



Dear Sir Keir Starmer,

We are DPO Forum England – an independent, nationwide forum of Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs). We represent over 350 member DPOs in England, with a wealth of lived experience, expertise and knowledge on the needs, issues and aspirations of Disabled people (including children and young people). We also have first-hand service delivery expertise in meeting our community’s needs and promoting Disabled people’s inclusion, justice and equality.

We welcome you as our new government. Congratulations on your new roles, and we wish you every success. We are certain we share the same vision of more inclusive, equitable and just society.

We welcome your commitment to championing our rights, working with us to ensure our experience and voices are at the heart of all you do. As a national collective voice of DPOs in England, we look forward to working with you to coproduce the policies that will have a real impact on our lives.

We are glad to see you want to improve the rights of workers and inclusivity of the workplace. Introducing the right to flexible working from the start, legislating for mandatory disability pay gap reporting and strengthening our rights to reasonable adjustments; as well as fixing Access to Work and improving employment support.

Your party was elected on a promise of change, and the change is exactly what our community has been longing for many years. There are many areas of our lives that have been neglected by the last government. However, we hope you recognise that it is not possible to achieve a fundamental change in our lives without investment in public services.

We urge you to invest in public services and see this investment as an investment in infrastructure. Accessible homes, good education support, investment in accessible transport, a well-functioning NHS and social care support in community are vital preconditions to enabling Disabled people to work, learn and have a good quality of life.

As part of this, we urge you to put an end to the segregation and institutionalisation of Disabled people, including involuntary detentions in psychiatric hospitals and forced treatment both there and in the community, instead ensuring that the necessary community resources are in place.

We also urge you to take strategic, transformative and coordinated approach to tackling the barriers we face. This requires a genuine Disability strategy co-produced with Disabled people, including those of us who experience more than one form of



discrimination, recognising the value of community- and user-led resources. We are willing to work with you to develop a real transformative disability strategy.

We welcome your commitment to build more homes including affordable homes. However, we are calling on you to urgently raise accessibility standards for new built homes to ensure those homes meet everyone's needs. We also urge you to bring in rent controls and an end to no-fault evictions in private rented accommodation, so that we can live securely and without fear in our own homes.

Our community was hardest hit by austerity, Covid and the cost-of-living crisis, with 1/3 of us living in poverty and making up the vast majority of food bank users. We welcome your commitment to end the use of food banks and doing this surely includes tackling disability poverty. The previous government spent years in endless reforms of disability benefits and have laid the ground for a more brutal attack on us. This causes anxiety, distress and preventable deaths.

We need you to show our community that you will be on our side. This is why we ask you to take urgent steps to reject the reforms announced by the Conservative government in 2023/24, including:

- Withdrawing the consultation on PIP reform;
- To end making it harder for people to pass the Work Capability Assessment;
- To stop linking all financial support in Universal Credit to PIP;
- To cease subjecting Disabled people to an unfair and harmful conditionality regime
- To stop making it harder for people to get a fit note.

We look forward to working with you to design a supportive benefits system that promotes our rights and respects our dignity.

We want to reassure you that we are your critical friend to work alongside and coproduce with, so that you can benefit from our expertise, we can get things right first time and build a more inclusive, equitable and just society together.

Sincerely,

DPO Forum England

<https://www.disabledpeoplesmanifesto.com/>