

DLA: why it matters

Mencap asked lots of people with a learning disability about how they spend their Disability Living Allowance (DLA). We did this using a survey. This fact sheet is about the main things we found out from our survey.



What is DLA?

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is money that the government gives to disabled people. This is called a benefit. Lots of people with a learning disability get DLA.

It is called an “extra costs” benefit. This means it is to help people to meet the extra costs that they have because of their disability. It can help with things like support or transport.



What does DLA look like?

DLA has two parts – one part helps to pay for things if you need help or support to do them. This is called the care component. This has three rates. This means how much money you get. These are higher, middle and lower.



DLA also has a part called the mobility component. This has two amounts. These are higher and lower. This part helps to pay for things if you need help to get around.



What is happening to DLA?

The government is changing DLA. They want to replace DLA with a new called the Personal Independence Payment (PIP).



Lots of people are very worried about this. People have been contacting Mencap to ask them what this change will mean for people with a learning disability.



Mencap wanted to be able to tell the government about how important DLA is for people with a learning disability. We carried out a survey. We asked people with a learning disability and their families to tell us how they spend their DLA and how important it is to them.



Results

We had nearly 1000 responses from people.

These are the key things that people spent their DLA on:



1. Care and support

8 out of 10 people said that they used their DLA to pay for care and support. This included things like:

- **Help around the home**

Over half of the people who answered the survey **(58%)** said they spent their DLA on help around the home, including help with personal care, cooking and cleaning.



- **Transport**

Over half of the people who answered the survey **(62%)** said used their DLA to pay for transport, such as paying for buses and trains for themselves and sometimes for someone to travel with them to give them support.





- **Leisure activities**

Over half of the people who answered the survey **(66%)** said they spent their DLA on paying to take part in leisure activities like sport and trips to the theatre.



2. **Everyday things**

Over half of the people who answered the survey **(61%)** respondents commented that they spent more money on “everyday” things as a result of their disability. For example, some people told us that caring for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) means that they have to do more washing.



Does DLA make a difference to your life?

Almost three-quarters of the people who answered the survey **(71%)** answered this question. All of them said that DLA made a positive difference to their lives.

What are some of the things that people said about DLA?

“My DLA gets me out of my bedroom and into society.”

“If DLA was taken away it would make people like me vulnerable and isolated.”

“Every penny is essential.”

“Without my DLA...I would not be able to go out at all and I would get very fed up.”



What did we find out?



We found out that DLA has a big role in the lives of people with a learning disability. People used DLA in lots of different ways to meet the extra costs of disability.



Mencap believes that the government needs to look carefully at why DLA was first introduced. They need to have a good understanding of all the ways it supports disabled people, including people with a learning disability.



Mencap wants to make sure that any changes to DLA do not unfairly disadvantage people with a learning disability.

Mencap believes that people with a learning disability need help to meet the extra costs of their disability. We want to make sure they keep getting this help.