



Meeting today's needs for tomorrow's future

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To whom it may concern

This response to the consultation about the draft criteria for Personal Independence Payments comes from a group of parents of young adults with learning disabilities all of whom attend Ambitions 4 Kirklees, a day provision in Kirklees. We have looked at the draft criteria at some length, and tried to do a dry run in terms of the needs and abilities of our own sons/daughters.

We should say from the outset that we oppose the benefit changes which are being introduced because we believe they will cause harm to the present and future lives of some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Inevitably, as they reduce the quality of life for the person we care for, the changes will also impact on us as carers. We already carry substantial extra responsibilities because of our caring role, and we need more support, not less, to make that contribution. The Government's supposed support for carers has no basis of evidence in our experience. Rather we encounter increasing difficulties and hurdles and are deeply angry that there is so little genuine commitment to protecting the life chances of vulnerable people like our sons/daughters.

The introduction of the PIPs and the connected assessments will be yet one more hurdle imposed on people who already have too many struggles to cope with. The cumulative effect of benefit changes and cuts in Local Authority funding will have a huge negative impact on their lives and on ours as their carers.

Having said that, we realise that this consultation is only about the detail of the assessment criteria on this occasion....and on that **we have one main point to make**. As we tried to apply the draft criteria to the people we care for, to see if they produced a picture of the impact of their disability that we recognised, we repeatedly found that the picture was reliable only if the additional terminology (reliably, in a timely fashion, repeatedly, and safely) was always applied. It was the addition of these terms that produced a balanced picture where it would otherwise have been missing. We would therefore strongly recommend that these terms are included in the detail of the activity descriptors.

Mark Feeny (on behalf of the parents group)