

Disabled and Broken

Being disabled in Britain remains a journey less equal

The Equality and Human Rights Commission promotes and enforces the laws that protect our rights to fairness, dignity and respect. As part of its duties, the Commission provides Parliament and the nation with periodic reports on equality and human rights progress. In [Being disabled in Britain: A journey less equal](#) (published April 2017) it assessed the state of equality and human rights for disabled people in Britain and set out the key areas requiring improvement. The overall picture emerging from the data is that disabled people were facing more barriers and falling further behind. They still are.

Government renews outsourced health assessor contracts

According to the Independent tax payers fund more than [£60million a year fighting disability claims](#) even though on average three out of every four (or 98% in our case so far this year) of cases that end up at a benefit tribunal are lost. Tick-box health assessments by giant outsourcing firms lead to many flawed decisions that mean the outlay by the Department for Work and Pensions is wasted. The impact on disabled people from forcing them to fight in the courts, however, can be devastating, pushing some into poverty and increasing levels of stress and anxiety.

Two years before the cost was £44m and that 39% increase is far greater than the increase in applications which was 13% for the same period. Despite all this the outsourcing firms earlier this year had their lucrative multi-million pound contracts extended a further two years to 2023.

Despite knowing that PIP claimants have the lowest level of benefit fraud

According to the DWP's own report [Fraud and Error in the Benefit System](#) (published 17/5/2018) fraud overpayments for the various benefits it controls are as follows:

- Housing benefit 4.6%
- Employment and Support Allowance 2.2%
- Pension Credit 3.5%
- Jobseeker's Allowance 4.3%
- Universal Credit 4.7%
- *Personal Independence Payment 1.2%*

Economically it's tough enough being disabled

According to [Scope.com](#):

- Life costs an extra £583 a month on average if you're disabled.
- Disabled people are over twice as likely to be unemployed.

Disproportionate suffering during the pandemic

According to the [Office for National Statistics](#) in a survey carried out in July 2020 showed that compared to others disabled people were:

- 2X as likely to be concerned about the impact on their well-being;
- 4X more concerned about access to healthcare and treatment;
- 2-3X more likely to feel that the pandemic has worsened their mental health;
- 2X more likely to be feeling lonely and say they spend too much time alone;
- 3X more likely to feel they feel like a burden on others, or have no one to talk to about their worries;
- 3X more likely to feel very unsafe when outside their home.

People with learning disabilities were up to six times more likely to die from Covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic, analysis shows. A report from [Public Health England](#) found the death rate for those with a learning disability was 30 times higher in the 18-34 age group. Mencap said the government had "failed to protect" a group already experiencing health inequalities. (Reported by the BBC 13 November 2020.)



For 35 years DAS has been working at the heart of the East Suffolk community providing free, impartial advice, advocacy and crisis intervention support to the disabled and their carers.

It is our mission to build confidence, enabling those who live with disabilities to gain the same rights and quality of life opportunities as others.



Free independent disability advice
www.daseastsuffolk.org