

Welfare Reform Bill, Second Reading

Briefing for: **Those with an interest in the Welfare Reform Bill**
Purpose: **To document contributions from MPs that raised Macmillan's concerns**
Contact: **Edward Goldring, Public Affairs Assistant**
EGoldring@macmillan.org.uk
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This document summarises contributions from MPs who raised Macmillan's campaign calls in the second reading of the Welfare Reform Bill. They are listed in chronological order. All the members were briefed by Macmillan except for Steve McCabe, Mark Tami, and Yvonne Fovargue.

Contributions from MPs

- Steve McCabe (Lab): Mr McCabe said that cancer charities had warned the Government that proposals to reform Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) would penalise patients who do not recover soon enough.
- Grahame Morris (Lab): after referencing Macmillan's letter to *The Guardian* the member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer said people recovering from cancer are likely to lose their ESA after a year.
- Liam Byrne (Lab): the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions said he believes there is a case for time-limiting ESA but he proposed 2 years. Mr Byrne warned that if the Government do not address how time-limiting ESA will impact cancer patients in committee stage, then this would signal the end of 'compassionate conservatism'.

Mr Byrne put on record his thanks for all campaigning groups / charities for mobilising their members and said that if the Government continued to ignore these groups' proposals then Labour will be forced to oppose the Bill in third reading.

- Dame Anne Begg (Lab): the Chair of the Select Committee on Work and Pensions criticised the Government for publishing the Bill effectively two days before the consultation on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) ended. Ms Begg focussed on the Government's decision to time-limit ESA after one year. She said that many people who would then lose that benefit would not qualify for means-tested benefit.
- Jenny Willott (LD): the Chair of the Liberal Democrat Committee on Work and Pensions welcomed the Bill but said proposals to time-limit contributory ESA was an area of concern. She suggested the cut off should be longer than a year and flagged Macmillan's concern that this will have a devastating impact particularly if the cut-off limit is implemented retrospectively. Ms Willott also warned that extending the qualifying period for DLA would have a devastating financial impact on patients with a sudden-onset condition, such as cancer.

- Julie Elliott (Lab): Ms Elliott said time-limiting the contributory element of ESA would disadvantage cancer patients.
- Mark Tami (Lab): Mr Tami spoke passionately of his personal experience of having a child diagnosed with leukaemia. He focussed his speech solely on the Government's proposals to lengthen the qualifying period for DLA. He said the current length of three months already creates problems. Doubling the qualifying period will only make matters worse, he added. Mr Tami said the proposals take no account of the sudden-onset nature of the condition and urged the Government to think again. He beseeched the Government to listen to cancer charities as 'they are the experts'.
- Yvonne Fovargue (Lab): Ms Fovargue expressed concern about changes to ESA, but particularly about the idea of extending the qualifying period for DLA. She warned of leaving people stranded in the first six months of their disability or illness.
- Naomi Long (Alliance): Ms Long expressed similar concerns about the effect of extending the qualifying period of DLA for people with onset conditions, such as cancer. She warned the plans could push patients into poverty if Personal Independence Payment (PIP) was not available to people at their time of genuine need. Ms Long also asked the Government to consider the effects of radiotherapy, saying that it is "not as debilitating as chemotherapy, [but] can nevertheless be exhausting and preclude people from holding down work".
- Brandon Lewis (Con): Mr Lewis asked the Government to consider the 'inequality between cancer sufferers who have intravenous treatment and those who have oral treatment'.
- William Bain (Lab): Mr Bain warned that plans to double the qualifying period for PIP to six months would 'push disabled people and those who care for them further into poverty'.
- Damian Hinds (Con): Mr Hinds said the position of cancer sufferers is one area where the Bill needs extra attention.
- Stephen Timms (Lab): Mr Timms warned against time-limiting contributory ESA to one year. He said someone receiving oral chemotherapy cannot be expected to return to work in a year. Mr Timms also said that disabled people were frightened by the Government's proposals to reform DLA.

Edward Goldring
Public Affairs Assistant
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