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Julian Rutter, 45, claims ESA

'My name is Julian Rutter, I was diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer.

'I've been claiming ESA since August 2010. We use ESA payments to help with additional heating and electricity costs and a special diet.

'Under the new proposals I wouldn't be able to claim as my partner is in full-time employment and so not only would there be a financial burden there would be increased stress.

'I don't feel that a year is sufficient time to return to work. Me personally it's been more than a year in between operations. I've paid my NI and now I'm feeling like I've been let down by the system.'

Karen Davies, 51, claims DLA

'My name is Karen Davies and I was diagnosed with breast cancer just over a year ago.

'I was diagnosed in the February and I had my operation in the March. I was just about to start a new job which I then couldn't start, so no wages or no statutory sick pay. My nurse at the hospital put me in touch with the benefits adviser who helped me claim DLA.

'Having the extra money helped us make ends meet. If I'd had to have waited another three months I think I'd have had a nervous breakdown.'

Karen Gough, Welfare Rights Advisor

'My name's Karen and I'm the Macmillan Welfare Rights Adviser based at Bath Citizen's Advice Bureau.

'When people are diagnosed with cancer they're devastated by that diagnosis. They're thrown into an unknown whirl of hospital visits and a big black hole of the benefits system, which is extremely complex.

'I do support simplification but what I don't think is right is cost cutting at the expense of clients who are very vulnerable.'