

The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
1 Horse Guards Road
Westminster
London
SW1A 2HQ
United Kingdom

Tuesday 25th March 2025

Dear Chancellor,

We write to you as a coalition of organisations working to advance gender equality to express our deep concerns about your Government's plans to cut social security for Disabled people. We are further alarmed by rumours that you will announce further cuts to public spending at the Spring Statement on Wednesday.

We urge you to reconsider.

The reforms proposed in the 'Pathways to Work' Green Paper and announced last week by the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions have been widely criticised by Disabled People's Organisations and their members.

Disabled people bore the brunt of cuts to social security and public services under austerity measures since 2010. The Women's Budget Group's [analysis](#) found that taken together with changes (cuts) to taxes, those measures will have cost Disabled women an average of £4,000 a year by 2028, an 11% drop in their living standards. Cutting their living standards further is unthinkable.

We recognise that the system needs to be reformed and we welcome the changes to increase the standard rate of Universal Credit; remove reassessments for people with permanent disabilities; and the additional £1.5bn funding to support people into work.

However, the reforms to restrict eligibility to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) will impact people with complex and multiple conditions and are estimated by the [Child Poverty Action Group](#) (CPAG) to cost some claimants over £100 per week. The cut to the rate of the health element of Universal Credit (UC) is estimated to cost eligible claimants £47 per week. The restriction of the health element of Universal Credit to people over 22 years old means young claimants face a loss of £97 a week. Together, the Government is cutting some [£6.5bn](#) from ill and Disabled people by 2029-30.

Women make up the majority of Disabled people. They also make up the majority of people caring for Disabled people. And it will be women who take on or increase unpaid care for their loved ones when their benefits are stripped back - often to the detriment of their own health and wellbeing. Some women are likely to lose the carer's allowance that is tied to the eligibility of their spouse or family member to PIP or the health element of UC. Some may have been managing to balance paid and unpaid work and used every bit of annual leave, unpaid carer's leave and emergency leave to keep a foot in the labour market. This could be the final straw, pushing women out of the labour market and having the unintended

consequence of reducing women's employment rate when these reforms are intended to increase people's access to paid work.

Further, Disabled women are nearly twice as likely to experience economic abuse compared to non-disabled women, and are nearly four times more likely to have a partner or ex-partner stop them, or try to stop them, accessing benefits that they or their children are entitled to. So while additional safeguards are welcome, removing benefits from ill and Disabled women subjected to abuse could be removing a vital lifeline - making it harder to flee abuse and harder to rebuild their lives if they do.

We acknowledge the difficult decisions you as Chancellor are facing in the current economic context. But public services and social security are the foundation to a healthy economy - and to women's equality.

Funding cuts to social security and to public services will undermine efforts to tackle child poverty, close the gender pay gap, halve violence against women and girls, boost the employment rate and grow the economy.

We ask you to instead reconsider changes to taxation that could increase revenue from those who can afford it. Tax Justice UK and the Patriotic Millionaires have set out [ten options](#) for taxing the wealthiest individuals and corporations that combined could raise £60 billion to invest in the foundations of our economy and promote equality.

The Department for Work and Pensions has said it will publish impact assessments this week. We hope that these include in-depth equality impact assessments of the impact of these measures on Disabled people and on women broken down by age and ethnicity. These should include an understanding of the interaction of paid and unpaid care work and where that falls when ill and Disabled people cannot afford to pay for their needs to be adequately met.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson, Director, Women's Budget Group

Eleanor Lisney, Sisters of Frida CIC

Claire Reindorp, CEO, Young Women's Trust

Andrea Simon, Executive Director, End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)

Deeba Syed, Head of Policy, Research and Advocacy, The Fawcett Society

Sam Smethers, CEO, Surviving Economic Abuse

Alexandra Brennan, Coordinator, Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group

Ghadah Alnasseri, Co-Executive Director, Imkaan

Becca Bor, Development Coordinator, Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network

Selma Taha, Executive Director, Southall Black Sisters

Danielle Roberts, Communications and Sustainability Coordinator, Reclaim the Agenda

Angie Herrera, Director, Latin American Women's Aid

Angie Airlie, CEO, Stay Safe East
Susie McDonald, CEO, Tender Education and Arts
Lisa-Marie Taylor, CEO, FiLiA
Nuala Toman, Head of Innovation and Impact, Disability Action Northern Ireland
Indy Cross, Chief Executive, Agenda Alliance
Souad Talsi- MBE, Founder and CEO, Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre
Elizabeth Jiménez-Yáñez, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Hibiscus
Dr Annette Lawson, The Judith Trust
Sam Clifford, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Women's Aid
Vivienne Hayes, OBE, CEO, Women's Resource Centre
Nahar Choudhury, CEO, Solace
Hannah Griffiths, Coordinator, Wales Women's Budget Group
Bridget Symonds, Director of Services, Galop UK
Sara Cowan, Director, Scottish Women's Budget Group
Anna Ritchie Allan, Executive Director, Close the Gap
Dilraj Sokhi Watson, Director Equate Scotland
Satwat Rehman, Chief Executive, One Parent Families Scotland
Tressa Burke, CEO, Glasgow Disability Alliance
Laura Tomson, Co-Director, Zero Tolerance
Liz Mack, CEO, Advance
Jenni Snell, CEO, The Young Women's Movement
Marsha Scott, CEO, Scottish Women's Aid
Natasha Rattu, CEO, Karma Nirvana
Cherryl Henry-Leach, CEO, Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse.
Maureen Connolly, CEO, Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid
Liz Thompson, Director of External Relations, SafeLives
Karen Sweeney, Director, Women's Support Network, Northern Ireland
Siobhán Harding, Research & Policy Officer, Women's Regional Consortium, Northern Ireland
Clare MacGillivray, Director, Making Rights Real