

Senedd Committee Aligns with Disability Wales in Criticism of Proposed Disability Benefit Reforms

The Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee has issued a formal and strongly worded response opposing the UK Government's proposed reforms to disability benefits. The move follows a letter from Disability Wales raising urgent concerns regarding the potential adverse effects of the changes on disabled individuals and families across Wales.

Committee Intervention

While welfare remains a reserved matter under UK jurisdiction, the Committee stated that it felt "compelled to act due to the significant impact on individuals and families in Wales." The Committee has since written directly to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, outlining its opposition to the reforms and raising the following key concerns:

- The accelerated and insufficiently considered implementation timeline.
- The disproportionate impact the proposed changes may have on communities in Wales.
- The failure to address long-standing barriers to employment for disabled people.

The Committee emphasised that "it is for the DWP, employers and others to get their own house in order" before pursuing any changes to the existing system of support.

Response from Disability Wales

Disability Wales welcomed the Committee's intervention and its support for placing disabled people at the centre of policy discussions. Rhian Davies, Chief Executive, stated: "Reforming benefits without addressing systemic discrimination and accessibility gaps is both unjust and ineffective. We are encouraged to see the Senedd recognise these realities and take action."

Supporting Evidence

The Committee's latest report, "Anything's Achievable with the Right Support," presents clear evidence that the current system is failing to meet the needs of disabled people. The report identifies multiple issues, including:

- Persistent employment discrimination.
- A lack of adequate support services.
- Widespread barriers to independent living and economic inclusion.

Call for Inclusive Reform

Disability Wales and the Committee are calling on the UK Government to pause the planned

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reforms and instead prioritise inclusive policymaking that reflects the lived experiences of disabled people. They stress the importance of co-producing future welfare changes in partnership with disabled individuals and organisations.

Next Steps

As concern grows within Wales and beyond, pressure is mounting on the Department for Work and Pensions to engage with stakeholders and reconsider the current trajectory of its reform agenda.