

## Case Study 2

Mr & Mrs ? are both in receipt of JSA on a joint claim with Mr ? being the main claimant. They also receive child benefit & child tax credit at the basic rates along with Housing & council tax benefits.

They have a disabled 2 year old son who suffers from a brain condition limiting his intellectual, cognitive behaviour. He requires a lot more care throughout the day than a child without this disability does.

When he was 6 months old they were advised by another disability advice agency to claim DLA for him which they helped the clients do. They were awarded the lower rate care component of DLA for him. The clients left it at that.

They came to see me as they were struggling financially because the child has to attend hospital in Sheffield very regularly for check ups & operations. The travel costs were high & also the Jobcentre were putting increasing pressure on them to find work which they find very difficult because of the time needed to spend caring for their son & attending medical appointments. This was making them extremely stressed out.

I started by carrying out a benefits check which I discovered they were not receiving enough child tax credit because tax credits were not awarding them the disabled child premium which they should have due to son having DLA lower rate care. The clients didn't realise they could get extra & their previous advisor from the other organisation had not followed this up when they were awarded the DLA! We telephoned tax credits there & then and they checked with DWP that he was on DLA & they awarded the extra £60 per week.

I looked at the DLA award & decided that due to the sons care needs the lower rate award was a little less than it should have been & again their previous advisor had not realised this & followed this up. Having an increase in sons DLA to at least middle rate care would mean that mum or dad could claim carers allowance & income support & come off JSA permanently & no longer need to meet the requirements of the jobseeker agreement! We rang the DLA unit & requested review forms.

The forms were completed a couple of weeks later and a few weeks later the decision was that the DLA care was increased to middle rate & we are now in the process of changing their primary benefits to carers allowance & income support.

This will give them more income to pay for extra things in order to care for their son & more to spend on travel to & from hospital appointments & gets the jobcentre off their backs!