

Dear DLA Reform Team,

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18/2/11 576

PLEASE DO NOT ABOLISH DLA AND REPLACE IT WITH PIP.

I have severe Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), a neurological disease that affects multiple systems of the body, and I am severely disabled. There is no known cure for my disease. Severe ME brings profound cognitive problems as well as functional disabilities, severe ongoing malaise that is amplified on even minor exertion, and many other complex symptoms that can make life a torment.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is an essential payment that people with severe ME rely upon to help meet their care and mobility needs. There are no compelling grounds to abolish it. The suggestion that the DWP can justifiably slash the welfare budget under the banner of replacing DLA with a system of 'Personal Independence Payments' (PIP) that is 'simpler' and 'fairer' is fundamentally flawed and disingenuous. It would appear that many people who face additional costs of living as a result of having a long term disabling disorder will no longer qualify for help when DLA is replaced with PIP. The predictable impact of the PIP system on people with prolonged ill health and disabilities will be enormously detrimental and unacceptable.

There are also potential adverse knock on consequences. If a person loses their benefits under PIP, then their carer may lose Carer's Allowance, then making it impossible to pay basic bills and to carry on caring.

The administrative costs of replacing DLA with the new system will be hugely expensive and a poor use of taxpayer's money.

The Ministerial foreword to the consultation paper states: "*We are steadfast in our support for the principles of DLA, as a non-means-tested cash benefit contributing to the cash costs incurred by disabled people.*" If this support is to progress beyond lip service then the government require to radically rethink their legislative plans for a new system.

I ask you not to abandon the Disability Living Allowance and replace it with Personal Independence Payment. The government's plans amount to the introduction of an inferior, unreasonable and unfair system. The introduction of PIP may act to reduce the budget deficit but unlike DLA it will not meet the needs of people who are chronically sick or disabled.

Yours sincerely,

