughter is planning to do a masters at university. Therefore, we are potentially in the position of paying \$40,000 for the replacement of our hearing aids and cochlear implant processor.

Where is the logic in denying hearing services for people who are studying or unemployed, simply because they are over 21.

Where is the fairness of this!

What about where parents cannot afford the hearing aids for their children over 21?

Or take the case of newly weds, or young parents, trying to find the money for hearing aids.

I pay for health insurance, and I pay my taxes, yet all I get back from my health fund is \$560 ONCE every five years! Suitable replacement hearing aids and Cochlear implant processors for my family range from \$4500 to \$10,000 each!

Then there are the additional costs –

- Hearing aid batteries

- Cochlear Implant batteries

- Insurance for the above

- FM systems (two us need these, at \$2500 each)

- Vibrating alarm clocks (three of us need these)

- Loop systems (two of)

Our society is in the position that hearing aids are treated like luxury devices.... They are not, they are essential requirements.

If a pair of glasses cost the same as hearing aids, would the policy be the same?

The obvious answer is no, because society understands the need for glasses. Yet the lack of hearing aids can lead to withdrawal from society (including employment) and cause or contribute to mental health issues.

I also travel for my employment, demonstrating technology for deaf and hearing

impaired people.

I come across people at all ages of who do not have a hope of affording hearing aids, or assistive technology. Yet, without both hearing aids/cochlear implants and the assistive technology, I (and many others) cannot participate fully in life - work, study, socially etc.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss these matters further.