

## **WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN FOR A FAIR SOCIETY**

Please find attached our submission on Scottish Government's Welfare Reform (Further Provision) (Scotland) Bill. We wish to be considered to appear before the Committee to share our views.

The following submission is based on the UK manifesto of Campaign for a Fair Society which was launched at the House of Lords on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

The Manifesto:

- says that the UK government's cuts are unfair – they target disabled people and those living
- in poverty
- explains how the cuts are inefficient – they will create more crises and new costs
- shows how the UK and Scottish Government could do things differently
- makes eight proposals for a fairer society

Having reviewed the Scottish Government's Welfare Reform (Further Provision) (Scotland) Bill, we believe that the eight proposals below can help frame discussion about how the Bill could be strengthened and improved.

### **Human rights**

A fair society is built on a foundation of human rights. The law and welfare systems should be judged by their success in upholding these rights.

There are already important agreements about welfare - The European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, These international standards for decency should be built into our own law.

The current Human Rights Act should be strengthened, not weakened, and it should become easier for citizens to hold the system to account.

### **Clear entitlements**

It is difficult to know what money, care and support we can get because the system is confusing.

A system with clear entitlements is needed. It must be easy for people to know what money care and support they can get. They must have enough money to live on and be active citizens.

### **Early Support**

If help is needed from services, it is often impossible to get until crisis point is reached. This is a bad way of spending money It causes problems like family breakdown and health crises.

People must get help as soon as possible. It is a better use of money because people can deal with problems when they are smaller. People can be more independent. Families are more likely to stay together. More people can get help for the same money.

### **Equal access**

Services for older and disabled people are often not the ones everyone else needs. Separate and institutional services cut people off from ordinary life, friends and neighbours.

All people should have the same opportunities - in housing, work, education, leisure and relationships. Then people will be part of their community. They will get the chance to put something in as well as get support.

### **Choice and control**

Often, people can only get help if they give up their independence.

A system is needed which helps people to keep control - to make their own choices and control their own life.

### **Fair incomes**

Many people who are entitled to benefits can be trapped in poverty. It can be difficult to break out and get a job or get involved in the community - especially if you are disabled.

A system is needed which gives everyone a reasonable income. We need a system that makes it worth getting a job, saving money and getting involved in community life.

### **Fair taxes**

The tax system falls hardest on people who need social care. Complicated rules hide this fact. Local authorities, and the Independent Living Fund, often charge for services and if you have modest savings, you will be penalised and you won't get help. The benefit system also disguises a series of unfair taxes.

A fair system is needed which doesn't have hidden taxes that fall on older and disabled people and people in poverty. Services must be free to people who use them. Taxes would fund these services paid for by everyone equitably.

### **Financial reform**

The banking and finance systems have not worked in favour of the whole of society.

A new system must change how banks and financial institutions work. They must offer value and benefit to everyone and bear responsibility for the common good. We need a system based on fairness one that is sustainable for all.