

## **WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE**

### **WRITTEN SUBMISSION RECEIVED FROM JIM ARMSTRONG**

From what I have read from whistle blowers who worked for ATOS, I can agree with just about everything they say after having my assessment for ESA and I believe the Tory government haven't just given them targets to get people off benefits, they have also given Job Centres targets to get people off JSA.

My GP has had me unfit for work since early March 2015 due to a work injury, and with worker's rights been taken away from them I was paid off for being unfit for work after 8 weeks as I had only worked for the company for 10 months. I had my assessment and scored 0 points. I have now been told I must claim JSA if I want benefit, even though I am still classed as unfit by my GP to work. My injury has got worse than what it was over a month ago, but I was still found fit for work by ATOS. The decision makers work in the DWP and do not have any medical experience, so how can they also say people are fit for work who have injuries or illness?

The welfare for Scotland must be run by the Scottish Government only and not by the Tories in London. I will be glad for anyone to visit me concerning this unfair system. We all know this is how the Tory government is to make its welfare cuts, and it's us who have to suffer for it.

From the experience that I had on my assessment, it is that the whistle blowers comments are very true. There are quite a few things that the assessor has on his report about me are untrue and have been changed. From the very first page I can see that, they have me as being made redundant from my last job, where I was paid off as I was unfit to go back after 8 weeks on the sick as I drove a truck. There are quite a few other things that are either misleading or have been changed. And in the result of that I have been scored 0 points.

So with that happening I have been forced on to JSA, even though I am not fit to work. And once again I have to live on £73.10 for two weeks for the first payment, where the law says I should have £73.10 per week to live on. Every time you are moved onto a different benefit they make you live on one week's payment for the first two weeks. I have applied for an ESA MR, if that fails, it will go to an appeal where I will be put back onto ESA and will have to go through, yet again, one week's money to last me two weeks. And again if that fails put back to JSA and have another one week's money to last me two weeks. I don't know how they expect us to get by when they keep doing that, as you fall way behind on your bills and debt. And it is also affecting my health and state of mind in general. Some one is going to either have their injuries or illness made worse by being falsely told they are fit for work. They don't even go to your GP or other medical experts to ask them about your condition as they will have to pay for it.

I have been unfit for work for just over three months due to a work injury, and have been told that my injury is now worse than it was a month ago. The welfare system needs to be brought to Scotland as soon as possible with proper people doing the assessments who will give us a fair assessment and given the benefit if we need it.

Whereas the Tories have given ATOS a target that they must reach or go beyond, the Job Centre have been given their targets too, for getting people off JSA.

Just a follow up from my ESA assessment. I now have to go to court to try to get ESA. And with the stress of trying to get ESA, PIP and the Industrial injury benefit (which I was told I was getting of which I have not got yet) I have now had a mini stroke.

I do think now that all the talking should stop and action be taken. How ill do we have to get to be awarded benefit that we are entitled to? Emails going to The Tory Government go unanswered or ignored.

My ESA was to go to court appeal but I now have to redo it from scratch to include the mini stroke that I have had, which is due to all the stress with being messed about and not receiving benefits that I am clearly entitled to and is now going to take another few months to see if I qualify this time.

My PIP MR has been sitting with decisions makers at DWP since CAB done it about 3 weeks ago and this can take from 8 - 11 weeks to decide. I know for a fact they do not contact your GP or hospital doctors for any reports.

My Industrial Injuries Benefit assessment report was withheld for about 3 weeks by ATOS before it went back to the DWP, the decision maker got it last Thursday, where they should have had it by a few days after the assessment. I was told that it will now take from 8 - 11 weeks to decide.

Something really needs to be done about this. Anytime an email is sent to the Tory Government it goes ignored and unanswered. I have been living on £73.10 per week since early May and been put back and forth from ESA to JSA and now back to ESA with another assessment to be done. I lose one week's benefit each time I am moved back and forward and I think it is a total disgrace that the DWP decision maker is not even medically qualified to make any decision and when any assessments are being carried out there are no doctors present.

Surely now the Scottish Government must be able to get to grips with this, as I said with all the stress I have now had what looks like on top of my work injury is a mini stroke. How ill do we need to get till we are given benefits that we are entitled to?