

Dear Alex Maskey

This is my submission to your committee over the Welfare Reform Bill.

It regards personal independence payment PIP.

Currently 182,000 people are in receipt of DLA. The majority use this money to live on and a significant number have had to fight to get their allowance by going through the appeal process of tribunals right up to the Social Security Commissioner.

Let me give you two examples of the strain people are put through the present system. This will be no different under PIP.

A friend had an incurable brain tumor which affected her mobility and mentally and affected her sensory abilities so she had to be looked after at all times. She was up for review of her DLA and was turned down. She came to me and I told her she must appeal the decision. She was very depressed because of this. She went with her husband to the appeal tribunal and presented her situation to them. The chairman of the tribunal stopped the proceedings and told her she shouldn't have had to come before him and apologized and her benefit was reinstated. A year later she died.

Another example is a friend who has various disabilities has only just applied for DLA as she felt they didn't need it.

There are many people in the two above situations.

Two specific points I want to make about PIP.

Firstly those in receipt of indefinite DLA awards should automatically be entitled to PIP. They also should not be subject to a face to face assessment as many have been through the appeal process right through to the Social Security Commissioner and the Social Security Agency holds all the evidence about these people already. These claimants have already suffered enough without having to fight for PIP the same way they have had to to get DLA.

Finally the Equality Commission should have a role in monitoring the implementation and the effectiveness of PIP.

Yours sincerely

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