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18th October 2022

Dear Chancellor

Supporting Disabled People

We, the Disability Poverty Campaign Group (led by Disabled People's organisations), and the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, a network of over 100 major disability charities, are writing to ask you to take urgent measures to support and protect Disabled people from the cost-of-living crisis, particularly the steep increase in energy costs.

Following your announcement that the government's Energy Price Guarantee, which was originally put in place for two years, is now to be limited to just six months, Disabled people need urgent action from the Government to protect our health and lives. Whilst the Price Guarantee didn't go far enough in meeting the additional energy costs of Disabled people, its removal severely worsens our position.

Disabled people's energy costs can be considerably higher than those of non-disabled people. We draw your attention to those in situations where heating is essential to manage lower mobility; to prevent severe illness in the immuno-compromised; and to charge essential medical and mobility equipment, such as oxygen machines, ceiling track hoists, floor lifts, suction machines for tracheostomy blockages to prevent choking, feeding pumps, and extensive use of washing machines and showers. The reality is that Disabled people in these situations use more household energy than anyone else. Uninterrupted energy supply is a lifesaver, not a luxury.

According to statistics from Leonard Cheshire more than 600,000 disabled people in the UK are estimated to have £10 or less per week to pay for food and other costs, while around a quarter surveyed had missed meals or not heated their homes. A new report from The Asthma and Lung charity found more than a million people in the UK have experienced life-threatening asthma attacks after cutting back on medicine, heating and food amid the soaring cost of living crisis, while the MS Society found that one in five people with multiple sclerosis did not have enough money to start the medication of treatments they needed with a third reducing or stopping treatments or therapies, greatly putting their health at risk.

We ask Government to implement urgent measures to support Disabled people to meet our essential energy costs. We urge you to immediately uprate benefits in line with inflation. In addition, we ask that every person receiving a disability benefit is given additional payments to meet the spiralling costs of disability.



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You have spoken about “difficult decisions on tax and spending, and that there would have to be cuts.” We strongly urge you not to go down the road of cutting public services, which provide essential support to Disabled people.

During her campaign to become leader of the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister publicly stated: “I am very clear I am not planning public spending reductions.” Less than a month into her premiership, we are told her ministers must find ‘efficiency savings’ –a move which will prove to be catastrophic to the front-line services that are critical to ensuring Disabled people’s rights are upheld.

The Government must take responsibility for supporting Disabled people with the least resources and the greatest costs, who through no fault of our own are now being forced to make terrible and potentially destructive decisions around heating, eating, and medicating.

We have a duty to convey to you in the strongest terms that the pressures created by rising energy and food costs, inadequate social security and rising social care costs must be met with robust, immediate action by your government if we are to avert a humanitarian crisis.

The DPCG has set out our calls for the urgent measures that must be implemented to prevent avoidable loss of disabled lives in recent letters to the Prime Minister, the two previous Chancellors, and the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury. We have received no responses.

Please act now to support Disabled people, our lives literally depend on it.

Yours Faithfully

On behalf of The Disability Poverty Campaign Group:

Dan White (Disability Rights UK)

Caroline Collier (Inclusion Barnet)

Svetlana Kotova (Inclusion London)

Helen Rowlands (Cheshire Disabled People’s Panel)

Lynne Turnbull (Cheshire Disabled People's Panel)