

yn cefnogi pobl ddall ac  
â golwg rhannol  
supporting blind and  
partially sighted people

Leader of the Conservative Group  
Monmouthshire County Council  
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2nd September 2008

Dear Group Leader,

### **Mobility Benefits for Blind People**

The Royal National Institute of Blind People launched a national campaign in August 2006 to ensure that your blind residents are given access to essential mobility benefits to enable them travel safely and live independently.

Many blind people live in isolation, often facing difficulties in accessing the basic essentials of life. Whether it's getting to the supermarket, visiting the doctors or seeing friends and relatives, blind people face huge financial and physical barriers.

The concessionary travel scheme has opened up more leisure options to blind people. However, blind people still face significant difficulties when using public transport, such as how to identify which bus is coming, how to know where to get off, or how to get to a bus stop or train station without support from a friend, neighbour or family member.

Travelling to essential NHS services such as a Doctor or Dentist, using community facilities or local leisure centres, visiting friends or



**BUDDSODDWR AEWN POBL**  
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Royal National Institute of Blind People**

**Cadeirydd/Chairman** John Ramm • **Cyfarwyddwraig/Director** Sarah Rochira  
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family, even paying bills at council offices or going to vote in elections is a huge challenge to blind and partially sighted people. Blind people are users of public transport however, their mobility, freedom and choice is restricted to bus routes. Alternative methods of transport involve reliance on friends, family, community transport facilities and taxis, denying them independence and resulting in additional unaffordable costs.

Accessing these facilities and services may require multiple bus changes, and ultimately may not even be near a bus route. often have to rely on friends, family, community transport facilities (where any of these exist) and taxis, denying them independence and resulting in additional, often unaffordable costs.

Under current social care eligibility criteria blind people are not considered to have "critical" or "substantial" care needs. This results in people being excluded from care support which would enable them to lead full and independent lives as active citizens and members of their community.

I am writing to you now because the campaign to secure greater support for blind people in meeting the extra mobility costs they face is at a critical juncture.

RNIB has been working with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Officials and Ministers for over a year to put in place the detail about how blind people can be given access to the **Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**. This extra cost benefit gives disabled people support with the additional expenses they face because of their impairment.

Disability Living Allowance (mobility component) is the key benefit which enables disabled people to achieve a level of independent mobility. The higher rate of DLA (according to the regulations which govern who is eligible) is payable to people with severe physical disabilities which impair their mobility. Having no useful sight for mobility purposes is not considered a physical disability, nor is it considered to impair mobility significantly to be eligible for the higher rate. The obvious difficulties that sight loss presents to blind people with independent mobility shows that the current eligibility criteria are unjust and it is this anomaly which our campaign is seeking to rectify.



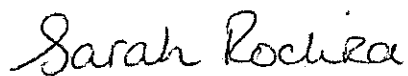
We welcome the progress that has been made and are pleased that officials have advised Ministers that this is an achievable change. However, James Purnell has now said that whilst he understands the force of our arguments and is sympathetic with our aims he is not able, at this time, to commit to amending the existing arrangements.

I would ask you to submit the motion enclosed for consideration at your next Council meeting. In supporting this motion your Group is sending out a clear message of support to your blind residents. It also demonstrates to the Government that you believe accessibility, mobility and independent living are an important priorities.

Last December the largest ever lobby of parliament by blind people took place in Westminster in support of this change, when 1200 people made the journey to London to meet with their MPs. There is a huge groundswell of feeling amongst the blind community that exclusion from the Higher Rate DLA Mobility Component is a great injustice that must be addressed. I hope you will support RNIB, the other organisations supporting this campaign, and your blind residents in pushing for this change.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Rochira  
Director RNIB Cymru

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

Furthermore, it highlights the role of internal controls in preventing fraud and ensuring the integrity of the financial statements. The document also mentions the importance of regular audits and reviews.

In addition, the document discusses the impact of external factors such as market conditions and regulatory changes on the organization's financial performance. It suggests that the organization should remain flexible and adaptable to these changes.

The document concludes by stating that the organization is committed to maintaining the highest standards of financial reporting and transparency. It expresses confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the financial statements and the overall financial health of the organization.

Very truly yours,  
[Signature]

[Name]  
[Title]

[Name]  
[Title]

## **Briefing on Mobility benefits for Blind Residents**

### **Leaders of Local Authority Political Groups**

Dear Group Leader,

#### **Context:**

Thank you taking the time to read our letter and the enclosed motion. I hope your group will be able to support the needs of blind residents in your local authority area, the support of local Councils is essential to this campaign and is vital to improving the mobility of thousands of blind people across the country.

This campaign has been launched as a result of a huge groundswell of support and anger from blind people throughout the UK who have been denied access to the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance.

The current rules state that to get the higher rate the claimant must have a physical impairment which causes difficulty with movement – sadly many blind people have difficulty leaving the home independently and then, only at great expense.

Many blind people have a mobility aid such as a Guide dog or Long Cane which greatly improve their quality of life however, even aids as vital as these have limitations to independent mobility.

The concessionary travel scheme has also gone some way to increasing mobility for blind people although most often this is used for small leisure activities in tandem with an assistant or mobility aid as mentioned above. The concessionary travel scheme is also limited to the routes bus companies use and therefore blind people are often restricted to services located along those routes.

**Ultra Vires:**

Your monitoring officer may possibly argue that this motion is ultra vires. The motion is not definitely not ultra vires, it refers directly to the needs of local residents and the way they are affected in accessing local services.

If they require precedent during 2003-2005 many motions were passed by local authorities against top-up fee's as these also affected local residents.

**Further Information:**

If you require further information on this campaign please call either:

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## **Mobility Benefits for Blind Residents**

### **Briefing for Local Authority Group Leaders - Model Motion**

This Council Notes:

- 1) That blind people experience significant barriers to independent mobility
- 2) That blind people are often isolated and find it difficult to access basic services without mobility assistance
- 3) That many blind residents in this authority area find it difficult to access Shops, Supermarkets, Doctors, Dentists and Community facilities and centres
- 4) Our blind residents find it difficult to access many Council Services ranging from housing to voting without mobility support and face additional costs as a result, such as using taxis or private hire vehicles.

This Council Further Notes:

- 1) That blind people are not entitled to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance
- 2) Loss of usable sight clearly causes significant independent mobility problems and incurs significant additional and unmet costs
- 3) That blind people are in many parts of England excluded from social care support because their needs are not considered "critical" or "substantial"

This Council resolves:

- 1) To ask the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, the Rt Hon. James Purnell MP, expressing these concerns
- 2) To ask the CEO and Leader of the Council to write to our local MPs asking that they sign up to EDM number 1982 and write to the Secretary of State expressing these concerns
- 3) To support the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) campaign on securing the higher rate mobility component of DLA for blind people.

