

# Press release

Warning that “Austerity Kills” ahead of financial statement

Austerity is the problem not the answer

Embargoed until 11am Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November

## What:

A coalition of Disabled people’s organisations has warned that **further austerity cuts will cause untold misery and many deaths**. The Disabled People’s Organisations Forum, a group of 40 Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), believes any further public spending cuts will once again disproportionately hurt Disabled people, millions of whom are already living in poverty in the UK. They state that there is “nothing left to cut, the government must make different political choices – austerity is the problem not the answer.”

Their full statement can be viewed [here](#).

They are calling for people to [contact their MPs](#) to urge them to vote against any cuts to essential support and public services, to increase all benefits in line with inflation and stop social care charging to protect social care recipients’ income with an increased Minimum Income Guarantee and excluding disability benefits from the social care means testing.

They will be tweeting using the hashtag **#AusterityKills**

## Why:

- Austerity is already responsible for tens of thousands of **excess deaths** in the UK<sup>1 2</sup>
- The **UN Committee** on the rights of Persons with Disabilities found austerity measures to cause **gross and systemic violations** of Disabled people's human rights<sup>3</sup>
- 13.3% of Disabled people have no educational qualifications<sup>4</sup>, and are blocked from access to employment<sup>5</sup>, increasing poverty further<sup>6</sup>
- Before the cost-of-living crisis, **4 million disabled people already lived in poverty**<sup>7</sup>
- Among disabled people, women, children, people of colour, and more severely disabled people are **more impoverished**

## Quotes

Tracey Lazard, CEO of Inclusion London said

“We are horrified at the prospect of further cuts to services that are already running on empty and the minimal levels of support that Disabled people get. Disabled people have been amongst the hardest hit by austerity, covid and the current cost of living crisis which is leaving many of us facing a prospect of starving or freezing this winter.

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<sup>1</sup>The Guardian: Over 330,000 excess deaths in Great Britain linked to austerity, finds study

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/oct/05/over-330000-excess-deaths-in-great-britain-linked-to-austerity-finds-study>

<sup>2</sup> Disability News Service: Austerity cuts to social care and health caused 57,000 deaths, research suggests

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/austerity-cuts-to-social-care-and-health-caused-57000-deaths-research-suggests/>

<sup>3</sup>The Guardian: UK austerity policies 'amount to violations of disabled people's rights'

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/07/uk-austerity-policies-amount-to-violations-of-disabled-peoples-rights>

<sup>4</sup> ONS (2021). Outcomes for disabled people in the UK: 2021.

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/outcomesfordisabledpeopleintheuk/2021#:~:text=One%2Dquarter%20\(24.9%25\)%20of,\(year%20ending%20June%202021\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/outcomesfordisabledpeopleintheuk/2021#:~:text=One%2Dquarter%20(24.9%25)%20of,(year%20ending%20June%202021))

<sup>5</sup> ERHC (2016). Being Disabled in Britain. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/being-disabled-in-britain.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The Burgen Project (2022). BATTLING DISABILITY AND POVERTY IN THE UK.

<https://borgenproject.org/disability-and-poverty-in-the-uk/>

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2019/20 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2019-20>

We are calling on the government to show responsibility and compassion to protect Disabled people's lives, dignity, inclusion and rights by ruling out further cuts to essential services & support and by committing additional targeted support to help Disabled people survive this cost-of-living crisis. Austerity is the problem not the answer and this government must not repeat the mistakes of the last decade"

## Case studies

**James\*** relies on benefits as his sole income and is required to pay a contribution for his social care. His income has gone up 3% this year, but his social care contribution has gone up **21%, an extra £137.54 per week**, due to funding cuts. James simply cannot afford this and feels like he is now in a position where he is without the basics and unable to live well. He has to choose between the support he needs and getting into debt.

**Lauren\*** receives direct payments and has a Personal Assistant (PA) for her care needs. She really values her PA and feels she provides her with excellent care. However, she can no longer afford to pay her because her local authority has begun asking Lauren for an additional contribution to her care of £270 a month, bringing her **monthly contribution** to close to **£1,000**. As Lauren's only source of income is ESA and PIP, she is left with very little left to live on. Lauren has spoken to the Council and feels they were not understanding about her situation. She feels she is left with **no choice but to stop having a PA** as she simply cannot afford it during a time of increasing cost of living. This means she doesn't get adequate personal care and is very limited in the food she can eat.

## Notes for editor

- Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations are organisations fully run and controlled by Deaf and Disabled people ourselves
- Case studies are anonymised as many Deaf and Disabled people live in fear of having benefits stopped in retaliation for speaking out
- Disabled People's Organisations Forum includes 40 DDPOs such as:
  - Inclusion London
  - WinVisible/Disabled Mothers' Rights Campaign
  - Disabled People Against Cuts
  - Shaping Our Lives
  - Bristol Reclaiming Independent Living

- Bromley Experts By Experience
- If you have questions or want further information/quotes, please contact Rensa Gaunt at Inclusion London
  - [rensa.gaunt@inclusionlondon.org.uk](mailto:rensa.gaunt@inclusionlondon.org.uk)
  - 07561 064227