

New Zealand Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

27 June 2015

RE: More Effective Social Services

My name is Irene Andrei and I'm writing on behalf of my husband Kerry who is our daughters agent and our 2 daughters Shannen and Keriann Andrei.

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

We are part of the Enabling Good Lives demonstration in Christchurch. Our Daughters are 20 and 22 years old this year. They both have complex needs, they have global developmental delay and physical challenges, autism, Shannen has epilepsy, and they are both nonverbal and require 24/7 support.

Both our daughters have their own personal budgets and this has made a huge difference in their lives and our lives. Before our daughters were on EGL we were reliant on agencies supporting our daughters. This was very limiting and we didn't have any real control or choice on who turned up at our home to do the supports for our daughters also choices for respite care outside of our home. This left us feeling at times overwhelmed and disempowered.

EGL has made a huge difference in our lives. Before we moved onto EGL our girls were forever at the GP's now they are rarely there. We would be at the doctors at least once a month for illness which usually resulted in our daughters being put on antibiotics. We now go to the GP for prescriptions these days both girls are rarely sick now! Are GP Dr Philippa Ryan Q E 2 Medical centre suggested it could be because we weren't having an agency person/s coming into our home who may have seen 5 clients before us and may have been spreading illness around?

We have employed our daughter's staff and this has resulted in our girls being very happy and thriving since leaving school last year 2014. We have respite in our own home and our girls are out and about daily in their community with their PA's living a great life.

Our daughters current support staff who we employed have been with us for over a year now, with 3 being with us since we started on EGL. What a difference this has made. Shannen and Keriann now get the support they need when they need it from people who value and respect them.

Employing our daughters staff has been very empowering for us as a family it has meant consistency in our girl's life which is very important for them and us. We could never go back to the way it was, being dictated to and having limited control. The only control we had would be to ring the agency office and ask them to not to send

one of their support people back to us if we didn't think they were the best fit for our family. It added unnecessary stress to our lives!

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

We know how we want our daughters to live and what we want their life to look like, Kerry and I are the best people, best placed to make decisions about how to achieve this. Both our daughters are thriving in every area of their lives.

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

Imagine what our daughters could achieve if they continued to have full flexibility with their disability supports and if they were truly able to choose the life they want to lead, just like other non-disabled New Zealanders. We know when our girls are happy, they smile and laugh and have good health and a good quality of life.

We have been blessed to have this opportunity through EGL and our wish would be that everyone who has a disability or has a child/c children with disability have this option/choice as well.

Kind Regards,
Irene Andrei!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J Mandrell".