



We reject the cuts as malicious ideological vandalism hitting the most vulnerable the most hardest - Join us in this struggle

THE HARDEST HIT

Disabled and ill people and their families are being hit hard by cuts to the benefits and services they rely on.

Many are living in fear of huge cuts to essential benefits including Disability Living Allowance (cut by £2.17 billion) and Employment and Support Allowance (cut by £2 billion). The total cuts will mean an estimated £9 billion loss to families' incomes over the next four years, on top of cuts to many local care and support services.

This affects people and families across the UK living with conditions like cancer, dementia, arthritis, Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health conditions and physical disabilities. Their everyday lives depend on support that is under threat.

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FIGHT THE CUTS TO DISABILITY BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Disabled people are twice as likely to live in poverty as non-disabled people. Families with a disabled child are estimated to be £50 a week worse off. Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has; only 20% of people with mental health problems are in employment. Only 50% of disabled people of working age are in work, compared with the 80% of non-disabled people.

72% of carers with substantial caring responsibilities are worse off. Over half are forced into debt and three quarters struggle to pay basic household bills. Over 1 million people have given up work to care for ill, frail or disabled loved ones, leaving them on average £11,000 a year worse off. It is estimated more than 10% of the adult population in the UK are carers. This means approximately 6 million adults are saving this country £87 billion a year. In the Poole area, there are approximately 16,600 carers and across Dorset there are 42,000.

Work Capability Assessment (WCA) is the main test for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claims and carried out under a £100M a year contract by private firm Atoz Origin who are not penalised financially for inaccuracy but paid per assessment. More than 400,000 appeals have been lodged against decisions not to grant the benefit since it was launched in Oct'08, and 39% have been successful. In a parliamentary written answer in Oct'11, Chris Grayling, the Conservative minister, said 31 people had died while awaiting their appeal in the last 3 years. The cost of tribunals is estimated at well over £30m a year. Charities have warned that glitches in the system mean that many seriously ill people have been judged fit for work.

The application of WCA to all Incapacity and ESA claimants is an attempt to simply reduce the numbers with a stated aim of reducing them by 20% even though, according to DWP figures, the fraud rate for false claims is only 0.5%.

The changes fail to accept the complex issues that disabled people face in finding and preparing for work

From Apr'13 the govt will replace DLA with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for those of working age with a planned arbitrary 20% reduction target for those receiving the new benefit. A report from the UK Disabled People's Council has found that this and other cuts could set independent living back 30 years.

An independent report by Poole LINK suggests that people affected by cuts to social care services could return to the council with increased care needs.

Independent think tank, Demos, have compiled a Disability Cuts Map showing how councils nationwide are coping with cuts to their Social Care & Support budgets. Poole council is ranked 93rd out of 152 with Bournemouth ranked 33rd.

The proposed removal of the Mobility component of DLA from all residents of care homes will result in a 66% fall in an individual's income and leave them with only £22 a week for all extra expenses.

Govt figures show that its policy to halve disability benefit additions for families with disabled children who are on low incomes or out of work will impact up to 70,000 more families than it had originally estimated. This means cuts to Child Disability benefit will adversely affect up to 170,000 families.

Disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled to live in social housing, so the govt's proposed "secure tenancy" changes would affect this group disproportionately. **Govt changes to housing benefit could see 11,000 young disabled people forced out of their flats and put them at the risk of homelessness.**