

Claiming our victories! The disability movement, including bereaved relatives, that led to Iain Duncan Smith's resignation and suspension of disability benefit cuts.

Please send us your info on the main actions so we can add to this list. We know there is a lot more and we must claim it all! This chronology is from 2010 but the movement was active well before that, as the cuts did not start with the Tories.



October 2010 – The march against Coalition cuts is headed by disabled people, outside the Tory Party conference in Birmingham. Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) is formed.



January 2011 – One of many protests outside Atos, the French multinational company carrying out exams for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), UK-wide and/or at their London HQ.



2011-2012 – Protests as the Welfare Reform Bill goes through Parliament. It abolishes Council Tax Benefit, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and the Social Fund. Brings in the bedroom tax, Universal Credit, the Benefit Cap, Personal Independence Payments (PIP), benefit sanctions on sick and disabled ESA claimants for the first time; harsher sanctions on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants, many of whom have health conditions.



May 2011 – At least 8,000 disabled people, groups and individuals from all over the UK gather in London for the Hardest Hit march. Big charities organise for their members to come. But some negotiate with the DWP on what restrictions to benefits they will accept, such as for PIP.



September 2011 – WinVisible gathers over 100 signatures from professionals and organisations on an [Open Letter](#) to the British Medical Journal (BMJ) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN), asking them to ban Atos from their recruitment fairs and websites since Atos health professionals flout medical ethics.



January 2012 – Disabled people and pensioners blockade Oxford Circus in an action called by DPAC, DAN and UK Uncut to stop the Welfare Reform Bill.



Feb 2012 – Rev Paul Nicolson launches [Taxpayers Against Poverty](#), highlighting how poverty and debt cause mental ill-health.



April 2012 – disabled Remploy workers, many of them women, demonstrate against factory closures. Two years on, [half](#) have found no job. The government has since sold a majority share in Remploy (now a job agency) to US multinational Maximus.



June 2012 – Members of Mental Health Resistance Network launch a successful legal challenge to the work capability assessment. The court rules that it discriminates against people with mental health problems, autism and learning disabilities.



June 2012 – the British Medical Association passes policy to scrap the work capability assessment and Atos contract. Dr Louise Irvine (Save Lewisham Hospital) argues for the motion by GPs and disability activists Black Triangle in Scotland.



July 2012 – Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson launches an inquiry into the impact of Universal Credit on disabled children and adults. The report “Holes in the safety net” (Oct 12), highlights that nearly half a million disabled people are hit hard, especially children and their families; severely disabled people living alone, and those in waged work. The report exposes that Universal Credit abolishes most help for particular needs, breaking with the consensus that UC usefully “simplifies” benefits.



August 2012 – Protests demand that Atos and Dow Chemical (responsible for the Bhopal disaster in India) be dropped as sponsors of the Olympics and Paralympics.



September 2012 – Osborne booed by the crowd at the London Paralympics over abolition of DLA and introduction of PIP. PIP has harsher qualifying rules and no lower rate of cash help. 600,000 disabled people lose £2.62 billion. Atos gets PIP exam contract and keeps government contracts worth £500m.

October 2012 – the success rate of ESA claims and appeals continues to increase though this is rarely announced!



October 2012 – Vigil at Parliament against abolition of Council Tax Benefit for low-income people. Council Tax becomes the top debt problem people seek help for as councils add court costs to unpaid CT. Rev Paul Nicolson continues to pursue this.



April 2013 – 1000 Mothers March against the piloting of the total Benefit Cap in Haringey, London. Osborne claims disabled people are exempt, which is untrue. People on lower rate ESA are subject to the Cap, as are families with sick and disabled children who don't get DLA, and some on Carers Allowance.



April 2013 – Steve Sumpter and others launch a legal challenge over PIP, arguing the consultation with disability organisations and charities was ignored. The walking distance that disqualifies claimants is reduced from over 50 to over 20 metres. This action is lost at court, but the reality of PIP cuts gains publicity.



May 2013 – Legal challenge against the Benefit Cap. Solicitor Rebekah Carrier says: “This is a cruel and misguided policy. It will have a catastrophic impact on many thousands more vulnerable children and adults. They face street homelessness and starvation. The children's commissioner warned the government that these changes would result in a sharp increase in child poverty and homelessness, with a disproportionate impact upon disabled children and children of disabled parents, and some BME groups.”



May & July 2013 – Bedroom tax campaigners attend the High Court to support a legal challenge by a number of disabled children and adults. Disabled children win, disabled adults lose and go on to appeal to the Supreme Court in 2016.



September 2013 – “[10,000 Cuts and Counting](#)” memorial rally in Parliament Square, for sick and disabled people who have died as a result of benefit cuts. MPs Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell, Michael Meacher speak in support.



November 2013 – [Disabled children](#) unable to share a bedroom are exempted from bedroom tax by a government change spurred by the court ruling.

December 2013 – Francesca Martinez’s [WOW Petition](#) (resist the War on Welfare) gets 104,818 signatures.



February 2014 – National day of action against [Atos](#) sees actions at [144 Atos offices UK-wide](#). In March, the government announces ending Atos’ contract for ESA exams in 2015.



June 2014 – DPAC occupies the grounds of Westminster Abbey in protest at the abolition of the Independent Living Fund. They are backed by John McDonnell MP.



July 2014 – Gill Thompson launches petition: “*Hold an inquiry into benefit sanctions that killed my brother*” – David Clapson, who was diabetic and on JSA. Over 200,000 people sign leading to an investigation into sanctions by the Work and Pensions Select Committee. The MPs’ report (March 2015) calls for a full independent review of sanctions – Iain Duncan Smith refuses. On 3 March 2016, Gill launches a legal case for an inquest into David’s death.



October 2014 – Disabled single mum Michelle Moseley wins a Supreme Court legal challenge against Haringey Council over their Council Tax consultation which denied the option to continue to exempt low-income people.





August 2015 – Jeremy Corbyn calls for Iain Duncan Smith to **resign over the** 2,380 people who died after DWP tells them to look for work. Finally a Labour leader opposes the work capability assessment (introduced by Labour in the Welfare Reform Act 2007)! John McDonnell MP had joined disabled people's protest against it outside the Labour Party conference in Manchester 2006.



October 2015 – Disability groups and individuals give evidence to UN Inquiry into grave and systematic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities in the UK.



November 2015 – High Court rules that the Benefit Cap discriminates against carers and the disabled people they care for. Judge Collins: “to describe a household where care was being provided for at least 35 hours a week as ‘workless’ was somewhat offensive... To care for a seriously disabled person is difficult and burdensome and could properly be regarded as work.”



13 January 2016 – Disabled people lobby MPs and Peers against the £30 a week cut to ESA in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill. Lords, led by disabled Peers, vote against the cut but the government reinstates it.



January 2016 – Two families: a mum and son living in fear of attack by her violent ex-partner, and the Rutherfords, win their High Court appeal against the bedroom tax. The government appeals! Paul Rutherford **says**: “It was a relief from all the stress. But I’m mad angry because they’re appealing. I would like David Cameron or Iain Duncan Smith to explain why they are spending taxpayers’ money [£250,000] on an appeal? Why are they doing this to me and other families?”



29 Feb to 2 March 2016 – Bedroom tax cases concerning domestic violence and disability come to the Supreme Court. People in the cases and supporters have a Vigil outside over the three days – ruling to be announced!



2 March – DPAC launches a campaign to press charities to disown their MP patrons who voted for the ESA cut.



9 March 2016 – National day of action against benefit sanctions called by Unite the union. At the DWP, Gill Thompson and Maggie Zolobajluk hold a banner with the names of people who have died as a result of cuts.



16 March 2016 – Budget Day. **Graeme Ellis**, host of the Conservative Disability Group website, shuts it down in protest at the cuts, posting a **message** and announcing he is joining the Labour Party.







17 March – Charity Richmond AID **announces** that Zac Goldsmith MP has resigned as their patron after they wrote asking him to step down because he voted to cut ESA.

18 March – Iain Duncan Smith resigns! Osborne and Cameron next?

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For more info about anti-cuts protests:

- <http://dpac.uk.net>  <https://www.facebook.com/Mental-Health-Resistance-Network-479666938752033>
-  <https://www.crowdjustice.co.uk/case/david-clapson>  <http://www.taxpayersagainstpoverty.org.uk>
-  <http://blacktrianglecampaign.org>