

## **HUTTON SHOULD PICK UP WHERE BLUNKETT LEFT OFF WITH INCAPACITY REFORM, RADAR SAYS**

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RADAR, the UK's leading disability rights organisation, is urging John Hutton to continue the programme of Incapacity Benefit reform in line with the direction set by outgoing Secretary of State for Work and Pensions David Blunkett.

The Green Paper on Incapacity Benefit was due to be released in mid November, and RADAR hopes that the reforms now being taken forward under John Hutton will stay true to Blunkett's vision laid out through the 8 Principles for Welfare Reform released on the 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2005.

Kate Nash, Chief Executive of RADAR, says, "The Government's approach up to now has been positive and encouraging. We were looking forward to the establishment of a system that is flexible, prioritises the right to work, and places the emphasis on incentives and support rather than sanctions."

Following Mr Hutton's appointment RADAR remains optimistic about the planned welfare reforms. RADAR hopes his experience as former Health Minister with responsibilities for social care will enable him to bring a wide understanding of the issues facing disabled people to the reform of Incapacity Benefit, and assist him in delivering on promises to improve employment opportunities and experiences of work for disadvantaged groups.

"We are keen to continue working in partnership with the Government, but are hopeful that the change in Secretary of State will not result in a change of approach to welfare reform."

At present RADAR is engaged in a myth-busting campaign in an attempt to mitigate against stereotypes and negative press coverage surrounding benefits claimants.

"We expect John Hutton to ensure a positive debate around welfare reform. Perpetuating stereotypes and myths about disabled people and benefits claimants will only impede essential reform. We hope Mr Hutton will work to ensure that the contribution of disabled people to society is recognised and maximised in a new system that meets the needs of individuals," Kate Nash said.

### Notes for editors:

<sup>1</sup> RADAR is a national non-governmental disability organisation working for the rights of disabled people, from the broadest range of cultural, racial and social backgrounds,

irrespective of their impairment. Although RADAR works with organisations of all types (of and for disabled people) RADAR itself is an organisation of disabled people.

<sup>2</sup> RADAR's vision is about pushing out the boundaries of the expected; a vision of a world where human difference is routinely anticipated, expertly accommodated and positively celebrated.

<sup>3</sup> For a copy of RADAR's 8 Principles for Welfare Reform please contact Erin O'Brien on 0207 566 0119 or at [erin.obrien@radar.org.uk](mailto:erin.obrien@radar.org.uk)

<sup>4</sup> Up to 11 November 2005 RADAR is refuting a 'myth a day'. The 8 key myths RADAR is refuting are:

- People on Incapacity Benefit are lazy and watch TV all day (1<sup>st</sup> November)
- People on Incapacity Benefit are fraudsters (2<sup>nd</sup> November)
- People on Incapacity Benefit could get a job if they really wanted one (3<sup>rd</sup> November)
- People on Incapacity Benefit are living a life of luxury (4<sup>th</sup> November)
- People on Incapacity Benefit already get lots of help from the Government (7<sup>th</sup> November)
- Employing disabled people is expensive; only big companies can afford to do it (8<sup>th</sup> November)
- Disabled people are less productive than non-disabled employees; they should stay on Incapacity Benefit (9<sup>th</sup> November)
- All we need are more ramps in the workplace and disabled people will be able to go to work (10<sup>th</sup> November)

A full refutation of all 8 Myths will be released on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2005.

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