

'Re Disability Living Allowance Reform -

on behalf of - [REDACTED]

4th February 2011

Dear 'Reform Team'

Ref No 380

Rec'd 10/2/11

In response to the public consultation document on Disability Living Allowance, may I specifically address Question 22 (Pg 32) of the document (other comments) – on behalf of an individual, - my son, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is currently in receipt of mobility allowance, and has a 'mobility' car. He doesn't read or write himself, which is why I am responding as his mother.

[REDACTED] is severely disabled by his autism. He had to spend several years, from 1996 onwards, on both Section 3 of the Mental Health Act, and subsequently Section 117 – on his 'release from [REDACTED] Psychiatric Hospital, [REDACTED] because of adverse reactions to the drugs he was on, and because of his behaviour when under stress (usually responding to noises) – where he could harm himself and others. Continued contact with his family – of whom he appears to be very fond – was kept as a reward and means of positive behaviour therapy whilst in hospital.

He has settled down with the help of a better drugs regime, and experienced help from [REDACTED] Autistic Society. He now lives most of the time in a terraced house, with a 1-to-1 carer, managed by the Society, and 'commutes' to his family home, sister and mother (me), sleeping overnight with me at least 2x per week.

[REDACTED] is currently in receipt of Mobility Allowance. He is not always safe on public transport – because he is extremely noise sensitive. He can become distressed by sudden loud, unusual, and unforeseen noises, and has been known to put his arm through the window of a mini-bus when other occupants have been too noisy – inevitably causing injury.

His vehicle – with his carer as driver – is a boon. It keeps both him and other members of the public – 'safe', and enables him to have a reasonable quality of life – accessing his family home, the gym, swimming pool, I.T Unit and other activities which are managed by the Autistic Society. Like all mentally handicapped members of Society, he has 'islands' of intelligence - e.g. with the aid of an amanuensis (someone to read and write the instructions for him) he has learnt to operate a computer, drive a tractor, and has many other skills. 'Education' still needs accessing.

Without his own vehicle – his activities will be severely restricted. As he lives under the auspices of [REDACTED] Autistic Society – which, despite the fact that many of its clients live in

'houses' in the community, is classified as a 'care home' – the mobility component of his disability living package will be removed.

I understand that the Autistic Society will lose at least £130,000 from its annual budget because other individuals, managed by the society, will also lose their mobility component. These individuals are NOT disabled physically, are not elderly, and do not spend their days in bed. They are in a 'care home' because of the expertise in autism which is available.

They will still need some form of funding to enable them to continue accessing - e.g. education, and all the other activities normal in a community.

Autistic Society has already responded to the consultation document in its own right.

I am merely bringing the response teams attention to Paragraph 21, Page 15 of the document – which states clearly that 'payment' (of the mobility component) will stop if the individual is in a care home – and enter a plea on behalf of my son, and others of his ilk, that this part of the proposals could be scrapped!

Apart from severely restricting the ability of clients to access even their own Doctors, it may result in more expenditure being incurred when clients have to go back into psychiatric hospitals because they are unable to cope with 'public' transport.

Whilst I am sure that there are other groups of people in care homes with similar needs, perhaps the response team could suggest that those people with severe autism could have their mobility component '**ring-fenced**' so they do not lose it. They really are a special group who are in great need of 'safe' transport – **both for their own safety, and for the safety of others around them.**

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted address line 1]

[Redacted address line 2]

[Redacted address line 3]