

Transcript of ITV News Item on 7 April 2011: Disabled Hit By The Cuts

Julie Etchingam & Alistair Stewart: -

"Politicians and economists may argue the toss over the need for the cuts to avoid a Portuguese style melt-down.

But for those at the receiving end, there's no argument about the impact - not least on some of the most vulnerable in society - the disabled.

ITV News has obtained a new study, to be published on Friday 8 April 2011, which shows that:

80% of councils in England will no longer support those with "moderate" needs.

50% of authorities have removed upper limits to the weekly charges they can take for disabled home care - and where they remain they've been **increased by up to 98%**.

Individual councils are also raising hourly charges - by as much as **78%**.

*In the latest in our series **"Life under the Cuts"**, our consumer editor **Chris Choi** reports on how disabled people are paying the price of the budget deficit": -*

Chris Choi: -

These are the biggest cuts in this Conservative led council's history (West Sussex County Council) as the disabled are reassessed, at stake is the way they socialise and the way they live as millions is cut from a budget many rely on.

Fiona Slade has Cerebral Palsy; a local day centre has played a big part of her life.

"So you won't be coming here anymore?"

Fiona Slade: -

"No"

Chris Choi: -

Fees have gone up with no matching increase in her own funding.

She can't afford to come here anymore.

Fiona Slade: -

"OK, so we have got a disability, our legs might not work, but our brains do, our intellect still works, but when you have got that thinking of intellectual stimulation, then you are going to

go downhill, your thought processes are going to be, I can't be bothered, why do I bother getting out of bed? What can I do today; it's the same old, same old, boring, monotonous routine."

Chris Choi: -

The council says the fee increase is part of a planned process over the last 2 years but they are aiming to save £2million from the budget that funds disability care.

Fiona Slade: -

"It's the money, it's the funding and it's the need and it's people's self esteem."

Chris Choi: -

Matthew Palmer uses a wheelchair; he loves getting out but now he is frightened. The council is reviewing funding, reassessing 1000s of disabled people and removing funds from those with moderate needs. If they do lose funding, some people won't get the support they need to attend this country park.

Matthew Palmer: -

"They really don't want this to happen and they are really, really upset about it."

Chris Choi: -

Here £31 million would go from adult social care funding in 3 years. They say disability reassessments will be sensitive and expect that those who lose support will be helped.

Andrew Pickthall has Down Syndrome; he also has bags of life and independence.

Andrew Pickthall: -

"I get up and go for work."

Chris Choi: -

Because he has been able to learn how to look after himself so well he is worried that as the council now struggles to cut spending, he will be assessed as able to cope without the support that allows him to go gardening once a week.

"Is that a week, are you sure it's a week?"

Andrew Pickthall: -

"Yes, yes."

Chris Choi: -

"Is all of this yours?"

Andrew Pickthall: -

"Yes."

Chris Choi: -

Tonight a spokesman for English councils said: -

"Taking 1 service or change as a barometer of any council's approach is misleading."

....but conceded that authorities face tough decisions as £6billion is taken from their budgets.

It is leaving many disabled person and afraid, Chris Choi, ITV News.