

Manifesto Briefing

Our voices ■ Our choices

4 A new Scottish disability benefit system that respects disabled people's human rights and helps to meet the extra costs of disability.

The Problem:

- Over half of the £22 billion of the cuts to benefits between 2010 - 2015 fell on disabled people and their families.
- Nearly half (47%) of all Scots disabled people on the Higher Mobility part of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will lose that when they are re-assessed for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Disabled people are being subjected to more humiliating, stressful and punitive assessment procedures.

Our Solution:

- The new Scottish disability benefit system to be designed in coproduction with disabled people.
- Replace the inhumane, expensive, error-ridden assessment regime.
- All benefit claimants, including disabled people, to be treated with dignity and respect.

Key Facts:

Based on DWP projections, the Scottish Government has estimated that by 2017/18 105,000 Scots disabled people will have lost all or part of their entitlement to disability benefits. The budget for the disability benefits to be devolved will have fallen by around 40% - from £793 million to £483 million.

- <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00457564.pdf>

Between April – June 2015, 57% of appeals against PIP Assessments found in favour of the claimant.

- Tribunal Statistics, September 2015, UK Ministry of Justice

29% of Job Seekers Allowance sanctions have been imposed on disabled people.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-and-employment-and-support-allowance-sanctions-decisions-made-to-september-2015>

There is clear evidence that disabled people have been unfairly singled out for a disproportionate amount of the cuts to benefits. The cumulative impact of the benefit cuts on Scots disabled people's incomes is staggering with an estimated total loss of over £1 billion a year by last year.

These cuts are driving tens of thousands of disabled people into poverty and will deepen the poverty that far too many disabled people already experience, and will be made worse by the recent arbitrary £30 cut to Employment Support Allowance.

Disabled people have been made the victims of an inhumane, expensive, never-ending and error-ridden assessment regime. Hundreds of thousands have had to resort to lengthy, stressful appeals and reviews to get the support they are entitled to and very much need. Last year over half (57%) of PIP appeals were successful. This success rate was achieved after the DWP had already reviewed their original decisions – suggesting that the majority of assessments are incorrect.

Disability benefits (DLA, PIP and Attendance Allowance) and Carers Allowance are being devolved to the Scottish Parliament from April 2017. This presents an opportunity to do things differently. This needs to be done in co-production with disabled people who know best how to overcome the barriers to their participation.

The over-riding principle of any Scottish benefits system should be that it supports all of Scotland's population, including disabled people, to reach their full potential and play a full, active and equal role in Scottish community and economy

Benefits should support all citizens by providing an adequate income and assisting disabled people to achieve and maintain independent living, underpinned by a commitment to fundamental human rights. All of those using it should be treated with dignity and respect.

Inclusion Scotland and partner organisations (People First and the British Deaf Association) have worked with Scottish Government and Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) practitioners to devise training that improves SWF staff's understanding of the barriers that disabled people face. We believe that similar training should be mandatory for staff administering the new Scottish Disability and Carers benefits. **For more information on this or the issues raised in this briefing, please contact us:**



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