

Muscular Dystrophy and Motobaility

Thousands of people have lost access to Motability vehicles through being switched from the Disability Living Allowance to the Personal Independence Payments since 2013.

According to Muscular Dystrophy UK the number of people returning Motability vehicles is over 900 a week, in addition to the 51,000 people who have already returned their cars.

The number of people eligible for Motability funding has halved during the reassessment process. Of the 254,200 people who were eligible for Motability funding under DLA who were reassessed for PIP by 31 October 2016, 126,300 people have lost access.

Government-funded Motability cars, mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs are specially adapted for the individual needs of disabled people, and are vital for maintaining independence, social inclusion and overcoming problems of loneliness and being housebound.

Since a change in the rules, to qualify for the higher level of the mobility component of PIP, which is needed to get a Motability vehicle, a person must be unable to walk unaided for 20 metres, compared to the previous distance of 50 metres under the DLA assessment.

The Government has not been able to produce any evidence to support the use of the 20-metre rule, which was introduced by the DWP with no prior warning.

This change has been compounded by a lack of knowledge about the reliability criteria, which are included in the assessment to ensure that people can not only walk 20 metres, but do so safely and more than once in a short time period. However, many people being assessed do not know the rules about the reliability criteria, and are losing their vehicles as they can barely or unsafely walk 20 metres.

It is also not a question of being able to walk safely and unaided but also to walk without severe pain.

Statistics from the Ministry of Justice show that 65% of contested PIP awards have been won on appeal.

Muscular Dystrophy UK is calling for the DWP:

- to revert to the 50-metre rule
- and assessment providers Atos and Capita to ensure that all applicants are made aware of the reliability criteria and are prompted to consider them
- to ensure vehicles are not taken away until a final decision has been reached. The appeals process currently takes longer than the time allowed for people to return their cars

That this Council supports the campaign by Muscular Dystrophy UK and requests the Borough's MPs to promote the changes requested by Muscular Dystrophy UK for the benefit of those who suffer from the disease (and other mobility diseases) and thus restore their ability to live as mobile and inclusive a life as is possible.

Proposed: Councillor Carole Mulroney

Seconded: Councillor Ian Gilbert

2 April 2017