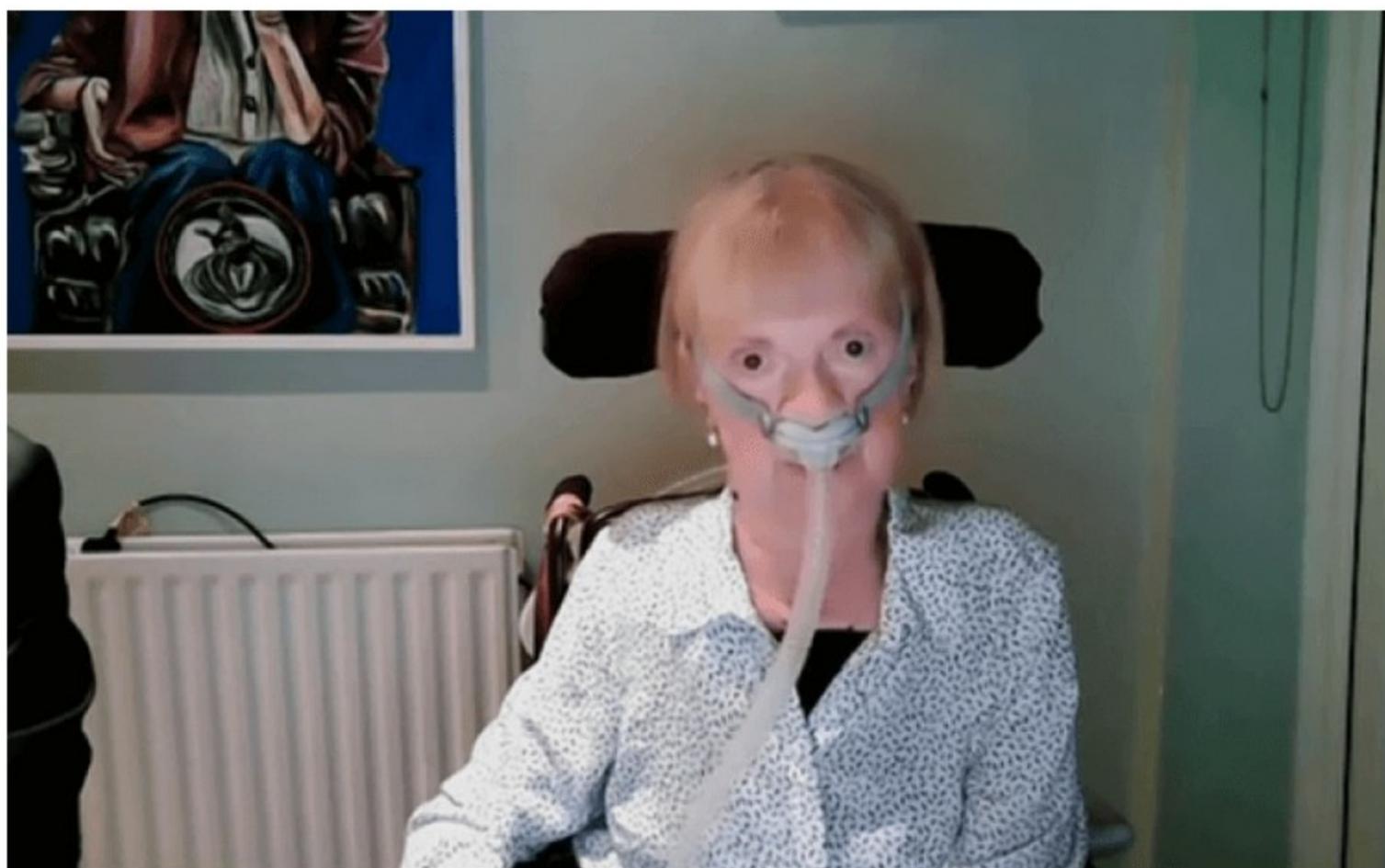


You are here: [Home](#) / [Independent Living](#) / [Government's 'criminal' plans for care charging 'will crush disabled people under debts'](#)



Government's 'criminal' plans for care charging 'will crush disabled people under debts'

By John Pring on 28th April 2022

Category: [Independent Living](#)



Devastated disabled campaigners have vowed to continue their fight against care charges, after parliament ignored their concerns and passed a government bill that will fail to protect most working-age disabled people from the “catastrophic” costs of their care.

The House of Lords this week voted against* the latest attempt to persuade ministers to change their health and care bill so that no-one in England under the age of 40 would have to pay for their care and support.

The Labour amendment would also have made further changes to “regressive” government reforms which the party says will “strongly favour the better off and would bring almost nothing to the worst off”.

The reforms will introduce an “extortionate” lifetime cap of £86,000 on how much anyone pays for social care, but it will not count financial contributions made by local authorities.

Labour’s health and social care spokesperson Baroness [Margaret] Wheeler said this week that “even the government’s own impact assessment admits that only 10 per cent of working-age disabled adult care users will benefit, that one in five older people will not see the benefits of the cap, and that poorer care users are much more likely to die before they reach the cap than others with the same care needs”.

The crossbench disabled peer Baroness [Jane] Campbell (*pictured*), who has led parliamentary attempts to ease the burden of care charges on working-age disabled people, told Disability News Service yesterday (Wednesday) that the proposals in the bill were “criminal” and “will continue to push disabled people of all ages into greater poverty and dependency”.

She said the new legislation will provide a situation for working-age disabled people that will be “so much worse than that which I experienced in my younger life”.

She **had told fellow peers**: “If the government’s proposals go through tonight, young disabled people will never participate in society as equal citizens, and those totally reliant on benefits will suffer even more financially.”

She said evidence showed that investing in social care to support disabled people “improves their health, enhances their independence and reduces demand on welfare benefits”.

And she said that without government action, disabled people would “be simply crushed by their rising debts”.

Baroness Campbell said: "Four million disabled people in the UK are living in poverty and are particularly hard hit by the rising cost of living.

"Without some easing, they will remain trapped in poverty."

The disabled Liberal Democrat peer Baroness [Sal] Brinton said: "How many more times must we say that it is still a disgrace that younger adults with disabilities – who we know are more likely to be asset- and savings-poor, likely to need care and support for much longer, and so will accrue much higher levels of costs than the elderly – will use the same arrangements as older people?

"Those older people will use personal care for much less time and will have had decades of income- and asset-building behind them.

"The proposals from the government are just not fit for purpose and must be reviewed for this group of younger adults in particular."

The former Tory pensions minister Baroness [Ros] Altmann said she would not vote against the government but could not support its proposals.

She said: "I put on record that I agree with everything that has been said about the government's changes to the social care cap.

"I believe that the measures are regressive... they may be better than the current system, but they are not a solution and are not satisfactory.

"We will end up having to revisit the support for social care."

The junior health and social care minister Lord Kamall insisted that the government's plans were "fair and affordable", were "designed to end the pain of unpredictable care costs by capping the amount anyone would need to pay at £86,000" and would be a "vast improvement" on the existing system.

He said that a pilot scheme would allow the government to "tweak the system to address any shortcomings".

And he said the Labour amendment would have led to "fundamental unfairness" and made the reforms "unaffordable" and would have forced the government to make "savings" elsewhere.

After the debate, Baroness Campbell paid tribute to the disabled people's organisation (DPO) Inclusion London and the disability charity Mencap, which "brilliantly pulled out all the stops" to lobby peers over the reforms.

But she said that other DPOs and disability charities “must do more” if charging is ever to be “seriously challenged” and must “be far more vocal on the issue with parliamentarians and produce much better campaign material”.

She said: “It’s up to all the campaigning organisations to demonstrate the evidence that charging for social care support is counter-productive, whereas investment reaps rewards in health, personal independence, financial productivity and general well-being.”

She now plans to concentrate on her work as a member of the Lords adult social care committee, which is [holding an inquiry into adult social care](#).

She said: “I’m really hoping that organisations and individuals experienced in this world will send in some good evidence of what works and what doesn’t and back it up with serious data.”

Svetlana Kotova, director of campaigns and justice for [Inclusion London](#), said: “We are extremely disappointed that the government pushed through its reforms, ignoring so many voices, including the voices of disabled people.

“Those reforms will not protect the vast majority of disabled people from catastrophic care costs; moreover, many will have to live for years trapped in poverty, choosing between heating and eating while paying for care.

“With the rising cost of living, the problem will only grow.

“The reforms will not bring extra money to the system, so while paying for care many of us will continue experiencing cuts to support and fewer opportunities to have choice, control and independence.

“Social care charging is a tax on disability and we will not give up our fight against it.

“We are calling on all disabled people to join our campaign to [Scrap Care Charges](#).”

**The motion was lost by 196 votes to 160*