**Social care reform must meet aspirations of Disabled people**

**Template letter to MPs**

This is a template letter that you can send to your MP. You can find your MP using this website: <https://www.writetothem.com>

Dear ,

I welcome the government’s commitment to transform social care.  This is a huge opportunity and we all need the government to get it right.

Social care support is vital for many older and Disabled people. It is like a vehicle that helps us to live a normal life. The reform should first and foremost improve the experience of those who use this vital support.

This is why I believe it is very important to directly engage and listen to Disabled people’s experiences and aspirations when these reforms are developed. This so far has not been the case. In the past changes that led to radical improvements for those who use social care, such as person centered planning, personal budgets and direct payments were developed by Disabled people ourselves.

**These are the basic principles I want the Government to adhere to in the reform of social care:**

* There must be a long term funding solution for social care. People should receive the care and support we need to lead full lives. Social care must be put on the same footing as the NHS, free at the point of use.
* Reform of the law to give more power to Disabled People and support inclusion. The law must guarantee Disabled people the right to choose where and with whom we live, have access to all necessary support to live a normal life and access community activities like everybody else.
* It is critically important to ensure that money is spent on services that Disabled people of all ages want and need. At the moment a lot of money is wasted by paying for care in institutions where some disabled people do not enjoy basic human rights.
* Local authorities should record the needs that they are currently unable to meet. This will make it possible for the Government to work towards filling the gap.
* Social care should be free at the point of use. It is completely unacceptable that people on means-tested benefits have to pay a significant proportion of their already small income for social care support. Charging for social care must be abolished.
* Reduce bureaucratic burden and enable disabled people to innovate. Reform must promote a radical change in the approach, ensuring that restrictions are removed so that people are truly able to self-direct their support and don’t feel as though care is done to them.

I do not believe the proposals so far will address any of the above. They will not make significant improvements in the lives of disabled people who do not have assets and are not able to work.

I therefore ask you to raise those issues with the Minister for Care and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and urge them to meaningfully engage with Disabled people and our user-led organisations in the development of the reform proposals.

Best wishes,