



**Inclusion
Scotland**

Disabled People's Organisation

Our voices ■ Our choices

Disabled People & The Impact of Welfare Reform

Who are Disabled People?

- Anyone excluded from participating in society by physical, social, economic, cultural and attitudinal barriers
- A barrier exists where a person's impairment or condition has not been accommodated

“If I go somewhere in my wheelchair and get stuck at the bottom of a staircase, it isn't just my illness that prevents me from completing my journey: it is also the lack of ramps or lifts that disable me. Install a ramp or a lift and voila! I can proceed.”

(Rosa Davies, Guardian, 14/05/2015)

How are Disabled People Impacted?

- Social security cuts
- Social Care Charges
- Proposed Changes to Housing Allowance
- Information / adapting to change
- Attitudes
- Poverty

DLA to PIP

- DWP estimate that 6 out of 10 working age recipients of DLA higher rate mobility will have lost their award by 2018.
- The Scottish Government estimates that 66,000 fewer DLA claimants will receive DLA/PIP by 2018, with another +50,000 partially losing entitlement in the transfer to PIP.
- Impacts on: mobility vehicles; paying for care; stress of assessments and delays.

Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)

- 100,000 disabled people will lose ESA as a result of stricter assessment criteria and time limiting claims to 12 months
- Decisions can be wrong - 40% of WCAs are overturned on appeal, rising to 70% if the claimant is represented by a CAB worker
- Over 40% of those losing entitlement to ESA after a WCA are people with a mental health issue or learning difficulty
- In Dec 2013 the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court's decision that the Work Capability Assessment is discriminatory towards people with mental illness, autism and learning difficulties
- Changes to Incapacity Benefit/ESA have cost affected households an average of **£3,480 pa**

Mandatory Reconsideration

- Step before appeal introduced in October 2013
- Makes it harder for claimants found 'fit to work' to challenge that decision
- Disabled people seeking to overturn a decision receive **no** ESA during their Mandatory Reconsideration instead need to claim JSA
- There is no time limit on how long a Mandatory Reconsideration can take
- Hardship payments are only paid in limited circumstances. They are normally paid at 60% of the IS personal allowance - **£43.44 pw**

Benefit Sanctions

- Nearly 1.5 million sanctions from Oct 2012 – June 2014
- 61% of ESA sanctions against claimants with ‘mental and behavioural disorders’.
- Stringent conditionality is a major barrier for disabled people – and other vulnerable groups.

Social Care Charges

- Councils charge for all non-residential social care
- Social Care costs differ between Local Authority areas – from £8.28 p/h in West Lothian to £23.70 p/h in Angus
- 60,000 disabled people to lose care element in transfer to PIP
- Knock-on effect on ability to afford social care

Proposed Changes to Housing Allowance

- Automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit to be scrapped for 18-21 year olds
- “Hard cases” excepted, but not defined
- Knock-on effect on independent living

Adapting to Change

- Welfare reform changes are intended to simplify the benefits system
- Adapting to a new system can be a barrier in itself for learning disabled people
- Need for accessible information and support

Attitudinal Impact of Welfare Reform

- Media has spread suspicion about disability
- Disabled people experience verbal abuse and hate crime
- Disability related hate crime rose 270% between 2010/11 and 2014
- Police Scotland 2015 'Report It' Campaign shows urgency of issue

Poverty Impact of Welfare Reform

- In 2012/13, 20% of individuals in families containing a disabled adult were living in relative poverty.
- New Policy Institute estimate that there are 1 million more households containing a disabled person living in poverty than are counted in official figures.
- A recent study by Scope found that disabled people spend an average **£550 a month** in disability related expenses (e.g. taxis, increased use of heating, special equipment, care costs, etc.).

Inclusion Scotland Research Found:

- The benefits application / assessment process is distressing;
- There is a lack of consistent and reliable information about benefits changes;
- A greater level of support for disabled people claiming benefits is needed;
- Political and media rhetoric about welfare reform has left disabled people feeling socially stigmatised;
- Fear of losing benefits adds to the financial pressures disabled people already face;
- Disabled people feel negative about their prospects of finding and staying in paid work.

Next Steps: Rights and Resilience

- Consulting disabled people and their organisations about **improvements** needed to help mitigate impact of welfare reform
- Working with other organisations / statutory bodies / Local Authorities to bring about improvements
- Sharing examples of good practice / what is helping
- New partnerships and co-produced strategies
- Improved awareness of disabled people's issues
- Improved awareness of disabled people's rights