

New Zealand Productivity Commission  
PO Box 8036  
The Terrace  
Wellington 6143

29 June 2015

**RE: More Effective Social Services**

My name is Jackie Monastra and I would like to make a submission in response to Chapter 11: Client choice and empowerment.

I am the mother of a 2½ year old girl named Sadie who has severe intellectual and physical disabilities and I use Individualised Funding (IF) to manage our support.

IF has made a huge difference to our lives. Before we moved onto IF, we had to work with various agencies who were not properly equipped to deal with providing care to a child with Sadie's complications.

The staff assessing our needs usually dealt with the elderly and could not grasp what it was like to be living with our daughter or how much support she needed.

The Carers they offered had little or no experience with children and were not appropriate to help us. The levels of services these agencies provided was lacking and it always left a bad taste in my mouth that they earned as much as they did off of 'managing our care' when that money could be better utilised elsewhere. One agency took \$5 an hour for almost 2 years and did very very little outside of manage payroll! Our Carer at the time was also employed by them as a contractor and was not eligible for paid leave entitlements.

We didn't have the ability to accrue support hours for when we needed them most – such as when my daughter returned from her multiple surgeries and needed the most care and support. We were given a weekly allocation of hours on a use it or lose it basis.

Now I have the ability to source and employ my own staff. To make sure they are appropriately trained and a good match to our daughter and our home. I also have the ability to ensure that they are appropriately remunerated and receive their leave entitlements.

I have had my current support person for 8 months and she is amazing! We found her ourselves and we now get the support we need, when we need it, from a woman who genuinely cares about our daughter's wellbeing and has so much to offer from a professional perspective.



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

We know how we want to live and what we want our daughter's daily life to be 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,

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