

PFG PRIORITIES:

SOCIAL PROTECTION

➤ Recommendations

We recommend actions to:

- to protect the most vulnerable from the adverse impact of welfare reform, particularly mindful of the impact on people with disabilities and women, and the barriers experienced by minority ethnic communities (including asylum seekers and refugees);
- to identify/commit to specific measures which will mitigate the adverse impact of welfare reform, or any alternate policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

➤ Accessing social protection

The Commission has highlighted the need to protect the most vulnerable from the adverse impact of welfare reform. We have, for example, raised concerns about the potential impact of welfare reform proposals on people with disabilities and women.

We have called for steps to identify and commit to specific measures which will mitigate the adverse impact of welfare reform on the promotion of equality of opportunity, or any alternate policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity. We note recent proposals designed to mitigate the impact of some aspects of the welfare reform proposals³.

In addition, while many of the top priorities for older people are income related, older people are also shown not to fully access benefits and take up programmes.

Further, minority ethnic communities, including asylum seekers and refugees, can also experience barriers to accessing social protection and services.

We recommend that, as part of a broader Refugee Integration Strategy, the Executive takes action to address the problems experienced by asylum seekers during transition from one form of public support to another; ensures that asylum seekers receive appropriate support from arrival until voluntary departure or compulsory removal from the UK; and assesses the barriers faced by asylum seekers and refugees in accessing benefits, including the accessibility of services.

3 E.Evason (2016) *Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group Report*.

Read more: www.equalityni.org/WelfareReform

