

Protest against benefit cuts at Secretary of State's constituency office

While the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Rt Hon Ian Murray, was in Edinburgh on Friday afternoon, he was not at his office to meet protesters keen to tell him that “Cutting disability benefits kills”.

Earlier in the week the UK Government [announced changes](#) to the benefits system when the Work and Pensions Secretary said that this would introduce a more “pro-work” system. The changes are aimed at cutting government spending by £5 billion, but may do so by making it harder for people with conditions perceived as less serious to claim benefits. It is feared that some payments may be frozen and others reduced.

Protesters outside the constituency office of @ianmurraymp.bsky.social were keen to tell him what they think of the UK Government's plans to wipe £5 billion off the benefits bill. He wasn't there but we had asked him about the proposed cuts earlier...

[\[image or embed\]](#)

– The Edinburgh Reporter ([@edinreporter.bsky.social](#)) [21 March 2025 at 17:02](#)

Protesters

Edinburgh against poverty were handing out a leaflet asking "Why should we waste millions on warfare when children here are going hungry? They call on the government to "end the Department of Work and Pension's cruelty towards claimants and kill the new threats to reduce eligibility and lower the level of sickness and disability benefits."

Chris told us that he thinks that in order to be progressive the government would have to see that poverty is the root that causes inequality. He said: "Poverty forces disabled people to have to seek benefits in this way. Including this while at the same time increasing military funding by £6 billion is a bit rich. It feels like it is robbing your own people to kill other people. I am a carer and my partner claims disability payments.

"We are left in a situation at the minute where we are terrified as to whether this will continue or not. We are already being hit by massive increases in our heating and electricity bills. Our rents are skyrocketing. If this happens as well, we've been squeezed from every angle."



Sasha told us about her son. She said: "I'm here for every other disabled person that's going to be hit by these cuts, including my son, who's severely disabled. If these cuts go ahead, it's very likely to lose his place in supported accommodation. And he is one of the most deserving people that you could ever imagine, and this Labour government is putting him in direct danger

Another protester said: "We're very distressed and very unhappy that Ian Murray isn't here to talk to us. It's almost as if he's hiding that he's too ashamed to actually talk to disabled people and try and justify what he's doing."

Jo explained it is quite an intimidating process to claim benefits. He said: "It's hard enough actually applying for these things, and getting medical proof."

Graham said: "My mum grew up with with soup kitchens in the 1930s I think it's terrible, and that's the kind of thing that we're now going back to in the 21st century. There seems to be plenty of money for weapons, but there's no money for

welfare.”

The Edinburgh Reporter asked the Minister earlier today about the cuts to benefits, asking how he as a Labour Mp could support them. Mr Murray said: “It is 100% progressive and 100% Labour values to make sure that we look after the people who can’t work and could never work.

“It’s also a 100% Labour value to make sure that we get people back into work.

“We’ve got a broken welfare system that’s trapping people on benefits when they want to work and can work. That’s no good for the economy. It’s no good for the welfare bill, but most importantly, it’s no good for them. So this is a really progressive way of looking at the whole benefits system, fixing it and making sure we can get people back into work who can work.

“That’s good for their mental health, it’s good for their physical health, and it’s also good for employers. So that’s the key drivers behind this. And I, as a Labour politician and a Labour government minister, cannot possibly accept 4 million people being on long term sick and disability and us just shrugging our shoulders at government, thinking that’s okay.

“It’s completely unacceptable, not just for the economy and for the country, but for the individuals themselves.”

Introducing the measures in parliament on 18 March, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Liz Kendall MP, said that the government had “inherited a social security system which is failing the very people that it is supposed to help and is holding our country back”. She said: “axpayers are paying millions more for the cost of failure, with spending on working-age sickness and disability benefits up £20 billion since the pandemic, and set to rise by a further £18 billion by the end of this Parliament to £70 billion a year. It is not like this in most other comparable countries, where spending

on these benefits since the pandemic is either stable or falling, while ours continues to inexorably rise. That is the legacy of 14 years of Tory failure.

Today, we say, "No more". Since we were elected we have hit the ground running to get more people into good work through our plan for change. We are investing an extra £26 billion into the NHS to drive down waiting lists and get people back to health and back to work.

"We are improving the quality of work and making work pay with our landmark employment rights legislation and increases in the national living wage; we are creating more good jobs in every part of the country in clean energy and through our modern industrial strategy; and we are introducing the biggest reforms to employment support in a generation, with our £240 million Get Britain Working plan. Today, our pathways to work Green Paper sets out decisive action to fix the broken benefits system, creating a more proactive, pro-work system for those who can work and so protecting those who cannot work, now and for the long term."

