# Disabled activists disrupt DWP consultation to demand full debate on proposed benefit cuts



# Disabled Activists Disrupt DWP Consultation, Calling for a Real Dialogue on Disability Benefits

In an unyielding display of activism, disabled protesters from Manchester Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) engineered a major disruption at a recent Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consultation in Manchester. Occupying the foyer of the Crowne Plaza hotel, these activists demanded to address all proposals in the government’s Pathways to Work green paper, which they rightfully criticized as fundamentally flawed.

This protest stemmed from the DWP's decision to limit discussion to only ten out of twenty-two proposals, including an alarming plan to slash over £4.5 billion from Personal Independence Payments (PIP). Such cuts represent a direct threat to the financial stability of countless disabled individuals. Activists characterized the DWP's consultation as a "sham," engineered to limit genuine public input while advancing a detrimental agenda.

Following a standoff with security and law enforcement, the activists succeeded in getting Rick Burgess, a DPAC spokesperson, in front of the few disabled attendees at the event. He urged them to vote for a more comprehensive discussion on all aspects of the green paper, rather than the selectively chosen topics favored by government officials. In a show of unity, attendees overwhelmingly backed this broader dialogue, escalating the protest and forcing the DWP to confront pressing issues that it has opted to sidestep.

Among the concerns raised were proposals to modify work capability assessments and the suggestion to freeze the health element of universal credit until 2029-30. Such freezes could severely impact new claimants, potentially halving their weekly premiums by 2026-27—raising significant alarms among the disabled community.

Burgess articulated a crucial sentiment: “Our message to the public is to find out where the consultation events are, attend them, and if they try to restrict discussion, aim to shut it down... this is akin to asking us to cooperate in our own marginalization.” His words resonate with a growing dissatisfaction among disability activists, who are broadly disillusioned by consultations that seem designed to stifle real dissent while perpetuating harmful policies.

Activists expressed the urgent need for direct action. Luke Beesley emphasized, “You don’t need loads of experience, just disabled people showing up, being vocal and assertive; that’s what gets you noticed.” Dennis Queen added, “We must demonstrate to the government and the DWP that we refuse to tolerate this and will not let them dictate our suffering.”

The DWP's response to this disruption revealed their significant disconnect from the serious discontent expressed by advocates. A spokesperson reiterated their intent to "fix the fundamentally broken system" they claim to have inherited, while asserting that consultations intend to amplify the voices of sick and disabled individuals. However, this sentiment is met with skepticism, as trust in such processes continues to dwindle, reflecting widespread frustration with a government now led by Labour that many believe further neglects the needs of the vulnerable.

The scene at the Crowne Plaza echoes previous protests from DPAC, a group renowned for their determined stand against austerity measures that harm disabled citizens. Their history of activism—including protests in Parliament and significant blockades at key sites—underscores the urgency of these interventions.

As discussions surrounding disability benefits continue, it is vital to confront the systemic challenges faced by disabled individuals navigating a government increasingly perceived as hostile. Activists assert that without a considerable shift towards open and inclusive dialogue, consultations risk becoming mere token gestures rather than pathways to real reform.

By drawing attention to these critical issues in Manchester, DPAC has not only challenged the complacency of the DWP but has also reinforced the notion that activism is essential in reclaiming agency in matters that significantly impact the lives of those it represents.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/disabled-activists-gate-crash-dwp-event-and-send-message-to-ministers-your-consultation-is-a-sham/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/disabled-activists-gate-crash-dwp-event-and-send-message-to-ministers-your-consultation-is-a-sham/> - Disabled activists from Manchester Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) disrupted a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consultation event at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Manchester. They occupied the foyer, demanding to address all 22 proposals in the Pathways to Work green paper, not just the 10 selected by ministers. After an hour-long stand-off, they persuaded DWP civil servants to allow them to pose questions on controversial topics, including plans to cut over £4.5 billion from Personal Independence Payment (PIP) spending. Attendees unanimously rejected the green paper.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/24/disability-campaigners-clash-with-police-inside-commons-over-benefit-cuts> - In June 2015, disability rights activists from the group Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) clashed with police inside the UK Parliament during a protest against benefit cuts. The protesters, including wheelchair users, were forcibly removed from the central lobby, leading to damaged equipment. The protest aimed to highlight the government's austerity measures and their impact on disabled individuals, with activists accusing the government of undermining support for disabled people and privatizing essential services.
4. <https://www.theboar.org/2025/03/coventry-campaigners-rally-against-despicable-and-cowardly-disability-benefit-cuts/> - In March 2025, disability rights activists in Coventry protested against proposed disability benefit cuts, labeling them as 'despicable' and 'cowardly.' The demonstration, part of a National Day of Action organized by Crips Against Cuts, featured over 35 attendees, including students and trade unionists. Speakers condemned the cuts, arguing they would force disabled individuals into unsuitable jobs and poverty. The protest highlighted concerns that the government's welfare reforms disproportionately affect disabled people, with potential severe consequences for their well-being.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/oct/22/protests-benefit-cuts-disabled-people> - In October 2011, demonstrations were held across the UK in response to benefit cuts affecting disabled individuals. Organized by the Disability Benefits Consortium and the UK Disabled People's Council, the 'Hardest Hit' marches aimed to draw attention to cuts in local services for disabled people proposed in the government's welfare reform bill. Protests took place in cities including Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Belfast, Cardiff, and Edinburgh, emphasizing the severity of the proposed cuts.
6. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/westminster-bridge-closed-down-disabled-people-against-cuts-protesting-austerity-a7230311.html> - In September 2016, members of Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) blocked Westminster Bridge in London to protest against austerity measures affecting disabled individuals. The protest aimed to draw attention to the removal of support from disabled people, leading to worsening health, extreme hardship, and deaths. DPAC criticized government policies such as changes to Personal Independence Payments, continuous sanctions, and the closure of the Independent Living Fund, arguing that these measures disproportionately impact disabled people.
7. <https://www.thecanary.co/uk/analysis/2023/10/25/dwp-protest-wca-plans/> - In October 2023, Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) organized a protest outside the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) headquarters in Westminster. The demonstration aimed to oppose proposed changes to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), which DPAC argued would remove essential income from disabled people and subject many to distressing work search activities and benefit sanctions. The protest highlighted concerns that the DWP's plans would exacerbate existing barriers to employment for disabled individuals.