

New Zealand Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

29 June 2015

RE: More Effective Social Services

My name is Jan Sara

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

I am the mother of Matthew Sara who uses Individualised Funding (IF) to manage his support. I am Matthew's agent.

IF has made a huge difference to Matthews life. Before we moved onto IF, the standard of Mathew's care was very unacceptable. His support workers would often not turn up when expected because they had been given other clients or programs to run. When they were attending my son, the standard of care was often well below acceptable. As Matthew's mother I was often very frustrated but had no power to improve his situation. What was so exasperating was knowing Matt had the funding for his support but the appropriate care was not being fully delivered. In those days we did not like going away and leaving him, but on one occasion we had to get away for rest and recreation so that we could keep going. We left him in the care of his support workers. When we returned three weeks later we found him in a terrible mess. His house was very unclean and rubbish bags had not gone out. It was soon after that I heard about individualised funding and applied for it.

The advantages of IF are: (1) We can choose our own support workers. Over the years we have employed mainly medical or social worker students. They are ideal as our son is on the autism spectrum.

(2) When there is a problem, we can address the matter immediately and directly with our employees. They are accountable to me and that helps keep the standard of his care high.

(3) We know our son and can choose support workers to suit his individual needs.

(4) I can divide the support into domestic support and personal care. We have a cleaner for the domestic support and then a support worker for his personal care. I have found support workers are usually inadequate cleaners.

(5) Matt is now getting the support when he needs it from people who are very competent to meet his needs.

On average employees tend to get a higher rate of pay and better working conditions under IF.

I know how I want to live and what I want my life to look like, so I am the person best placed to make decisions about how to achieve this.

I would urge the government to look into IF and see what an amazing difference it is making to people's lives.

Imagine what I could achieve if I had full flexibility with my disability supports and if I was truly able to choose the life I want to lead, just like other non-disabled New Zealanders.

Kind Regards,

Jan Sara