Ian Murray MP
Secretary of State for Scotland
Dover House
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AU

6th June 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

Strong opposition to proposals in the Pathways to Work Green Paper

People in the UK need a government that delivers a just and compassionate country. They urgently want to see an end to deepening poverty, debt, and hunger in their communities. The UK Labour Government was elected on a promise of change. With more than one in five people in poverty across the country, it is clear that change cannot come quickly enough.

Our organisations were hopeful that change would mean the long overdue strengthening of our social security system so that it once again functioned as a safety net against poverty. We are therefore deeply concerned that the proposals contained in the Pathways to Work Green Paper will, instead, further undermine that already inadequate support.

We are writing to you as a group of civil society organisations in Scotland to express our strong opposition to these proposals. We are clear that these proposals will push more people into poverty, debt and destitution. Estimates from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation point to almost 400,000 people falling into poverty as a result of these changes. Given the higher rate of child poverty in households with a disabled person, this will undermine the Government's forthcoming child poverty strategy before it's even published.

The Department of Work and Pension's own analysis indicates significant loss of income for many disabled people with multiple, complex or life limiting and serious health issues. Women will be disproportionately impacted by both the changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and the knock-on impact of the loss of carers benefits.[1] This loss of income for unpaid carers demonstrates a lack of understanding of just how much carers, the majority of whom are women, do to plug the gap in public services and support disabled and older people to stay well in every community across Britain.

Disabled people, their children and families are already at greater risk of poverty and destitution, with 63% of those experiencing destitution in the UK being disabled or having a long-term health condition. Our organisations see the impact of poverty every day in our work. Analysis from Citizen's Advice Scotland found that over 40,000 disabled households have sacrificed a cooked meal to run or charge essential medical equipment.[2] A survey of 621 disabled members of Glasgow Disability Alliance in October 2024 found that 68% of respondents said they couldn't afford utilities, 58% couldn't manage food and essential groceries and almost three-quarters (71%) said that their income through social security or

[1] Carers Scotland (2025) *Briefing for Scottish Government Debate on UK Welfare Reform*. Available at: https://www.carersuk.org/briefings/carers-scotland-debate-ahead-of-the-scottish-government-debate-on-uk-government-welfare/. Benefits and Work (2024) *Labour knowingly hugely discriminating against women for welfare cuts*. Available at: https://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/news/labour-knowingly-hugely-discriminating-against-women-for-pip-cuts

[2] Citizens Advice Scotland (2024) *Tens of Thousands of Disabled People Sacrifice Cooked Meals to Charge Medical Devices*. Available at https://www.cas.org.uk/news/tens-thousands-disabled-people-sacrifice-cooked-meals-charge-medical-devices

work did not meet their needs.[3] In this context, it is completely unjust that the UK Government have announced a series of cuts which will make it even harder for disabled people to keep their heads above water.

The structural inequalities and barriers facing disabled people will not be changed by reducing people's incomes, and increasing conditionality does not practically help people to get into or remain in work. Neither will the Green Paper proposals make social care, transport or wider services more readily available or accessible. However, we believe that these changes will mean more people presenting to the NHS in crisis, people losing social care packages because they can no longer afford to pay for them, and unpaid carers in greater poverty because they lose eligibility for carer benefits.

The impact of Universal Credit changes will be felt across the UK, adding further to the challenges faced by families in Scotland who have a disabled member. The impacts of cuts to PIP in Scotland are currently uncertain, but have the potential to be devastating. The Green Paper does not directly address the knock-on impacts of tightening eligibility for PIP on devolved disability benefits, which include stark budgetary concerns for the Scottish Government, the process of assessments changing, and how Adult Disability Payment acts as a gateway benefit. In addition, PIP is not a work-related benefit and is meant to cover the additional costs of being disabled. It is not, and never has been, related to work or someone's work capability. There remains a significant degree of uncertainty and fear for disabled people and carers in Scotland.

Ultimately, this is a question of about the kind of society we want to be. Scotland is a country that believes in justice and compassion and people want our governments to make decisions which align with those values. These proposals have been met with clear public opposition, with 3 in 5 people saying they are a bad idea.[4]

Social security is a public service and a basic human right that should secure the wellbeing of everyone in society. While our social security system should be a safety net for unexpected life events and a springboard for families to build a life free from poverty, decision making by successive UK Governments have systematically undermined that support. There is a chance for this UK Government to take a different approach.

Our organisations write to you today with a simple message: it is not too late to change course. We urge Ministers to drop these proposals. We urge Scottish MPs to vote against these cuts, sending a strong, positive message to disabled people and carers in Scotland that this Government will build a country free from poverty, not one that forces people into deeper poverty and destitution.

We look forward to hearing from you, and would be happy to facilitate a meeting to discuss these issues with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

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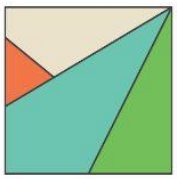
[3] Glasgow Disability Alliance (2024) *Disabled people challenge poverty survey results.* Available at: https://gda.scot/resources/disabled-people-challenge-poverty-survey-findings/

[4] Joesph Rowntree Foundation (2025) *Where will cuts to sickness and disability benefits fall the hardest?* Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/social-security/where-will-cuts-to-sickness-and-disability-benefits-fall-hardest

...Better tomorrow, one child at a time



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Loch Ewe
Trust

CRANHILL DEVELOPMENT TRUST

GLASGOW
EAST END COMMUNITY
CARERS

The Church of Scotland

blue triangle

ENGENDER

PEEK

Forward
Mid

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Trussell
Ending hunger together

SOHTIS
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