

Disabled and Broken (An answer to the question: "Why does DAS do what it does?")

Being disabled 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. In [Being disabled in Britain: A journey less equal](#) it assessed the state of equality and human rights for disabled people in Britain and set out the key areas requiring improvement. The picture emerging from the data is that disabled people were facing more barriers and falling further behind. They still are.

Poverty and social exclusion

The New Policy Institute in its report [Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2016](#) found, *"One aspect of poverty that can be understated in the official statistics is disability. When the extra costs of disability are partially accounted for, half of all people in poverty are either disabled, or in a household with a disabled person. Disability and family type are significant in explaining the children still in workless households; 46% of children in workless households have at least one disabled adult in the household."*

Homelessness and the disabled

The number of ill and disabled people [becoming homeless](#) surged by 53% in 2019 as local councils found themselves increasingly unable to provide them with support.

According to Government data, councils across the UK reported a 14 per cent rise in households which have at least one resident classed as suffering physical ill health or disability presenting as homeless.

Meanwhile £60M a year of tax payers' money is being wasted

Tax payers fund more than [£60m a year fighting disability claims](#) even though 3 out of 4 (or 100% in 2020 for DAS) that go to appeal are lost. Tick-box health assessments by giant outsourcing firms lead to many flawed decisions that mean the outlay by the DWP is wasted. The impact on the disabled by forcing them to fight in the courts, however, can be devastating, pushing some into poverty and much increased levels of stress and anxiety.

Two years go the cost was £44m and that 39% increase is far greater than the 13% increase in applications over the same period. Despite all this, the outsourcing firms in 2020 had their lucrative multi-million pound contracts extended a further two years to 2023.

This is despite, according to the DWP's own report [Fraud and Error in the Benefit System](#), fraud overpayments for the other benefits it controls are in the range 2.2-4.7% whereas the rate for Personal Independence Payments is only 1.2%.

Concern over suicides related to benefit decisions

A [BBC investigation](#) revealed that shocking numbers of people have committed suicide closely related to a refusal or downgrading of their benefits following assessment by DWP contractors. Serious concerns over the worth of these assessments in the case of people with mental health issues and the lack of transparency in DWP internal reviews have been met with calls for an enquiry.

Economically, being disabled is much tougher

According to [Scope.com](#): Life costs £583 more a month if you are disabled; and disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed. According to the [Centre for Social Justice](#) there are 7.7m working-age disabled people in the UK, of whom 53.6% (4.1 million) are in work. This compares to an employment rate of 81.9% for working-age non-disabled people – meaning there is an employment gap of 28.2%. For certain health types, the numbers are even more concerning. Those with learning disabilities have an employment rate of just 5.9% despite the fact that 65% of them want to work.

Disabled people suffer more from domestic abuse

The SafeLives report [Disabled People and Domestic Abuse](#) found that disabled people are **more than twice as likely to experience some form of domestic abuse** than non-disabled victims and that they also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time.

Even after receiving support, disabled victims were more likely to continue to experience abuse.

Disproportionate suffering during the pandemic

According to an [ONS survey](#), compared to others disabled people were: twice as likely to be worried about impact on well-being; four times more worried about access to healthcare/treatment; 2-3 times more likely to feel mental health has worsened; twice more likely to be feeling lonely and say they spend too much time alone; three times more likely to feel like they are a burden on others, or have no one to talk to about their worries; and three times more likely to feel very unsafe outside the home.

People with learning disabilities were up to six times more likely to die from Covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic and 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.



For 36 years DAS has been working at the heart of the East Suffolk community providing free, impartial advice, advocacy and crisis support and our Listening Service 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