

City of York Council Task and Finish Group Proposal 1 May 2025

Corporate Services, Climate Change & Scrutiny Management
Committee

Preparing for proposed changes to long-term sickness and disability benefits

Members: To be confirmed

1. Summary and Rationale

In March 2025 the Government set out a range of proposals which could restrict eligibility for, and reduce the value of, a range of long-term sickness and disability benefits. Some proposals are subject to consultation and therefore may change, whilst others are set to be enacted through legislation. Any agreed changes are not due to come into effect before April 2026.

At a Full Council meeting on 27 March 2025 a motion was passed which included the following resolution: *“To request the relevant Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review via a Task and Finish Group, when detailed Government proposals on disability and long-term sickness benefits are known in order to identify likely impacts on the demand for support from the council and its local partners.”*

2. Aims and Objectives

It is proposed that the Task & Finish Group seeks to:

- Acquire a detailed understanding of the scope of the proposed changes and the likely direct and indirect impacts
- Establish the number of York residents likely to be affected by the changes and in what ways (and including those currently eligible who are not taking up all the benefits they are / will be entitled to) if the changes are implemented as currently proposed
- Identify what additional financial or other support affected / eligible residents may seek to access from the council and partners
- Identify how affected / eligible residents can best be supported to access help, such as applying for other benefits for which they may be eligible
- Establish whether capacity exists to meet a potential increase in demand for services or support
- Make recommendations as to how the council and partners can most effectively allocate resources to support affected / eligible residents

3. Methods

There will need to be some initial desk-based research to ensure that members of the Task & Finish Group are familiar with the details of the Government proposals and the range of financial and other support that is

currently available through the council and partners, as well as awareness levels and take up rates.

This will likely be followed by interviews with officers and external partners to better understand current provision, and awareness levels, and to get their insights into likely future demand. There will need to be engagement with residents likely to be directly or indirectly affected, and careful thought will need to be given as to how best to go about this.

4. Impact on Resources

- Member time and commitment
- Officer and partner time will be required
- Scrutiny Officer / Democracy Officer time will be essential to support the group's work
- Given the significant public interest there is likely to be a need to organise public information-gathering or engagement sessions

5. Proposed Timescale

- The information-gathering phase will aim to be completed by October 2025
- A draft report will aim to be completed by December 2025 and shared for review as appropriate.
- The aim will be for a report to be considered at the meeting of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee in January 2026