

**20 May 2025**

**Open letter from Social Scientists to UK Government and Parliament, opposing cuts to disability benefits outlined in the March 2025 Spring Statement**

We are writing to express our concern about the planned cuts to Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit as outlined in the March 2025 Green Paper and Spring Statement. As social scientists we feel morally obligated to speak out against policy changes that evidence suggests will cause harm. It is our professional opinion that these cuts will cause disproportionate harm to disabled people and accomplish little or nothing in terms of helping the economy or balancing public finances.

As demonstrated by the Bibliography attached to this letter, the existing literature indicates that previous similar cuts to welfare, especially those targeted at disabled people, were ineffective in getting people back into work and instead drove people into deeper poverty, damaged mental health and were associated with high numbers of preventable premature deaths. Furthermore, the problems caused or exacerbated by such cuts typically end up being even more costly to resolve as they increase the burden on various public services.

Policy-makers in the UK Government should already be aware of the social research that has proven the ineffectiveness and harms of such approaches, and have been warned by the UN that they must reverse the disability welfare cuts enacted by the preceding Conservative Government. We urge the government to comply with the UN rather than indulge in further ineffectual and harmful cuts targeting disabled people. These cuts will not help disabled people back into work, bring growth, or balance public

finances. They are likely to increase rates of poverty, mental ill-health, and premature death.

We call for all announced cuts to Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit to be overturned. Should the UK Government proceed with current plans, we implore all MPs to vote against these cuts when they come before Parliament and speak out against continued austerity. Public finances can and should be improved via redistributive measures such as a wealth tax. As once promised, those with the broadest shoulders should bear the heavier burden.

Sincerely,

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**Prof Thomas Shakespeare CBE, MPhil, FBA - Professor of Disability Research & Co-director of the International Centre for Evidence on Disability at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**

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