

Edinburgh concern over benefit cuts

Edinburgh residents and politicians continue to protest about government cuts and benefit reassessments which could lead to 3.5 million disabled people losing over £9.2 billion in benefits.

A Public Meeting is being held at Portobello Town Hall on Friday 7 September 2012 at 7.30pm to consider the effects of [The Welfare Reform Act](#). The meeting is open to everyone who thinks it is important to tackle these issues and who do not want to stand by while people suffer.

‘A dramatic restructuring of our welfare state’ is how Sheila Gilmore, Labour MP for Edinburgh East, describes the coalition government’s Welfare Reform Act, passed in March of this year. Ms Gilmore is one of the speakers at what is expected to be a widely attended public meeting on the social effects of the Act.

The MP stressed: ‘What is happening in our social security system is not just “more spending cuts”. Throughout all the debates in parliament it was clear the government want a “welfare” system which provides only for those in the greatest need, not a social security system to which all contribute and all can rely on in times of unemployment, illness or disability.

‘We need to be out there restating the importance and the need for a comprehensive system of social provision’, she added.



Convener of the
Joint Valuation
Board Norman Work

Councillor Norman Work, SNP group spokesperson on Health, Social Care and Housing, is also speaking at the meeting. He said: 'I have concerns that the poorest, most vulnerable and weakest in our society will suffer as a result of the welfare reforms being driven by a Westminster government that Scotland did not vote for. Reforms to housing benefit could lead to homelessness, fuel poverty and mental health problems. Councils will have to pick up the pieces with reduced budgets and services will suffer as a result.'

Sasha Callaghan of Disability History, who will also join the platform, commented: 'The Welfare Reform Act is going to take us back to the days of the Poor Law. Once again it is a crime to be on a low income and the very poorest are being expected to pay for the mistakes of a failed banking system.'

The meeting is being organised by East Edinburgh Save Our Services in response to deep public concern and anger about the implications of the Act. This local residents' group was at the forefront of the recent campaign to expose and defeat Edinburgh City Council's privatisation plans.

For further information: East Edinburgh Save Our Services: www.edinburghagainstcuts.org.uk