

Child charity's charter

by **Caroline Brodie**

A CHARITY dedicated to helping improve the lives of severely disabled children by teaching them the basics of sitting, standing and walking, will today call on the Government to recognise the huge health and social benefits it can deliver.

Disability charity Move Europe will unveil its new charter at the House of Lords today.

It hopes to highlight how its Move programme paves the way for huge improvements in the quality of life of many disabled children and their carers and also reduces the financial pressures on social care agencies and health services. Yet despite being available in this country for almost 10 years now, only 1.5% of the UK's 110,000 severely disabled children are able to gain access to the scheme.

The programme is offered by just nine out of 32 Scottish local authorities, including Aberdeen, and two English local authorities.

The technique combines education and therapy to help

teach children important movement skills.

Research has shown 72% of children taking part increase their mobility within their first year on the scheme.

Specialist trainers work with members of the child's everyday care team, including parents, teachers and health practitioners, teaching them how to deliver individually tailored programmes. This approach means costs associated with the scheme are minimal, and existing support staff are able to work more collaboratively.

As well as leading to greater independence and an improved quality of life, Move can also offer considerable health benefits as increased mobility helps children develop stronger bones and muscles while improving breathing and circulation.

Phyllis Tulloch, a senior physiotherapist who uses it, has seen the results first-hand. She said: "Since starting on the Move programme, we've had two children awaiting hip surgery taken off the waiting list."