

1 February 2011

DLA Reform Team
1st Floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9NA

Rec'd
10/2/11

Dear Sir/Madam

Disability Living Allowance Reform Consultation Paper / PIP

I refer to the above consultation paper to replace the Disability Living Allowance with the Personal Independence Payment and wish to register my response to the proposed legislation. Notwithstanding that this was something the Conservatives pledged to protect, the short consultation time of a mere 9 weeks, is just disrespectful to disabled people.

Simple consultation

Highlighting a few of the points raised in the consultation paper, I respond as follows:-

Claimants will have to qualify for a period of six months and be expected to continue to qualify for a further six months before an award can be made

If the qualifying six months is back-dated, does this mean the disabled person will only have to go without any benefit for the "further six months" and then they will get their award. Or, does it mean that they will have to go without any benefit for the six months to qualify and then the further six months (a whole year), before they receive their award?

Everyone will have to reapply for PIP and have an objective assessment of individual need, including advice from an independent medical professional

Will my objective assessment and advice from an independent medical professional, be carried out by a paraplegic in a wheelchair. the only person who can truly understand what it means to be a paraplegic in a wheelchair? If not someone in a wheelchair, will they be people with any form of disability or live with someone who has a disability, who will have a better chance of understanding what it means to be in a wheelchair? Or will they be healthy and fit individuals with no real idea of what it means to be in a wheelchair?

continued....

*Decisions will be taken on the impact of the impairment or health condition only
The new benefit will take greater account of aids and adaptations*

The current Disability Discrimination Laws still does not adequately cover the needs of disabled people. Just because someone can push a wheelchair across a smooth hospital floor, does not mean they could push a wheelchair several miles to work on uneven pavements, inadequate dropped kerbs, use buses that are not wheelchair accessible, buses that only run twice in the morning and not in the afternoon in counties like Lincolnshire and small towns like Louth, trains that are not wheelchair accessible, platforms not wheelchair accessible, bus-stations not wheelchair accessible, buildings still with steps. Big strides have been made in these areas, but until they are 100% perfect and someone in a wheelchair could push themselves 300 yards up the road, get on a bus that drops them 300 yards from their destination and make the return journey at the right time, then taking away disabled people's ability to fund a car and get themselves where they want to be, in the same way as a non-disabled person has the right to do, is morally wrong.

Claimants will be responsible for reporting changes that occur between reviews

If these reviews are going to take place frequently, say every 12 months, than why create a strata of middle-management to deal with any reported changes and to re-assess benefits, when the next review is only a short time away? I thought this Government was keen on cutting back levels upon levels of bureaucratic management.

Motability will be supported under the new scheme

If you already have a vehicle under the Motability Scheme, but under the new PIP rules you fail to qualify for the PIP award, will the car be immediately taken away from you? Will there be time to appeal against the decision, before the car is taken away? Will there be any penalties incurred for early-cancellation of the Lease and if so, will the government pay that penalty or will the disabled person be expected to pay that penalty?

I know, from personal experience, that I would not be able to go anywhere without a car, as Louth in Lincolnshire has inadequate public transport. In my car, I have enjoyed days out, British holidays, shopping and supporting Grimsby Town, that I do feel lucky to have been able to do. If other disabled people have to live in a Care Home, I would like to think those pleasures would still be available to them as well, so I am opposed to the withdrawal of their Mobility element of the DLA or PIP.

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You say the application forms for DLA are too long and complicated; your Consultation Paper is also too long and complicated.

I should be pleased if my concerns and those of my fellow disabled friends, could be noted and taken seriously.

Yours sincerely

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