

NOTICE OF MOTION	Date of Council Meeting: 09/04/25
	Mover: Councillor Yasseen
	Seconder: Councillor Havard
	Title of Motion: Impact of Disability Welfare Cuts

Summary/Background:

As elected representatives of Rotherham, we have a moral obligation to speak up when national policy threatens the dignity, stability and wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents. Cutting welfare support for disabled and long-term sick people, not as a matter of necessity but to save money undermines the very principles of fairness, compassion and public service that we are elected to uphold.

That this Council:

1. Notes with serious concern that:
 - a. The Government has announced changes to disability related welfare benefits, including reductions in eligibility for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and cuts or freezes to the health component of Universal Credit for those who are long-term sick. These changes will affect approximately 3.2 million households nationally, with an average loss of £1,720 per year;
 - b. Rotherham is disproportionately impacted, with 24,200 residents receiving PIP (14.3% of the working-age population) and 13,900 residents receiving the health component of Universal Credit (8.7% of people aged 18–65) both figures well above the national average;
 - c. The Department for Work and Pensions' own impact assessment forecasts that 370,000 current PIP claimants will lose an average of £4,500 per year by 2029/30, and 430,000 potential claimants will be denied access entirely;
 - d. New applicants for the health component of Universal Credit will see support cut by almost 50%, and existing claimants will face a benefit freeze, with 2.5 million people projected to lose an average of £500 per year;

- e. On a pro-rata basis, this means in Rotherham alone, an estimated 2,420 disabled people would lose PIP worth £11 million, 2,810 people would be denied access to PIP, and 13,900 residents could lose £7 million in support via Universal Credit;
 - f. The Government's own assessment also suggests that 250,000 people may be pushed into poverty. Proportionally, this equates to 1,640 more people in Rotherham, including **330 more children, falling below the poverty line.**
2. Notes with alarm that these cuts are driven primarily by a Government commitment to reduce welfare spending, rather than a comprehensive strategy to support disabled and long-term sick residents into meaningful employment;
 3. Recognises the Council's ongoing work to support residents through investment in advice services, local welfare assistance and partnership working, while acknowledging that powers over national welfare policy rest with central Government.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on behalf of the Council, expressing concern about the proposed welfare reforms and urging Government to immediately reconsider its proposals and instead:
 - Maintain current eligibility for PIP;
 - Uprate all elements of Universal Credit in line with inflation;
 - Focus on meaningful support to help disabled and long-term sick residents who can work, to access appropriate employment;
 - Collaborate with South Yorkshire local authorities and the Mayoral Combined Authority to implement the recommendations of the Pathways to Work Commission, including investment in skills, mental health support, and inclusive workplace practices.
2. Request that the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members write to Rotherham's three Members of Parliament, urging them to oppose the proposed welfare reform plans in Parliament and to advocate for the protection of disability and sickness-related benefits on behalf of Rotherham residents.