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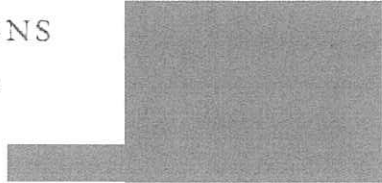


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DLA Reform Team  
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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA



08 February 2011

Dear DLA Reform Team

A large number of constituents and local groups have contacted me since it was announced that you intend to replace Disability Living Allowance with a new benefit – the Personal Independence Payment.

I am concerned that the stated aims of the reforms are to cut the amount of DLA claimants by 20%, to save £1 billion by 2014/15. This arbitrary cut is likely to leave thousands of working age disabled people unable to meet the additional costs many face as a result of their disability and can be expected to increase the number of people living in disability poverty.

The decision to focus on 'those with the greatest need' risks leaving a large number of people with no help at all. The large majority of councils will only give social care support to those with the most critical needs. DLA is a vital source of support for those who don't qualify for social care, but nevertheless face significant costs and barriers to participation as a result of their condition.

Furthermore, a recent report by Scope and Demos, 'Counting the Cost', demonstrates that the test to assess people for the new Personal Independence Payment will not accurately measure the cost of living with a disability as it will be based on an assessment which focuses on an individual's medical condition, not the nature of their needs and their true cost of living.

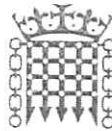
The report illustrates that the costly reassessment of DLA claimants will waste government money and will fail to provide disabled people with vital support, which could compound disability poverty.

The removal of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, is further evidence that the Government is targeting the most vulnerable people in society to reduce the deficit.

I am concerned that you do not appear to know how many people will be affected by the cut they are introducing. Research from the Learning Disability Alliance Scotland (LDAS) has revealed that the number of people affected by the removal of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, living in residential care, has been grossly underestimated by the Government and that Scotland will suffer disproportionately compared with the rest of the UK.

I am enclosing further supporting evidence from LDAS which details the impact of the removal of the mobility component for people living in residential care. I trust you will take this evidence into account in your review of these issues.

The effect of these cuts will mean that people already in care homes will not be able to access community facilities in the same way. Independent travel will be much harder and people will be trapped in care homes unable to even get out for the day. In a recent response at Prime Minister's Questions, David Cameron said that this change is to remove the discrepancy between benefits paid to people in hospital and those living in residential care. I believe that the two are fundamentally different and the payment of the mobility component to people in residential care is recognition of this. They are



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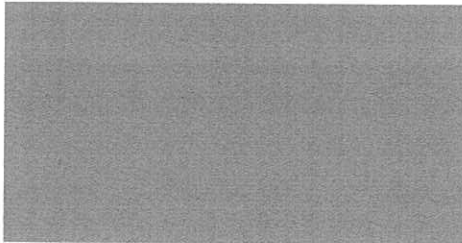
not there to receive medical treatment or interventions. It is their home and they should have the same dignity and rights as people living in the community.

Taking the mobility component away from those in residential care is a regressive step and will deny many people in residential care the support to get out and about and retain a small slice of independence. You are proposing this cut on the basis that the needs of people in residential care homes are met by their local authorities, however, evidence from provider organisations, local authorities and individual's shows that this is not true.

I hope you will consider this evidence when reviewing your proposals to reform Disability Living Allowance.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely





LEARNING DISABILITY ALLIANCE SCOTLAND

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### **An underestimate by the DWP**

We have done our own calculations on how many people are affected by this cut and got a significantly higher figure than that given by the Minister.

In the "Spending Review 2010 Policy Costings" document published by the Treasury on October 20, figure were given for the annual saving of £130 million by the time the policy is fully implemented. It also gave a figure of £33.40 per week for the average saving per person affected. Using these along with the existing rates of mobility DLA, we were able to calculate that a total of 74,850 people would be affected by this cut. This is 25% higher than the government has advised.

We are also able to work out how many people are losing out at each level the mobility element of DLA.

DLA Mobility rate	Number losing out	Weekly loss
Higher Rate Beneficiaries	35003	49.85
Lower Rate Beneficiaries	39847	18.95

- Put simply 35,000 disabled people will be losing out by £50 per week, a 70% cut in their disposable weekly income, leaving each with just about £20 a week in personal allowance.

### **How Many People Will Be Affected In Scotland?**

In Scotland there are 302,000 people in receipt of entitlement to the mobility element of DLA, this is 13.9% of the total number [2.17 million] of mobility recipients of DLA in the Scotland, England and Wales.

In Scotland, there are 44,000 people resident in care homes, 229,000 in England and 14,800 in Wales. The Scottish number is 15% of the total number for the three countries.

Both figures show a higher occurrence of DLA claimants and care home population in Scotland than a strict population share would suggest. As a result, we would suggest that the number affected in Scotland is probably also around 14-15%. Using the DWP figure this would give 9,000 affected individuals. Using our higher figure there could be as many as 11,100 people affected in Scotland

### **Who Will Be Affected?**

The table below is drawn from the Scottish Care Home Census published by the Scottish Government.

#### Numbers resident in Care Homes across Scotland

Number of Places	Mar-00	Mar-05	Mar-09
Older People	39,178	38,186	38,843
Physically Disability	823	548	547
Mental Health	1,189	1,178	1,053
Learning Disability	3,598	2,860	2,857
Other	923	718	595
Total	45,711	43,563	43,894

Source SCHC1 2009

The table above demonstrates a decline in the number of younger people from adult care groups using residential care as it becomes increasingly focussed on people with higher levels of needs. There will be a significant effect on older people. DLA is payable to people over 65 but only so long as people have claimed the benefit prior to their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Their entitlement will continue as long as there is no change in their needs. Older people who have claimed DLA before 65 will continue with this benefit even after they move into care homes.

However this change will impact particularly on younger people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. [Other adult groups in care homes are less likely to be entitled to this benefit.] We have carried out a test survey amongst some of our member organisations who still operate care homes for people with learning disabilities and estimate that amongst these two groups of people almost 100% are in receipt of this benefit.

As a result we can say that 2,800 people with learning disabilities and over 500 people with physical disabilities will be affected in Scotland by this cut, with an indeterminate number, perhaps as many as 8,000 in homes for older people also losing out.

#### What will be the effect?

Some people will not go into care homes as a result of this, the individual and family carers making alternative long term arrangements for the benefit of the individual. This will see carers taking the strain more often and for longer.

People already in care homes will not be able to access community facilities in the same way. Independent travel will be much harder and people will be trapped in care homes unable to even get out for the day.

In some cases, an anomaly will allow some people to remain unaffected. A number of "smaller" homes for people with learning disabilities can be "deregistered" as care homes in order to allow the residents to continue to receive payment of this allowance. Such homes will still be scrutinised by the Care Commission, a similar contribution from public funds will be made for the support of each individual but there will be no financial saving in DLA. This process has already been taking place over the last 6 years but we would expect this to increase over the next few years as we lead into to this change.

#### Conclusion

This cut in the mobility element of the Disability Living Allowance will affect people in Scotland disproportionately and have a significantly damaging effect on younger people with learning and physical disabilities who need high levels of care.