

WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE

THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN SCOTLAND

ANONYMOUS WRITTEN SUBMISSION

I have a condition called Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, Type 2 and it causes me severe pain in my right arm and hand, with wasting and disability. I am on many heavy duty medications to combat this, never ending pain. I constantly have pain and I get flare ups too, which intensifies my pain and disability. During these flare ups, I can't really function at all.

I get DLA but the lowest amount, because I can't prepare a meal. I used to be right handed and am needing to just use one, left hand. I ask you all to spend one day carrying out your tasks with your non dominant hand, to understand, how this feels? Now add on the equivalent of child birth pain and this is my normal.

I was employed as a staff nurse, when my arm was failing. I was forced out because my managers in the NHS wouldn't believe that there was anything wrong and so wouldn't get me adaptations. If only they had checked my medical notes. I was badly bullied and as a result, I could take no more. I left my employment.

I live at home with my husband who works on a zero hours contract employment. We have 14 year old son. Three years ago, when I left my employment, we ended up unable to pay our mortgage and often we had no money for food and sometimes electricity. My arm/hand are highly affected by temperature, so I couldn't get my arm/hand warm and became depressed in my bed.

My mood dropped rapidly and I set out to commit suicide but thoughts of my son stopped me. I went to my GP and ended up on anti-depressants. My bills were coming in fast and furious and I couldn't respond to them because my phone was cut off. I could no longer write with a pen, either. I felt less than useless. We managed to rent a flat in Penicuik.

I tried to get some extra help with money but I was informed that my husband earns enough to keep me. He doesn't always get work, every week. My condition is poorly understood and with this brings emotional and psychological distress at times.

I have an honours degree too in Social Sciences. I understand that my condition is too unpredictable to work for an employer. Because I can barely dress myself, let alone get to an employment. I would be on buses during peak times and I can't hold on with my left hand, while standing. I am really anxious on buses and need someone with me.

Seriously, who is going to employ a person, with the use of only a clumsy arm/hand?

All I can do is type on my tablet, with my left hand. I can't even afford a PC with disability equipment. I came up with an idea for writing, for extra money but would need equipment. I always enjoyed writing. As well as ensuring that disability payments are paid for, with some fairness people, who lose the use of their dominant hand, it would be useful, if there were one time payments, to help with equipment,

like that of a PC, so that I can work from home and have a bit more of a life than I do now.

One off payments could help people with disabilities; create our own ideas to make some income. It can enable us to take our own ideas forward.

My husband has serious concerns for my son and I should anything happen to him. I worry about this too, because I know that I am in no fit state to work. I am still just learning, to use my left hand to be my dominant hand. What employer would take me on? I can't even fill out a CV, despite having a BA (Hons) and a Diploma.

Upper limb disabilities must be recognised and it should be people with disabilities, who are creating policy. I previously worked with people who had disabilities, prior to my own disability. I thought that I understood disabilities and how big the barriers are, until I had a disability of my own.