**DPAC UN CRDP consultation event – independent living workshop**

**1. Have things have got better or worse or stayed the same since the last examination in 2017?**

Attendees unanimously agreed that things have got worse.

On dealing with social services:

* “Total ableism from non-disabled social workers for focus on their point of view and nothing else.”
* “[Dealing with social services] is very belittling and I have to fit in with the people who get paid.”
* “I end up spending more of the money for PAs on trying to sort out direct payments. Sometimes I think I’d be better without direct payments!”
* “Social workers aren't social workers anymore, they're glorified accountants.”

On managing direct payments/personal budget:

* “I don’t think there’s anything wrong with direct payments – the problem is we don’t get any support. They give this support to lots of disabled people who haven’t been employed themselves and expect them to be able to handle it. I remember when we had more proper DDPOs who were there to help people run their packages and we haven’t got that anymore.”

On charging:

* “Some of my friends are having to choose between eating, heating their homes and paying for care because of the charging policy.”
* “'It's a postcode lottery - if Hammersmith and Fulham can do away with charges then so can every council in my opinion.”
* “'I've been told my local authority are breaching my human rights but [social services] don't care. I wanted to take my council to court because my situation is the same as the Norfolk case but I can't because I use my disability benefits to pay my mortgage off because I wanted to make sure I have a roof over my head, and because I own a house that is more than a hundred thousand I can't get legal aid. I'd have to pay a lawyer £250 an hour to get my human rights!”

On recruiting personal assistants:

* “I’m having major difficulties trying to get PAs. Part of the difficulty is the pay is so bad but if I want to pay more I get less PA time.”
* “There's nobody wants to go into care work. They blame it on the pandemic but I don't think it is.”
* Rise in LGBT-phobia makes it harder for LGBT service users to hire respectful/non-discriminatory PAs

**2. Which if any of the Committee’s recommendations from 2017 and 2016 have been implemented by the government?**

Attendees unanimously agreed that none of the Committee’s recommendations from 2017 and 2016 have been implemented and that things have gone backwards, even before the coronavirus pandemic.

**3. Have any new issues emerged since 2017?**

“Yes, it’s all got worse”

* Impact of the coronavirus pandemic
* Harsher charging policies
* Difficulty recruiting PAs

**4. Which are the top three issues in this area are most important to bring to the Committee’s attention?**

* Human rights being violated, particularly in relation to the concerns raised in the Norfolk charging case
* Poor pay for PAs makes it harder to recruit PAs, particularly for overnight shifts/24 hour care packages
* Charging policies mean many disabled people are having to choose between eating, heating and having a PA