

**Disability Action in the Borough of Barnet**

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For Information of Councillors

Dear Member of Barnet Council,

**Re: Proposed Funding Cut to Barnet Welfare Rights Unit**

I am writing to express my concern that a cut to the funding of Barnet Welfare Rights Unit which may result in its closure is being proposed.

We consider Barnet Welfare Rights Unit is a key provider of advice on welfare rights which complements and does not duplicate the work that we do. We rely on them for specialist advice on welfare rights in complex cases. They also represent clients at Social Security Appeal Tribunals, which is a service we are not funded to provide at present.

The Unit's closure could generate more demand for generalist advice from us. We would find it difficult to meet this extra demand in our existing funding as our advice service works at full capacity already.

Barnet Welfare Rights Unit undertakes a lot of specialist work for disabled people. As this group of people are already severely disadvantaged in society we would be extremely concerned to see them deprived of services. People who are in receipt of welfare benefits are already living in extreme hardship. Closure of the unit would mean many people would suffer financially as they would not be able to secure as much money as they could with advice and representation. As you may know Local Authorities are required to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people (Disability Discrimination Act 2005 as amended). We feel that closure of this vital service would detract from your work in this area. We hope you will consider the issues raised in this letter and continue to fund this service.

Yours faithfully

Leon Rabstaff  
Chair of Executive Committee

