



Consultation about changing Disability Living Allowance to a new benefit

Tell us what you think

December 2010



Easy Read

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

Questions

Question 1

What things stop disabled people joining in with other people and living full, active and independent lives?

Lack of money for activities and to fund fully flexible support/care. Often people with learning disabilities have difficulty communicating and understanding what an independent life means to them.

Question 2

What parts of Disability Living Allowance do you think we should keep?

Care and Mobility. It is important that disabled people don't lose the funding for the support they need to realise basic human rights. The rate of DLA should not be cut^{but increased} We are living in a situation of constantly rising prices.

Question 3

What extra things do disabled people need to spend money on?

Care and Support - hours but also pay fees for the carer in activities
Extra heating, clothing, more ~~laundry~~ ^{laundry}, petrol, specific food,
prescriptions, extra travel costs for equipment, accessible transport.
This is very often in the context of very low income - due to lack of
personal or family carers employment due to disability.

Question 4

The new benefit will have 2 amounts for each of the 2 parts of the benefit. Do you think this will make the benefit easier to understand and also easier for us to run?

Do you think just having the 2 amounts for each part will cause any problems?

People on medium rate now will either get less or more not stay the same.
This seems like it would cause problems.

It would be better if people ~~are~~ ^{were} looked at individually. E.g. If someone gets a motability car, they don't really need a free travel pass. Why not give that free travel pass to someone on a lower rate who could benefit from it. Personalisation should extend to benefits not just how people get support. People shouldn't just automatically be eligible or not eligible for things purely based on the level of DLA they are deemed to need.

Question 5

Do you think some health conditions or disabilities should allow people to get an amount of the benefit automatically? — No

Or do you think that all claims should be based on the needs of the person asking for the benefit? — Yes

However the application process and decision making process need to be suitable for people with different disabilities and their consequent support needs. ^{Currently} ~~the~~ forms are very "medical model" of disability, and aren't always appropriate for describing the experiences of people with learning disabilities or autism.

Question 6

Filling in the form is stressful for carers!

How can we make sure that disabled people who most need the new benefit can get it? — Don't limit the eligibility criteria.

Promote new benefit on TV and posters in community centres. Make available in various formats (eg other languages and easy read).

What activities or actions are the most important to live an independent life? — Every person with a disability

would answer this in a different way just like people without a disability would.

However DLA often funds very basic needs, those

fundamental to realising basic human rights. These are vital.

People with disabilities in 2011 should be able to expect much more than this. The basics are vital but people need true and meaningful life experiences too. These will be different for everyone.

Question 7

How can we make sure that the new benefit takes into account the way a person's health condition can change?

Ask people initially "what's the likelihood of your condition changing" or "how long have you been like this?"
People are the experts in their own life and condition/disability
Look at the probability of a person's health condition changing.
If it seems likely, reassess those people more regularly. Making some disabled people keep going through that process unnecessarily is very stressful.

Question 8

When a person makes a claim to the new benefit, should we take account of any aids or adaptations that they use? Yes

What aids and adaptations should we take into account? All/Any

Should we only take aids and adaptations into account if the person already uses them? Or should we take aids and adaptations into account that a person could use and get hold of easily?

or not so easily

No

Yes

Question 9

How could we make the way a person asks for benefit better.
For example

- How could we make the claim form easier to fill in?
- How could we tell people about the new benefit so that they know what the benefit is for and who is likely to get the benefit?

easy read
more appropriate
questions re living
disability
offer help
filling in
form.

TV adverts including people who are disabled (physically learning disability, mental health problem) and say these terms in the adverts. Work with people who already work with disabled people to promote it (ie disabled people organisations, social work depts, support agencies and Local Area Co-ordinators)

Question 10

Who are the best people to tell us about the needs of the person asking for benefit? — The person themselves and sometimes their carer or guardian.

What information will we need to make it clear what the person can and cannot do?

Ask them what they need support with now and what else they would like support for in future. Some people will be unrealistic but some people will have genuine needs that aren't being addressed now. Ask about their day or week

not lots of hypothetical questions. These are abstract and hard.

- 16 Ask a doctor to back up what person says. Ask the people who often support the person too.

Question 11

An important part of the new benefit may be talking face to face with an independent person about how well you can do the things you need to do to take part in everyday life.

What good things and bad things may this bring?

Is there any time when it would not be right to say that a person had to meet an independent person face to face, either in the person's own home or somewhere else?

this should be optional depending on individual preferences.

if this does happen people need to be well supported.

It could be very stressful. People need to be able to take someone to support and advocate for them if necessary. This could be a very disempowering process for people to have to go through. No one likes to focus only on the negative. There should be space for people to celebrate the things they can do, even if it isn't something vital to contributing to everyday life (I'm good a cheering people up). This will help make it a more positive experience for people.

It might help if the individual got to choose the meeting venue. If not at home then why not somewhere else they feel comfortable e.g. in a local cafe. Meeting in an unusual place or work place of interviewer takes some of the power away from the individual. These ~~independent~~ people should have experience of people with disabilities and the social model of disability not just a medical background. Everything possible should be done to make people feel comfortable with this process. People are entitled to pride and dignity.

Question 12

What should we use to decide how often we should look at a claim again and check it? *see question 7*

Should the way we look at a claim again depend on the needs of the person and their health condition or disability? *Yes*

see Q7

Question 13

The new benefit will be easier for people to understand, so we will expect people to tell us when things change in their lives.

How can we get people to tell us about the changes in their lives?

offer lots of ways emails, visit DWP, DWP to visit them, phone numbers and ^{voluntary} reassessments. Provide tear off form to all claimants.

Question 14 *support to think about their life
" to fill in form*

What types of help and advice are people who will ask for the new benefit likely to need?

Would it help if we told people to get help and advice and where to get it from? — *Yes! Accessible, easy read advice!*

Question 15

How do disabled people pay for their aids and adaptations at the moment? — *don't know*

Should disabled people be allowed to use the new benefit to pay for a one-off cost? — *Yes!*

Question 16

What are the main differences we should think about when we are dealing with claims for children instead of adults?

That their needs could change a lot.

Question 17

How important or useful has Disability Living Allowance been in getting people to use other services or to get other benefits?

What can we do to make things better? More money. It's essential!

At the moment people who get Disability Living Allowance automatically get help from other benefits and services, like the Blue Badge scheme and the Warm Front scheme.

What would it mean to disabled people if they did not automatically get help from these other benefits or services?

For our family it would be a major catastrophe. But for other disabled people that might not be the case. Look at everyone as an individual. See Q4.

Question 18

What information about the disabled person could we share with other services or government departments to stop the disabled person having to tell lots of people the same thing?

Anything the claimant or their guardian allows
you to share.

Question 19

How would our ideas for the new benefit affect different equality groups? For example, the equality groups looking at disability, age, race, gender, **sexual orientation** and religion and belief.

— need info in community languages

Sexual orientation

This is about whether a person is

- heterosexual – sexually attracted to people of the other sex.
- lesbian – a woman who is sexually attracted to women.
- gay – a man who is sexually attracted to men.
- bisexual – sexually attracted to men and women.
- asexual – not sexually attracted to men or women

Question 20

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about our plans?

Hope these changes are not a way of cutting benefits for disabled people