

# Fears for disabled son

## FACILITY'S MOVE TO PRIVATE CARERS WORRIES PARENTS

Claire Ottaviano

BUTLER parents Mike and Sue Smith fear the wellbeing of their son will be at risk if the Disability Services Commission group home he lives in is released to a non-government provider.

Their 39-year-old son Clinton, who has Angelman Syndrome, has lived in the Girrawheen DSC facility since he was seven.

Mrs Smith said the family were happy with the service provided by the DSC and they feared a private company's staff would not have the proper training to take care of Clinton's "complex medical needs".

"The fear of the unknown is a big thing for us," she said.

"He can feed himself but can't speak, he can't do things others take for granted and needs help to have showers and get dressed."

In October, Disability Services Minister Helen Morton said the "restructure" would have 60 per cent of DSC-run facilities

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transition to non-government organisations over a number of years.

"The Government has long recognised the best way to provide community services is through specialist non-government providers," she said.

"That's why we have allocated an additional \$604 million to help not-for-profit organisations deliver the services they provide."

At a meeting with the minister on April 7, families and carers asked what would happen if they refused to choose an alternative provider.

The minister said the DSC could appoint someone to represent the resident's best interests.

NGO's provide 83 per cent of accommodation services for people with disability in WA.

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Mike and Sue Smith are concerned about the future of their disabled son's care in Girrawheen. Picture: Emma Reeves

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