

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard Mazur [mailto:richard.mazur@scovi.org.uk]

Sent: 28 November 2011 10:15

To: DWP PIP assessment

Subject: Scottish Council on Visual Impairment

Dear Sirs,

Formerly the Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind, the Scottish Council on Visual Impairment is an umbrella body which encompasses all voluntary organisations and the majority of local authorities in Scotland who are in contact with blind and partially-sighted people. It provides a forum for networking, discussion and training and also provides a unified voice for consultation to both the Scottish and Westminster governments.

We have considered the second draft of assessment regulations for Personal Independence Payment and also a briefing paper on these prepared by the policy and campaigns office of the RNIB. In general we support all the comments in this briefing paper but would emphasise particularly the following points:

Page 6, Section 7, Paragraph 3: It is essential that any written notice sent to a blind or partially sighted person can be read by them. This may require to be in Braille, or in large print (Arial 16 point bold is generally recommended). It may be better to follow through with a telephone call.

Page 15, Planning and following a journey, c (i): We appreciate the acknowledgement of the support that a guide dog gives, but less than 5000 dogs are trained annually for an estimated 2 million people with sight loss in the UK. Many visually impaired people use a long cane as an alternative, for which the training is intense, and we feel that this should get the same weighting as a support dog. Guide dogs will not take a blind person to a particular place, it will merely guide them around obstacles. The person needs to know the route in their head, just the same as a long cane user.

I trust you will find these comments useful.

Richard A H Mazur
Secretary and Treasurer
Scottish Council on Visual Impairment
Scottish Charity Number SC002185
Mobile: 07711 524946