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18 June 2025

Dear Convener,

I am writing to you following the first reading of the UK Government's draft Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill in the House of Commons today. As you know, the Bill will give effect to the proposed changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) set out in the UK Government's Spring Statement, making it more difficult for people in England and Wales to qualify for PIP.

I wish to inform the Committee that the Scottish Government does not intend to make the same changes to the eligibility criteria for Adult Disability Payment in Scotland, ensuring that disabled people continue to receive the support they rely on. I am also writing to Disabled People's Organisations today so that they can reassure their members that we will not be making any cuts to Adult Disability Payment.

Since the publication in March of the UK Government's Pathways to Work Green Paper, the Scottish Government has repeatedly called on the UK Government to abandon their damaging reforms. Despite this, and the extent of the concerns raised by civil society about the hugely damaging impact these cuts will have on disabled people, the UK Government have today pressed ahead and introduced this legislation.

This is deeply disappointing, especially given the UK Government's own analysis highlights how their proposals will push an additional 250,000 people across the UK, including 50,000 children, into poverty – with Child Poverty Action Group estimating that 100,000 children may be pushed into poverty in the longer term.

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With around half of all children in poverty in Scotland living in a household with a disabled person, the changes threaten to undermine both the progress that the Scottish Government is making to reduce child poverty, and the work of the Child Poverty Taskforce.

That the UK Government is urgently acting to deliver deep cuts to support for disabled people is made even worse by their failure to abolish the two-child limit, which is estimated to have pulled more than 35,000 children into poverty since July last year.

I will continue to express my firm opposition to the UK Government's dismantling of the social security system, which runs contrary to Scottish Government values, and is particularly callous during a cost of living crisis.

There is of course still an opportunity for the UK Government to instead follow our lead in protecting and enhancing the social security safety net. I sincerely hope that they do so.

Yours Sincerely,

**SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE**

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