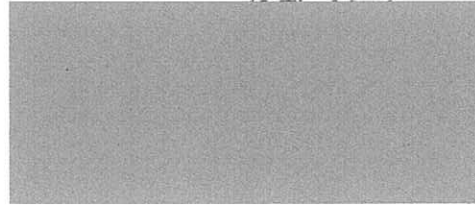


2011/11

078. Con. Res. W.



DLA Reform Team  
1st Floor  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London SW1 9NA

Dear Sir/madam,

I am very concerned at the government's proposal to reform the Disability Living Allowance.

As the mother of a 23 year old daughter with Aspergers syndrome, I know that DLA has provided my daughter with valuable support during a time in her life when she has really needed it. During this time she had a lot of difficulty finding employment due to her disability, for which she received little help from any government agencies, then she decided to enter full time education again, in order to go to university. She went to Sheffield city college, as Chesterfield college had been a scene of former disasters, and was not eligible for EMA, apparently (.We live in Chesterfield)

Clearly travelling to Sheffield every day and the cost of food and materials for college was not cheap, and the DLA provided her with valuable independence during this time. As she was intending to leave home the following year, and has done (she is currently at Sussex university reading Law and American Studies), the year at Sheffield with valuable personal autism support (which incidentally was paid for by us as parents-NOT the state) and autism support at Sheffield city college ( which was excellent) and the back up of DLA monies has given her an opportunity for independence both personally and employmentwise. (The degree hopefully bettering her employment prospects).

Even at university, her government loan does not even pay fully for her accommodation, and the DLA helps to pay the extra so as she can have her own shower facilities which due to her disability she needs. If she did not have her own shower and the communal facilities were busy she would not shower and that would not be good for her social acceptability, and indeed health .We pay her a small monthly allowance for her living expenses, food, transport, clothing etc.

So as you can see, I for one would be very wary of a new system which had stricter criteria and would effectively "cut off" many people, far worse off than my daughter from monies which would give them the vital support they need to be independent until they find employment and which pays enough for the extra living expenses they may need as a result of their disability. I fear that new assessment criteria for the "Personal Independence Payment" would merely be an excuse to cut many disabled people's much needed monies.

If the government cuts monies then I feel it is going to have to put a heck of a lot more into training and employment opportunities for disabled people, and indeed helping carers care.. Judging by my daughter's experience at the Job Centre , there is very little awareness of the discrimination in the world of employment against people with learning difficulties such as Aspergers, and the specific difficulties faced in actually getting employment, especially in these credit crunch times, when neurotypical people are having problems getting

employment. Before she was diagnosed, even when my daughter just got an agency job in an office, she was dismissed after 6 months for reasons to do with her Aspergers. She didn't "fit in" and heard this from one of her work colleagues on the second day there. All because she found it difficult to read social cues and take part in office chit chat. She just wanted to get on with the job and do it properly. A little awareness and support would have helped. They found an excuse to fire her- "time keeping" when there many in her office far worse than her, time keeping wise, who still kept their jobs, because they "fitted in".

We have been lucky enough as a family to have had financial resources to help our daughter, but for families without DLA will mean that more carers( who spend some of their own income in helping care) could be forced into poverty, or mean that they could no longer care for a disabled person. I feel the government has not really assessed the knock on effect the new proposals will have on families, which could be devastating, particularly for those who receive Carer's allowance alongside Disability Living Allowance.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address]