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018. Con. Res. W.

DLA Reform Team,
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5th January 2011

Dear Sir, Madame,

Rethink, the national charity for people with Mental Health Problems, has e-mailed me about your plans to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment. I am currently in receipt of DLA and write to contact you as you are having a consultation period before acting. I may get in touch with my local mental health unit about these changes as they can only antagonise my health problem, which is chronic schizophrenia.

I would like to know, first of all, just how much these changes are going to cost. Mr. Osborne has already made it clear that he wants to cut DLA by 1.4 billion pounds a year. It seems you are unnecessarily interfering in a process that works. Your whole ideology is one of cutting benefits, even though you can find money for Foreign Aid to countries like China and India, and you can find money for poor school children and also find money for to bail out Irish banks.

I am against these changes as they are merely a ruse for cutting the amount of money available for disabled people. Mr. Osborne seems to have confused Incapacity Benefit with DLA. It has been estimated that only 11 000 people are fraudulently claiming DLA. Under your new proposals there will only be 2 personal care components, cutting out the lower care rate. You want to sound like your bringing in a 21st century benefit but you are going to deliver a system that is not as fair as the current one. You claim that it will be easier to understand. I doubt this very much. When I filled my DLA claim in, I was helped by the professionals of the local Mental Health Team. This is likely to be the case for most schizophrenics.

I do not think you have done much research into mental health disabilities. If you had, you would know that 99% of schizophrenics do not work. Yet your message is constantly one of getting disabled people into work. I do not see how a new Personal Independence Payment will achieve this. The nazis had a motto over the concentration camp Auschwitz which read,

Arbeit Mach Frei.

This translates as, "work makes you free". You seem to think in your rosy picture of life that most disabled people can work. Maybe there are those who can but I am not one of them. I can no longer drive. And, I do not think that there are any jobs about. Nor is there likely to be with austerity cuts. In the Daily Mail of the 30 10 10¹, it was claimed that migrants took 9 out of 10 new jobs created under labour. So what hope is there for the disabled? What employer is ever going to try and employ a schizophrenic.

It is just not going to happen, no matter what you say.

I do not own a computer as I cannot even afford one. I am not earning a fortune in benefits as the right wing press would have the so called hard working public believe. Consequently, I cannot answer all your questions which are attached to the consultation document on the computer sent by Rethink. I have to use the Library computer. Also, I note that your e-mail address for consultation is not functioning.

I know that question five is about automatic right to entitlement. What I can say is that for schizophrenics, there is no cure. There is no hope of these people getting better, even though medication does manage the disease. Thus, I could argue that those sufficiently disabled with this disease should get automatic entitlement. I am living in fear that when the changes come into operation in 2013 my health will suffer and that there will be a long and protracted battle over my right to benefits. It should not be like this. You live in cloud cuckoo land if you think that the majority of schizophrenics will find employment.

I will try and access the computer at the library to fill in your questionnaire but it is so confusing.

I appreciate that there are many people in politics who feel that the benefits system is out of control but do not blame the disabled. What is apparent is that the benefits system does attract many people from abroad. Take muslim extremists for example. They all seem to be claiming large amounts of benefits but even though they set up organisations promoting Islam they are not penalised as they are obviously not looking for work. It is people like this that give the glorious British benefits system a bad name. We are not the USA where there is an underclass of 50 million people who are cut off benefits after 90 weeks.

Britain is a civilised european country which ought to protect its disabled. India has a space industry yet we still give them aid. I do not believe that we should put people in other countries before our own disabled. Besides in your election manifestos you said that you would not touch DLA. Now you want to spend vast sums on another new bureaucracy.

Lastly, I am a disabled individual. I do not have much clout as I am not a doctor or psychiatrist. I would like to think that Rethink and MIND are doing their bit to oppose the changes that your organisation proposes. I believe that the current system works. You believe that there are too many claimants. That is not the fault of the system.

Yours Sincerely,

P.S. I apologise for the quality of my typing. It has almost killed me writing this communication.. I hope it is of use.