

Welfare Charity Slams Government Benefit Delays

Tuesday 6 May, 2014

The Scottish Welfare Support and Advice Network are abhorred by the failings of the current Government and the significant impact these 'welfare reforms' are having on society's most vulnerable. The raft of changes to the benefits system in the UK have plunged many families into significant hardship and many who are already seriously ill are having their lives turned upside down having had their benefit sanctioned or removed entirely. The hidden victims are those waiting for significant periods of time for a PIP decision, with little or no entitlement to other analogous benefits while waiting. The new mandatory reconsideration stage leaves claimants further in the dark with no official time-scales for reassessment.

We call on the Government to halt their demeaning treatment of benefit claimants and strongly urge them to reconsider the impact these harsh reforms are having on our most vulnerable. Of the 260 clients we have assisted with disability benefit issues since January 2014; 92% are in relation to PIP with 79% waiting for more than 90 days for a benefit decision, this is completely unacceptable.

Foodbank use has sky-rocketed as sanctions have increased and as much as the Government try to avoid taking responsibility, the statistics are clear. The latest raft of changes to the benefit system including sanctioning jobseekers for not accepting zero-hour contracts and forcing jobseekers to attend woefully understaffed and under-resourced jobcentres on a daily basis show just how out of touch the current DWP Ministers are.

David Barrett, Chairperson of the Scottish Welfare Support Network described the current system as 'shambolic' and added that he 'feared more lives would be lost while the DWP gets its house in order'.

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