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Latest welfare attacks: a callous move by government

PCS, the largest union in the DWP and the civil service, has called the government's latest attacks on welfare claimants callous, with thousands of ill and vulnerable people expected to be forced to search for work and lose their benefits.

PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka says:

"The government has set out in its [health and disability white paper](#) that it is seeking to ramp up its attacks on the most vulnerable people in our society, who our members provide vital services for. At a time of continued economic uncertainty, to make it more difficult to claim and then retain much-needed benefits cannot be allowed to go unchallenged.

"We urge the government to abandon its proposals to tighten the criteria used to assess people's ability to work. These proposals will force people who are too ill to work to search for jobs.

"People who are in severe pain or suffering from depression and anxiety should not be put in this position in what is another callous move by the government that is really designed more to save money in benefits payments than offer support for people with disabilities. An even more punitive regime could not only be disastrous for some of the most vulnerable in the country, but will make it even more difficult for our members to provide the supportive service they tell us they desperately want to deliver for the public.

"We are demanding that the DWP responds to the staffing crisis by increasing the current staffing levels by 30,000. This is to cover the historic shortage of staff to deliver the service that the public expect and deserve.

"In a recent survey, hundreds of members have told us how much they are struggling with workload and stress caused by chronic under-staffing. It is clear from those responses that staffing has become unacceptably low across all areas of DWP. Members from virtually all arms of DWP have shared shocking stories

about the personal impact of becoming ill due to the stress experienced as a result of the pressure of overwork.

“30,000 new staff would bring relief to members and bring staffing up to a level that would enable a decent service to be delivered in light of government policy announcements in last year’s autumn statement and the spring budget.”

ends