

Newsletter - Spring 2025



Barriers to social tariffs

Research carried out by national Citizens Advice has identified **11 key barriers** across four stages of the consumer journey: awareness, availability, eligibility, and sign-up.

To boost uptake, we recommend that support schemes should be designed to minimise the need for consumers to act because every step that requires consumer action will mean some miss out.

Read the full report [here](#).



Child poverty - a call to action

The Government's child poverty strategy is due to be published soon and we are calling for the 2-child limit on benefits and the benefit cap to be scrapped.

Here at Citizens Advice Somerset we understand how deep the problem of child poverty is. 40% of the 553 people we helped in the last 4 months with crisis support such as vouchers for energy top ups, clothing or food via our Help Through Winter fund were households with children.

We believe - and research data shows - that scrapping the 2-child limit and the benefit cap is the single most effective way to reduce child poverty, and we call on government to do the right thing.

Changes to Council Tax Reduction impacting disabled people

We have seen a 18% increase of people seeking advice about Council Tax during March/April 2025 compared to 2024. This follows the CTR changes that have increased council tax bills in Somerset. Many of our clients who are unable to work because of ill health have seen an increase of over £100 per month and are telling us of their fears of slipping into a negative budget and debt as a direct result. We are calling on the council to make access to their council tax hardship fund easier and to make changes to next years policy.



Proposed disability cuts

What you need to know



Over a third of PIP claimants in Somerset could be affected

There are 30,252 in receipt of PIP in Somerset.

We are deeply concerned by the government's plans to cut disability benefits will force many disabled people into poverty and hardship, and lead to deteriorating health and wellbeing.

PIP is the top benefit issue that people come to Citizens Advice Somerset. Between April 2024 to March 2025, 63% of our clients had disability or long-term ill health and we dealt with 7,311 advice issues relating to PIP.

Around a third (29%) of the people Citizens Advice helps with PIP queries have dependent children, we fear that this policy will worsen child poverty rates which is at odds with the government's stated aim of reducing child poverty.

Our concerns

The three proposed changes we are most concerned about are:

- 1 Restricting the PIP eligibility criteria for daily living. We estimate **over 13,000** people in Somerset could lose their PIP and linked benefits such as carers allowance if these changes are implemented - a reduction of £74 - £110 a week for some claimant.
- 2 Reduction to UC health (work capability) element - from £97 to £50 from April 2026 a **£203 monthly drop** in income.
- 3 Using PIP daily living as the sole gateway to UC health and work capability - this is not appropriate because PIP does not assess work capability.

We are calling for...

1. Protection for the most vulnerable by safeguarding disability benefits from cuts.
2. Transformation of support for those who can work, by reforming work coach support, providing tailored employment support, and increasing flexibility within Universal Credit to enable labour market engagement.
3. Health services to be part of the benefit assessment process, so the system plays a role in improving health, not simply monitoring it.

**Citizens Advice
Somerset**

0808 278 7842

Monday to Friday 10am-4pm

For other advice options:
citizensadvice-somerset.org.uk