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Dear Sir,

Consultation on the PIP assessment *Moving around* activity

Enham was founded in 1918 as a rehabilitation centre for ex-servicemen returning from the First World War. Since then, we have expanded to work with a wide range of people, with a variety of disabilities and continue to help those vulnerable members of society who need that extra assistance to succeed in life. Enham's Mission is to create:

A world where disabled people can live the lives they choose.

Our Mission is to:

- Maximise opportunities for Disabled People to Live the lives they choose
- Empower disabled people to exercise choice and control
- Create opportunities for disabled people to work.
- Ensure sustainability of the Charity through growth and diversification.
- Be a national voice on disability issues.

In order to respond to the consultation on the PIP assessment *Moving around* activity, disabled people living in Enham's three residential care homes or supported living accommodation took part in an activity, attempting to walk either up to 20 metres or 50 metres.

Through the experience of walking (or attempting to walk) a number of important issues were highlighted by the individuals:

- Concern was expressed that 50 metres is a relatively short distance when trying to access services in the community. For instance, the distance between most car parking (including disabled parking) and shops is usually greater than 50 metres. Therefore, in order for people to access basic



community premises, support will be required for people who can walk more than 50 metres.

- There appears to be no account taken for people often needing to carry even light weight items, such as a small amount of shopping, and the impact this will inevitably have on the distance someone is able to walk or the support they may need.
- Two participants who walk with the use of crutches stressed how whilst they are able to walk in straight lines, find turning around extremely difficult, with the risk of falling over. They found they met category b) *Can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres*, either aided or unaided, but required support when turning around. Therefore, concern was expressed, especially in light of the high level of criticism towards current benefit assessments (i.e. Work Capability Assessment via Atos), over whether the assessment technique would be sensitive enough to cater for people with specific issue.
- Whilst the people responding to this consultation recognise the PIP Assessors will take into account the distance required to be able to walk will be based on the ability to do so in an outdoor environment, participants questioned how local factors would be taken into account. For instance, someone living on a hill may find walking 50 metres impossible, whereas, the same person may be able to do so on level ground. Hence, it may not be possible to avoid walking up/down the hill, but if the assessment is based on being able to walk over relatively flat terrain, it may result in an individual not receiving the support they require.
- Participants also questioned how factors such as weather conditions would be taken into account i.e. ice, wind or extreme heat, noting if PIP Assessors only assessed using 'average' weather conditions, some groups may be inadvertently disadvantaged.
- A number of participants questioned why they needed to be reassessed, when they have a long-term, permanent condition that will only degenerate. These participants, highlighted how stressful such an assessment will be, possibly triggering additional health problems.
- Likewise, concern was expressed over how people with fluctuating conditions would be assessed, noting how many people will have a significant difference in their ability to walk from day-to-day or longer.

Disabled people who use Enham's services and participated in this consultation have consistently stressed how the Government does not appear to be giving consideration to the cumulative impact changes in welfare benefits are having upon them. Very small changes in income are having a profound effect upon the quality of lives of people living in residential care homes and supported living.

The opportunity to contribute to this consultation is very much welcomed and we hope the Government will protect people who could easily become marginalised and isolated if the PIP assessment for moving around activity is too restrictive.

Yours sincerely

Mark Deal

On behalf of disabled people who participated in this consultation