



Cancer Patients and Welfare Reform

May 2013

Background

- Professor Harrington – review of ESA
- 2010, 2011, 2012
- Dr Paul Litchfield appointed in 2013

UK Government

Welfare Reform Bill 2011-2012

We worked successfully to ensure people can claim PIP 3months after diagnosis rather than 6months as originally proposed by Govt

But Govt still introduced time-limiting of contributory ESA for those in the Work Related Activity Group to 12 months

Debate in UK Parliament

‘The intention of our proposals is to introduce a presumption that **most people being treated for cancer should be in the support group** unless the evidence indicates that, exceptionally, the debilitating effects of treatment are likely to be more limited. We would expect this to increase the number of individuals going into the support group and to reduce the number of people called to attend a face-to-face assessment.’

Lord Freud, February 2012

Stormont Response

- *“It is very much our intention—especially for those who have finished their treatment but are not yet prepared to return to work—to have a simple system that enables a medical professional to indicate to us that that person is **not yet sufficiently recovered** to make a return to work. Our proposals are out to consultation at the moment, but our overall clear goal is that, in the vast majority of cases, someone who is undergoing treatment for cancer or is recovering from the aftermath of that treatment should be in the support group.” Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, February 2012*

20 September 2012 – a press release from **DSD Minister Nelson McCausland** welcomed the rule change to support cancer patients:

“New proposals, published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Great Britain, will mean that hundreds more people in Northern Ireland, and across the UK, who are **awaiting, receiving, or recovering** from any form of chemotherapy or radiotherapy for cancer will be placed in the Support Group for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Here they will get the financial support they need while unable to work.

Minister McCausland said: “This is a very welcome step and it is one that I have been calling for, for some time.

DSD Committee

Macmillan gave evidence to DSD Cttee last year.

Reciprocity of ESA from GB (and vice versa)

New ESA50 form

Training for Social Security Staff

- Macmillan staff have designed and delivered a training course for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) decision makers in NI
- In total 135 ESA decision makers attended the training

Bringing the Health Service and Benefits Together

- We need DSD & HSS&PS to meet regularly to ensure the two systems are aligned
- HSS&PS to ensure staff sign the forms like ESA50
- Cancer and Long Term Condition patients get sign posted to welfare advice as a routine part of their treatment

Macmillan Advice Services

- Working with partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau
- Macmillan has benefits advice services in the cancer centre in Belfast
- And the four cancer units across NI
- 0808 808 0000 Macmillan Helpline