

Brighton Pavilion Labour Party



Disabled Members' Branch News

Friend, this newsletter from the [Pavilion Labour Disabled Members' Branch](#) (or the DMB) contains some news and events of interest to members who live with a disability, impairment or chronic health condition, including:

- Our next DMB meeting
- Tories make biggest benefits cuts in 50 years
- 1m+ disabled people will lose out when forced onto Universal Credit
- Medicine shortages and why we must rebuild our NHS
- Help Labour's two local by-election candidates
- Your access needs and our Disabled Members' Branch

If you're a disabled member, come along and join-in with your local Labour branch! Best wishes, Theresa and Judy - CLP Disability Officers

Our next DMB Meeting

11am - 1pm, Sunday 8 May

Pavilion Labour's Disabled Members' Branch has arranged its next online meetings for 11am on Sunday 8 May 2022. This meeting will be **online only** and replaces our 2 April meeting, which had to be cancelled at short notice following guidance from Labour South East. Members of Brighton Pavilion

Labour Party who live with a chronic health condition, impairment or disability are welcome to attend.

If you wish to attend either online event, please contact the Branch by 9pm on Friday 6 May, by email to disabilities@pavilionlabour.org.uk using the title "request DMB link" and confirming your name and membership number. The link to the meeting will be sent out in due course.

AGENDA

Our agenda for this meeting is as follows:

1. **CLP & LGC Report** – update from our officers and General Committee (GC) delegates. Covering GC business, progress on forming the Local Government Committee (LGC), and the inclusion of disabled members' priorities in the 2023 local manifesto – not just the manifesto process.
2. **Nominations** for national and local posts
3. **Minutes of the previous meetings** – 22 March, 2 April
4. **Matters arising** including how we take forward disabled members' priorities for the year ahead
5. Consideration of **Assistant Secretary** post
6. **Resolutions** (if any)
7. **Planning of DMB programme:** meetings, socials, policy forums, awareness workshop – dates, topics and suggested speakers.
8. **Any Other Business**

As you can see, there's much to discuss, so it'll be great to have old friends and new faces with us.

Please **email any business** you have for this meeting to disabilities@pavilionlabour.org.uk by **8pm on Wednesday, 4 May.**

Any formal meeting papers will be circulated to members (who have notified attendance for these meetings or are on our regular mailing list) a day or two before the meeting.



Biggest Benefits Cut in 50 years

This month the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) (JRF) highlighted the greatest fall in the value of social security payments in fifty years. After more than a decade of Tory austerity cuts, wage caps and welfare freezes, April 2022 saw the Tory Government choose to uprate benefits by just 3.1%, despite inflation being projected to be 7.1% later this month and 9% or 10% by the year-end.

With UK social security payments already some of the lowest in Europe, the [JRF](#) estimated that this further real-terms cut will push an additional 600,000 people into poverty.

As [DPAC](#)'s Linda Burnip writes [here](#), after the cruelty of austerity and Covid, the Tories have now hit disabled people with the biggest fall in social security payments ever recorded. It's a national scandal – and it's time to fight back.

Established as a coalition of disabled people's organisations, national charities and allies, the [Disability Poverty Campaign Group](#) (DPCG) has been set up to address the increasing levels of poverty among disabled people affected by rising food and fuel prices, and the failure of social security payments to keep up with those price increases. The DPCG has highlighted these [three areas of concern needing immediate action](#):

- To push for an increase in all benefits in line with inflation
- To seek targeted support for disabled people's energy costs
- To seek fairer charging for social care.

SCRAP UNIVERSAL CREDIT

DWP admits 1m ESA claimants will lose out

The [Disability News Service](#) has finally forced the DWP to publish data disclosing that over one million disabled and chronically-ill people, currently receiving Employment Support Allowance (ESA), will lose out when forced to move to the Tories' dreadful Universal Credit (UC). Read the full report [here](#).

A wide range of claimants have yet to be forced onto Universal Credit by the DWP. Disabled people claiming ESA are the largest group still receiving "legacy benefits" as shown at table 1 of the DWP's report [Completing the Move to Universal Credit](#) (press release [here](#)). This forced migration onto UC itself causes many problems, as people may not understand DWP communications, receive no help and fail to act. As **DPAC** outlines [here](#), forced migration can leave many people without any financial support at all.

Getting all its bad news out at once, this week the DWP also confirmed that about 2.6 million households who remain on legacy benefits will either be claiming UC, or will have left the benefits system, by the end of 2024 – when their forced migration to UC is due to be completed. By "left the benefits system" the DWP is pulling a veil over an estimated 400,000 vulnerable people the Tories intend to deny even the most basic benefits (see annex 2 and figure A1, tucked away at the end of the DWP's report, [here](#)).

Once migrated onto UC and any transitional protections have eroded, about one million disabled people will have lost out compared to the benefits they would have received on ESA, while about one million people will have gained. Tory Ministers have repeatedly mentioned the one million gainers only. In doing so, arguably, Tory Ministers such as Therese Coffey and Justin Tomlinson repeatedly misled parliament and the country.



Medicine Shortages worsen

Shortages in medicines are a major concern for anyone living with chronic ill-health. Previously, shortages were attributed to manufacturing failures or supply-chain issues. This was one reason Labour's last manifesto backed the creation of a public pharmaceutical provider based in the UK.

Panic-buying of paracetamol early in 2020 brought one drug shortage to widespread public attention. While the Tory Government claimed its pre-Brexit stockpiles would bridge pandemic shortages, by April 2020 there were over 200 drugs in short supply in the UK. Added to Brexit and Covid, in the last week, the Tories have blamed war in Ukraine for additional shortages which, as [Channel 4 News](#) highlighted, go far beyond HRT.

The [Pharmacy Pressures Survey](#) from pharmacists' trade body, the [PSNC](#), has confirmed that unsustainable pressures are being placed on community pharmacies, with serious, negative impacts on staff wellbeing, pharmacy services and survival. Two-thirds of pharmacies say they are dealing with shortages every day and another 21% encounter them several times a week. You can read the PSNC's summary of its survey results [here](#).

People who rely on medicines are distressed that their health maybe undermined by interrupted supplies or drug substitutions. As socialists we send solidarity to pharmacy staff experiencing increased aggression and abuse. Rather than target frustrations at staff, we encourage everyone to target the real culprits – the Tories who systematically wreck all parts of our NHS.

Labour established
our NHS, based on
need not ability to
pay.

We'll never stop
fighting for it.



Rebuild Our NHS

Katrina, from Withdean Labour and [Sussex Defend the NHS](#), has written to encourage us all to join in the national [Rebuild Our NHS](#) campaign being run by [We Own It](#).

As Katrina warns, what the Tories call an “Integrated Care System” (or ICS) is nothing to do with integrating health and social care, as we might wish. Rather, it has everything to do with bringing private sector providers, private insurance companies and corporations further into the core of UK health systems, so that they are an integral part of our once-great and wholly public NHS. Adopting USA models of healthcare, each ICS will be in charge of the budget and commissioning of NHS services. This should concern us all.

Each ICS will have statutory powers from 1 July 2022 and a degree of flexibility regarding their future commissioning of health services. The campaign aims to send thousands of emails to the Chair of each ICS. Join in the campaign by sending such an email. You can find a formatted email plus the name and email address of the relevant ICS Chair by typing-in your own postcode using the links found at [this page](#).

If you want to do more local campaigning, **Rebuild our NHS** campaign leaflets and posters are also available to order free [here](#) from **We Own It**.



Help local Labour candidates

Labour has candidates in two local council by-elections where your help will be appreciated by our candidates **Ciarron Clarkson** in **Peacehaven West** and **Robert McIntosh** in **Rottingdean Coastal**. Both by-elections were triggered by the resignation of Tory Joe Miller from his seats on Brighton and Hove City Council and Lewes District Council.

If you can help in **Rottingdean Coastal**, where the election is on **Thursday 5 May**, please contact **Robert McIntosh** on **07853 622456**, or scan this QR code to join the WhatsApp group:



Ciarron Clarkson is Labour's candidate for **Peacehaven West** in the Lewes District Council by-election, which will be held on **Thursday 12 May**. If you can help with Ciarron's campaign, please contact either Ciarron or Councillor Laurence O'Connor using their councillor details provided by Meridian Labour Party [here](#).



Your Access Needs

Could Pavilion Labour meetings be organised differently to help you attend? While the switch to online events helps some members, we are concerned that other members may be struggling with arrangements for virtual meetings, such as the timing of meetings, inadequate captions or with problems obtaining internet / broadband access.

We want to do what we can to ensure that members can attend our meetings. So, we are asking all members struggling with access to contact our Disabled Members' Branch (DMB) who will be reviewing arrangements for our local Labour Party. Whether you consider yourself disabled or not, please contact the DMB by email to disabilities@pavilionlabour.org.uk with a short description of the issue you have experienced.

Our Disabled Members' Branch is a chance for all members of Brighton Pavilion Labour Party who live with a chronic health condition, impairment or disability, to meet together, exchange views and share experiences.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or suggestions for this or a future meeting. Our branch is where disabled and chronically ill members can get together, and we want everyone to get as much out of it as possible.

You can also contact us if you have any other questions about our Labour Party, whether our Constituency Labour Party (CLP) of Brighton Pavilion CLP, or your neighbourhood, Council ward-based, Branch Labour Party, or if you want to know how any part of any our parties, branches and forums fit together.

Best wishes, Theresa and Judy - CLP Disability Officers