**Open Letter to All Greater Manchester MPs Regarding the Government’s Green Paper on Benefits**

**20 May 2025**

**To the Members of Parliament representing Greater Manchester,**

We are writing to you as members of the [Greater Manchester Equality Panels](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/) regarding the Government’s recent ‘Pathways to Work’ Green Paper on changes to benefits. We are deeply concerned that the proposals outlined in the Green Paper risk undermining the dignity, security, and well-being of the very people the social security system was created to support. All the proposed policies concentrate on supply side workforce activation and none address the real problem of demand side labour market conditions. We are concerned that the language being used to talk about the Green Paper will have a negative impact on discrimination against disabled people. We already have seen a rise in disability hate crimes since 2010.

We now have both the Office for Budget Responsibility impact assessment and responses to Freedom of Information requests, that show 1.3 Million disabled people will lose Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Daily Living[[1]](#footnote-1) and 80% of Universal Credit Health claimants (Limited Capability to Work Related Activity (LCWRA) & LCWRA+PIP) would lose all entitlement, raising the total facing a loss of income to 2 million disabled people[[2]](#footnote-2). The re-arrangement of Universal Credit conditionality will see 600,000 disabled people[[3]](#footnote-3) who cannot work subject to being sanctioned for not looking for and finding work. Disabled people are already the majority of foodbank users, [[4]](#footnote-4)these proposals will see that number likely rise by several hundred thousand. We also know from Professor Ben Geiger that the actual level of cuts amounts to £9 Billion[[5]](#footnote-5). The impact on employment is not known and will likely not be published until the autumn, meaning no one can make informed decisions about the stated aspirations that this will raise employment. There is a great deal of existing data which suggests it will not, beyond a few percentage points[[6]](#footnote-6). This raises serious questions about fairness, honesty, lack of peer reviewed independent evidence, and long-term cumulative social impact. We are concerned about the impact on the Government priorities of growth and reducing National Health Service (NHS) waiting lists. In a region like Greater Manchester, where communities are already grappling with inequalities, entrenched poverty, and continuing austerity, these changes will disproportionately harm the people who are already most excluded.

The United Nations has twice reported on the conditions for disabled people in the UK, finding that there were ‘grave and systemic’ violations of our human rights[[7]](#footnote-7), with further regression. This Green Paper will exacerbate those abuses

We highlight the following key concerns:

1. **Disability and Health Assessments**
The proposed tightening of eligibility criteria for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and Work Capability Assessment (WCA) (before its abolition, leaving a revamped PIP assessment as a single gateway to health elements of Universal Credit) risks excluding individuals with genuine and complex needs, particularly those with invisible or fluctuating conditions. Many of these individuals already struggle to navigate an opaque and stressful process, that has contributed towards over 600 suicides in just 3 years[[8]](#footnote-8).
2. **Mental Health Oversight**
The suggestion that mental health issues are being “over-diagnosed” within the benefits system can be stigmatizing[[9]](#footnote-9). Mental health is a critical public health issue and dismissing it as less ‘deserving’ of support perpetuates harmful stereotypes.
3. **Conditionality and Sanctions**
Proposals to expand conditionality and increase sanctions are counterproductive. Evidence—including from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) itself—shows that sanctions do not lead to better employment outcomes, but do exacerbate hardship, debt, and mental distress[[10]](#footnote-10).
4. **Consultation Process**
There are 22 policies announced but the consultation only seeks to discuss half of these with the most impactful measures instead being put into a parliamentary bill.

We are also concerned that the consultation process may not be fully inclusive, particularly of disabled individuals, carers, disabled people’s organisations, and frontline support workers. Any meaningful reform must be co-designed with those most affected.

As MPs elected to serve the people of Greater Manchester, we urge you to:

* Vote against the proposed changes.
* Commit to co-producing a disability strategy with disabled people as outlined on the DPO Forum Manifesto[[11]](#footnote-11).
* Advocate for evidence and rights-based policies that reflect the lived experience of your constituents and the reality of the Social Model of Disability[[12]](#footnote-12).

We believe a Social Security system should empower, not penalise. It should be built on trust, support, and to remove the disabling extra costs of disability which are on average are £1,010 a month.[[13]](#footnote-13)

We hope you will raise these concerns in Parliament and in your work locally, and we would be happy meet with you to engage with you further on this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,

**Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Panel**

**Greater Manchester Equality Alliance**

**LGBTQ+ Equality Panel**

**Greater Manchester Older People’s Equality Panel**

**Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel**

**GMCA Women and Girl’s Equality Panel**

**Youth Combined Authority**

1. <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/personal_independence_payment_pi_7/response/2989270/attach/3/Response%20FOI2025%2024990.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/lcwra_pip_daily_living_allowance/response/2987083/attach/3/Response%20FOI2025%2025575.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/a-dangerous-road/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.trussell.org.uk/news-and-research/news/almost-one-in-five-people-receiving-universal-credit-and-disability-benefits> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://inequalities.substack.com/p/disability-benefit-cuts-are-deeper-than-you-think> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/new-government-figures-show-key-policy-at-heart-of-disability-employment-strategy-will-not-work/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/no-progress-2016-grave-and-systemic-violations-disabled-peoples-rights-un-report-says> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2022/june/dwp-ignored-‘hugely-alarming’-research-linked-wca-600-suicides-mps-are-told](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2022/june/dwp-ignored-%E2%80%98hugely-alarming%E2%80%99-research-linked-wca-600-suicides-mps-are-told) "read also How a Violent Government Bureaucracy Killed Hundreds and Hid the Evidence’ by journalist John Pring. <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/disabled-activists-deliver-book-exposing-deaths-hands-dwp-every-member-parliament> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.rethink.org/news-and-stories/news-and-views/2025/our-response-to-the-health-secretary-s-claim-that-mental-illnesses-are-being-overdiagnosed/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/sanctions-ineffective-way-getting-people-jobs-or-work-more-hours-finds-suppressed-dwp-report> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.disabledpeoplesmanifesto.com/manifesto> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://gmcdp.com/beliefs-values-aims/social-model> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/disability-price-tag> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)