

New Zealand Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

23 June 2015

RE: More Effective Social Services

My name is Heather Hoffman.

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

I am married with two children and one grandchild and I use individualised Funding (IF) to manage my support. I have MS and use a wheelchair.

IF has made a huge difference to my life. Before I moved onto IF funding, I was getting extremely tired trying to manage all my personal care and other personal needs. I was unable to go out very often to do shopping, visit friends, or join exercise classes or go swimming. Now that I have a support person I can do all these things confidently. It has made a major improvement to my quality of life.

I have had my current support people/person for about 4 years. What a difference it has made. I now get the support I need when I need it from people who value and respect me.

Being able to employ my own staff has meant I can employ someone who is matched to my personality and personal needs.

On average employees tend to get a higher rate of pay and better working conditions under IF. They feel more valued and respected

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,
Heather Hoffman
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