

DLA consultation document.

I am concerned about the proposal to change the DLA benefit. At present it works quite well although like any benefit it is open to fraud.

One major change needed is to review certain cases more often. Where the disability is not progressive a review should take place e.g. every three years. I feel that there is a difference between a disability which is caused by an injury and a disability which is caused by illness e.g. neurological problems, heart and lung disease, sensory problems.

These conditions are on the whole progressive.

The new scheme to disallow payment because a person can move about with the help of an aid is ridiculous. DLA was introduced to help people with a disability to live a more 'normal' life. That means with the benefit they could afford to buy any aids to help them lead a more independent life. This new scheme smacks of the Victorian times where anyone 'different' was shut away out of sight.

The change of form is not really necessary, as the questions asked are in depth so that as much information is available to anyone reading the application form. The information from a client's GP does not always show a true picture as to how much a disability affects day to day life. No GP as far as I am aware has ever asked a patient to go through details of their daily routine.

In question 5 the matter of automatic entitlement is raised. I think this should be left as it is at present with the same conditions receiving automatic entitlement.

The consultation does not go into details of mental health conditions.

Children with disabilities is another area where there might be problems. As children grow up their condition will likely change. There should be regular assessments e.g. every 5 years. Surely common sense should prevail in these types of cases.

There does need to be some sort of network where support from other agencies is linked to the disability benefit. At present this is a bit of a grey

area.

At present a claimant must have had the disability for 3 months. This should not be extended to 6 months. At present it takes fully 6 months from initial application to a result and any longer would be detrimental to the client.

This consultation is to reduce costs but it will need more people to keep the system working. There will be more appeals etc.

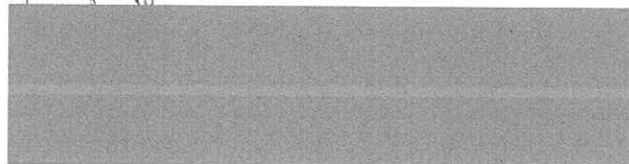
Employment - It is all very well looking through rose tinted glasses but what employer wants to employ someone who is unreliable due to illness. A lot of illnesses vary in severity on a day to day basis. Most people with a disability would be quite happy to work and keep themselves but this is not feasible.

Is there a draft of the new application forms?

Will this mean an end to the motability scheme which is a godsend to a great number of people. This is particularly relevant to rural areas where public transport is non existent and the nearest shopping area is some miles away.

This consultation has been slipped in without any publicity. Releasing it in December meant a lot of groups were closed for the festive season and a number of groups do not meet again until February. The only way I found out about this was through the disability group of which I am a member.

Yours faithfully

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