

New Zealand Productivity Commission  
PO Box 8036  
The Terrace  
Wellington 6143

24 June 2015

RE: More Effective Social Services

My name is Jennifer Natusch.

I would like to make a submission in response to Chapter 11: Client choice and empowerment.

I am the mother and primary carer of Katherine Natusch and I use Enhanced Individualised Funding (EIF) to manage her support. Kate is 32 years old, and has moderate cerebral palsy. She continues to live with us as her wish, but uses a walker or wheelchair and does not drive a car.

EIF has made a huge difference to our whole family. Before we used EIF, we had virtually no support since Kate left school 12 years ago. This is because we live on a farm 60 km from Tauranga where most of the support agencies operate. For 3 hours care, Kate and I had to drive for an hour to where the agency worker was, on the day that suited them and then we drove an hour home. That is 2 hours driving for 3 hours care. We had no choice about the person who would provide the care, and needless to say, this system did not work for either Kate or me. She has been therefore totally reliant on her family for her every need since.

Now, Kate has carers who she helped to choose. They come to her home and work with her in her place, or take her out to socialise, shop or go to Riding for the Disabled, as well as volunteering at the local school. She is now participating in life in new ways with people who respect her and value her. And this allows me a little time out too.

We have had our current support people for a year now. We now have some flexibility in how we live our lives, as do most other New Zealanders. We can change the hours each week, the days each week to make the care meet Kate's and the carers needs, and be responsible employers. Our carers get a much higher rate of pay and better working conditions under EIF. We have had no problems finding carers or retaining them.

We know how Kate wants to live, and what she wants to do, so Kate and I are the people best placed to make decisions about how to achieve this. I would urge the government to look into EIF and see what an amazing difference it is making to people's lives.

**EIF has been transformational to our family.**

Kind regards,

Jennifer Natusch.