



Disability Rights UK (DRUK) – News Roundup – January 2023

We work with our members to influence national policy on independent living, benefits,

education, employment, transport, human rights and other issues – shaping policy through direct experience and expertise.

We also work with our local individual and organisation members to empower and to influence local policy and services.

To contact Disability Rights UK (DR UK) see

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/contact-us

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A Message From DRUK CEO New Year Message

As the cost of living crisis continues to bite, millions of Disabled people are struggling to keep homes warm, run essential health and mobility equipment and keep food on the table. With the wider Disabled people's movement, we will press for a fairer benefits system, seek improved targeted financial support to meet energy costs and campaign for the banning of forced switchover to pre-payment meters.

Other priorities for Disability Rights UK in the coming year include: promoting inclusive climate change solutions, speaking out for better care and support for independent living, tackling discrimination in education and employment, ensuring support for Disabled rail travellers is retained, campaigning for disability hate crime to be a criminal offence and advocating for accessible housing.

Later this year, the Government will be consulting Disabled people on a Disability Action Plan and we will work to ensure that the voices and experiences of Disabled people are truly heard.

Disability Rights UK is developing a new strategy for the next five years and in the Get Involved section below, details are provided on how you can share your thoughts with us.

Recognising all the challenges you are facing, I wish you a Happy New Year.

Disabled People Cut Off From Energy Supply

Citizens Advice estimate that 3.2 million people ran out of credit on their pre-payment energy meter last year, the equivalent of one person every ten seconds. The advisory service says that they saw more people last year unable to top up their meter than in all of the previous ten years combined. It's calling on energy companies to stop forcibly switching people to pre-payment meters.

Massive Income Gap' Between Disabled And Non-Disabled People – Resolution Foundation

A new report by the Resolution Foundation has found a massive income gap between Disabled people and non-disabled people, resulting in many more Disabled people not being able to afford basic necessities such as food and heating.

UC Hardship Payment Waiver

Following a recent judicial review, Universal Credit claimants can apply for hardship payments to be waived or refunded. The review was brought by Public Law Project last year on behalf of a client. In response the DWP confirmed it had discretion to waive hardship payment debt, and changed its guidance.

Labour Will Guarantee Disabled People Moving Into Work A Return To Benefits With The Need For Reassessment

A Labour government would overhaul routes into work for Disabled people, including a guarantee that those who move into work will not have to face benefit re-assessments.

New DWP Scheme May Enable Claimants To Get Refund Of Already Paid Back Universal Credit Hardship Payments

Under a new DWP scheme clients may be able to get a refund of already paid back Universal Credit hardship payments. The deadline to apply is 19 June 2023.

Access To Work Wait Times Leading To Lost Jobs

The Mirror reports that Access to Work wait times have "skyrocketed", after Labour's welfare chief uncovered new figures on the Department for Work and Pensions policy.

DFE Figures Show Teachers Are Leaving The Profession

New Department for Education figures show that a third of England's teachers who qualified in the last decade have left the profession.

Prime Minister Proposes Maths Till 18

Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, set out plans in his New Year speech to make maths a compulsory subject for all students until the age of 18. No plans have been revealed on how this would work for those not studying A-Levels, and there has been no acknowledgement of the barriers posed by inaccessible assessments.

Smart Tech Rail Ticket Machines Not Fit For Disabled People

Disability Rights UK is concerned that some new changes which are coming to train stations that could catch-out Disabled passengers.

DR UK Backs Rail Staff Cuts Campaigners

Disability Rights UK is backing campaigners who are warning Transport Secretary Mark Harper that "discriminatory" plans to remove guards from trains, cut staff and close ticket offices will stop many Disabled passengers from travelling by rail and will endanger lives.

Church Of England Calls For Radical Social Care Reform

The Archbishops of York and Canterbury have said that taxes must rise to fund a new NHS-style universal social care system. The call comes four months after the Prime Minister abandoned Boris Johnson's plans to raise taxes to fund social care.

Hackney Council Sued After Home Caused Lung Disease

A tenant with an incurable lung condition he argues was caused by

the mould the council allowed to grow in his flat has called for greater punishments for councils and landlords that fail to act on "inhumane" living conditions.

Valuable 500 Committed To Mandatory Workforce Reporting

Caroline Casey, Founder of the Valuable 500, spoke on the importance of workforce reporting at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting earlier this month. The Valuable 500 has committed to reporting data on disability and has released new research on the topic.

Read about [this Valuable 500 report](#) on our website.

DWP Assessment Firms Still Producing Shocking Levels Of Sub-Standard Reports

Contractors likely to be bidding for new five-year contracts to test eligibility for disability benefits are still producing a "shockingly high" number of sub-standard assessment reports nine years after they first won contracts to carry them out.

Government Announces Schedule Of "Cost Of Living Payments" During 2023/2024

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has given more detail on the payment schedule for the next round of Government "cost of living support" announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

Disability Campaigners Ask For Ban On Prepayment Meters

The Disability Poverty Campaign group (DPCG), of which DR UK is a leading member, has launched a campaign asking that there be a mandatory ban on the forced installation of prepayment meters in the UK's Disabled households.

Census 2021 Data Shows Increase In Number Of Disabled People.

The latest findings from the [2021 Census](#), which showed that Disabled people make up 17% of the population, are now available. Find out more about [the latest Census data](#) on our website.

Disabled People Abandoning Leisure Activities

Disabled people are abandoning plans for outdoor activity breaks due to the cost-of-living crisis. Their decision comes at a huge cost to their physical and mental health.

Spirit Of 2012 Report

Spirit of 2012 is an organisation which has as one of its aims the goal of changing perceptions of disability. DR UK CEO Kamran Mallick participated in its research into such perceptions.