



Pathways to Work

The public health threat created by the planned changes to PIP

a Briefing by Mo Stewart

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For those in greatest need we are living in very dark times in the UK, with the chronically ill and disabled community living in fear of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The latest government threat to the health, wellbeing and survival of many chronically ill and disabled benefit claimants is the Pathways to Work Green Paper now [out for consultation](#) regarding planned changes to access to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) disability support benefit, created to fund the additional costs of living with a disability. Those in greatest need depend on this income, and removing it will cause [preventable harm](#) to many.

The constant claim by DWP Ministers that there are 2.8 million people '*out of work and classed as long term sick*', suggesting this is excessive, is a political smokescreen to manipulate the public and to justify the unjustifiable. It overlooks the fact that, in 2005, [there were 2.7 million](#) chronically ill and disabled people funded by the DWP. So, a slight increase given the impact of the pandemic, an ageing workforce, and the growing [government-induced public health crisis](#), clearly demonstrates that it is not unreasonable for there to now be 2.8 million people claiming disability benefit twenty years later; especially given the backlog of patients pending treatment in the NHS, which inevitably increased disability benefit claims.

The [Pathways to Work Green Paper](#) doesn't hide the fact that social policies are designed using a fiscal priority whilst disregarding the impact on health and wellbeing of those in greatest need with the expectation by DWP Ministers, and the Chancellor, that changes to PIP access will save £5billion regardless of consequences which [threaten health of the most vulnerable](#).

Once again DWP Ministers' claims have failed to include any impact assessment prior to these suggested policy changes whilst [various UK social policy experts](#) have, collectively, all warned of the preventable harm these PIP changes will create; with a predicted increase in poverty, a deterioration in public mental health and an anticipated increase in [suicides of chronically ill and disabled people](#) when once again abandoned by the State.

Furthermore, the DWP Secretary of State seems confused, and is identified as [‘misleading MPs four times in 23 minutes’](#) during recent work and pensions questions in the Commons. Given that PIP is not an out-of-work benefit, it is clear that once again the welfare budget is being used by the administration to balance the books [‘on the backs of the poor’](#).

A new report by the Work and Pensions Select Committee identified the need for the DWP [to change its culture](#) which negatively impacts on the chronically ill and disabled community, with no-one held to account for what is an ongoing [government induced public health crisis](#) when influenced by an extreme [right-leaning think tank](#) with a history of treating those in greatest need with contempt.

Neoliberal politics is the politics of [power, profit and greed](#) with all benefit claimants viewed as a financial drain on resources rather than people in need of support.

Since the adoption of neoliberal politics in the UK all evidence of a moral compass disappeared from the DWP, and more chronically ill and disabled people are destined to suffer if the planned changes to access to the PIP benefit are adopted, with no-one held to account when many of those in greatest need are, covertly, [killed by the State](#).

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