

Meeting With Rosie Winterton M.P. at SYCIL 19th February 2010

This was the third time that Rosie Winterton M.P. had visited SYCIL to talk to local disabled people about issues which concerned them. Rosie thanked everyone for coming and mentioned that there was a big conference being held in London around the future of care, as more people needed support, and wanted to be able to stay in their own homes.

The main issues discussed were:-

There appears to be an increase in the numbers of people having claims for Disability Living Allowance rejected. Rosie Winterton said that she would contact the benefits office in Leeds to ask if it would be possible for SYCIL to meet with them regularly, on a quarterly basis to look at issues for service users around this issue.

Lack of communication aids for people with a hearing impairment.

Limited resources available through Access To Work, and the practical problems of trying to work when disabled.

The complex nature of the self assessment forms involved in getting a personal budget were discussed. For anyone with limited literacy the forms are inaccessible, and for many disabled people the forms are too vague, complicated, provoke considerable anxiety, and if not completed fully or accurately could lead to a support plan being put in place for up to a year which does not meet a person's needs.

Following on from the discussion about the personal budgets form it was felt that the council's communication is often an issue, and that there was a role for the LINK and 50+ Parliament in challenging the council on this.

Concern was expressed about the possibility of a reduction in local council tax, which could result in a reduction in services for local people.

Concern was also raised about the reduction of translation services locally, including those for Deaf people who needed BSL translation services.

Several people said that they were anxious about the possibility of Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance being removed from individuals and taken into social services budgets. Rosie Winterton said that she would contact the minister concerned with this area of government policy and seek clarification, and feed back any information she received to SYCIL.