

SUBMISSION FROM THE HUG (ACTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH) FRIDAY FORUM

I apologise for the brevity of this response. Due to the short time scale this is all we can manage. If you wish us to give oral evidence we are happy to.

Question 1.

At present we have more faith in the Scottish government being receptive to the needs of unemployed and disabled people than the present UK coalition.

This doesn't necessarily mean that we are giving a view on the need for independence or not for Scotland.

As such we would prefer the Scottish Government to have influence over welfare reform and related legislation.

questions

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We think the Scottish government should have influence in these areas:

Our comments on welfare reform have been made elsewhere but we would encourage you to look at our report on POVERTY at hug.uk.net.

We are increasingly concerned about the provisions of the Welfare Reform Bill. We feel that people with mental health problems have been unfairly targeted by these changes over the last few years. Questions assessing fitness to work are grossly unfair and are increasingly giving the impression that substantial numbers of our community are fit to work when they are patently unfit to do so. Many of us are made ill by medical reviews and treated inappropriately at such events.

We struggle to live on our present income and are fearful that our lives will become increasingly unmanageable our health at greater risk and the degree of exclusion we experience heightened.

We find the changes in almost all areas of benefit ranging from housing benefit to ESA unpalatable and retrograde. We have great worries about DLA which many of us rely on for an adequate life and for passported benefits such as blue badges and concessionary transport.

The welfare reform changes being introduced will increase inequality and decrease our chances and faith in recovery.

The knowledge legislators seem to have about people with a mental illness on benefit leaves us alarmed and greatly concerned. They seem to have no appreciation of the reality of our lives and happy to make changes that will make life unsupportable for many of us.

If the Scottish Government can pass legislation that minimises the burden we are facing we would be in favour of this legislation. We hope that by being in contact with communities such as ours the Scottish government can be more in tune with our needs than the UK government seems to be.

Yours

Sincerely

Graham Morgan
HUG action for mental health