



Brighton and Hove Speak Out  
Brighthelm Centre,  
North Road,  
Brighton, BN1 1YD

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dear Mr Peter Kyle MP,

We wanted to say again how worried we are about the Labour government's proposal to cut eligibility for disability benefits like the Personal Independence Payment [PIP] and the health element of Universal Credit. We strongly believe that the changes proposed are a bad idea for people with learning disabilities, and for the country more widely.

PIP is a recognition of how much more expensive and difficult life can be when you live with a disability, as is the health element of Universal Credit. It is not connected to somebody's ability to work. Speak Out is for adults with learning disabilities – a lot of our people receive PIP (or the legacy benefit/s it will eventually replace).

We use this money to cover things like: warmer socks for Reynaud's flare-ups, more heating, paying for bills, travel to activities to socialise, food out or takeaways when we don't have support to cook, general daily life, lightweight equipment that is easier to lift, special tints for our glasses to stop getting overstimulated, and wheelchair parts and mobility aids.

A lot of our people would identify as having a mild or moderate learning disability. This is the type of person who you might be excluding from receiving PIP in the future. As we understand it, they might not score a '4' or above in the PIP assessment, but the cumulative impact their learning disability affects every aspect of their life, every day, to be as much of an impairment. The impact of a learning disability will effectively have the same impact on their lives as if they were to have a significant impairment in one individual area. Especially if people do not get the right support. And, unfortunately, with our local authority having to repeatedly cut their social care budget (last year by approximately £9 million, £4.5 million the year before), this group of people often do not receive any support, let alone the right support.

Life is getting more expensive too. We all know about the cost-of-living crisis, and it has meant that a lot of us are already struggling to afford things that we used to be able to. The cost-of-living crisis, combined with the long waitlists for social care and housing in Brighton and Hove, make a lot of us anxious every day. It is making it harder to live independent and fulfilling lives, as our choices are getting more limited. To add to this, a lot of services and charities in Brighton and Hove have had

their funding cut or reduced over the last few years, not to mention during the many years of the austerity beforehand.

In our first letter from the Link Group, we highlighted that cutting disability benefits will give people less choice to eat and live healthily, so it will probably mean more people unwell and needing to use the NHS. We think this will be the same in terms of social care and housing. Already, with the lack of social care available in Brighton and Hove, we often support people who have problems that have gone ignored by the local authority (like a risk of homelessness), only to become much bigger and more expensive problem to fix later. We think this will end up costing the country more in the long run than just giving people with disabilities the dignity to choose how to keep themselves healthy and well.

Finally, all the talk and focus about getting people 'into work' is not the answer for us, and it is not helpful. Some of us would like to work but have struggled to find a suitable job or employer. Some of us have already worked but got too unwell to continue or suffered discrimination and abuse that made us quit. Some of us still work now, mainly part-time. Some of us cannot work because we risk losing our benefits. And some of us have no clue how we would even start to find a job. We are still valuable members of society regardless and contribute in other ways. However, we do know one thing for sure, and that is that removing our benefits will not do anything to help us get into work and will likely just make it even harder. Please listen to us, understand and do all that you can to protect our benefits. We are relying on you.

Sincerely,

Ian Metherell  
Anonymous  
Michael Robinson  
Oliver Hockman  
Ben Colyer  
Robert Moss  
Shannon  
Marie de Silva  
Roger Brownlow  
Matthew  
Sarah Watson