

£345 million cut for over 200,000 people with mental health conditions under this Government – Debbie Abrahams

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A new Freedom of Information response published today by the Department of Work and Pensions shows that over 200,000 people with mental health conditions will have their income slashed by Conservative cuts to Employment and Support Allowance introduced in April this year.

This data flies directly in the face of the Prime Minister's commitment to end the "burning injustice" of the treatment of people with mental health conditions.

With the cut to Employment and Support Allowance Work Related Activity Group amounting to a £1,500 reduction per person, these new figures show that over £345 million will be taken from the pockets of people with mental health conditions.

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary said:

"These cuts to people with mental health conditions just go to show that you cannot trust a word the Tories say.

"They have boasted about offering 'parity of esteem' to mental and physical health. In reality this just means equal austerity for all.

"Labour is committed to reversing the Conservatives' pernicious cuts to Employment and Support Allowance, as well as the cuts to Personal Independence Payments introduced by emergency legislation in March also affecting people with chronic mental health conditions.

"We want to transform the social security system so that it is there for anyone of us in our time of need."

[Press release: Innovative flood defence engineering on show at Leeds Waterfront Festival](#)

Visitors to this year's Leeds Waterfront Festival will get the chance to see the innovative technology being used to reduce the risk of flooding to the city.

The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme project team will be on hand at the event on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June, to explain what work has been done for phase 1 of the scheme in the city centre.

A model of a moveable weir will be demonstrated at the event, which is a replica of those installed in the River Aire at Crown Point next to Knightsway Bridge. The moveable weirs used for the project can be lowered in flood conditions to reduce river levels and the threat of flooding.

The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme team will be hosting a stand at Armouries Way, Leeds, LS10 1JP (next to Leeds Dock) between the hours of 10am to 4pm, Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June.

The first phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, aims to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Aire and Hol Beck for residents and businesses in the city centre. The scheme also includes flood risk reduction at Woodlesford.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

This year's Leeds Waterfront Festival promises to be a great event for people of all ages. With the first phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme nearly finished, visitors to the festival will be able to get a unique insight into the technology involved through the virtual reality experience and the moveable weir to see how the system works to reduce the risk of flooding in the city centre. It is a simple but very clever approach and we look forward to seeing lots of people taking the chance to find out more about it as they enjoy the festival.

Rosa Foster, Strategic Partnerships & Projects Manager at the Environment Agency said:

This event is a great opportunity to demonstrate the moveable weirs before our work in the city centre comes to completion. This is the first time that moveable weirs are being used in the UK for a flood risk reduction scheme and we're excited to show everyone at this year's festival what's been achieved.

Visitors to the event will also get the chance to try out the virtual reality area, and wear headsets to view 360 degree footage from the construction phase of the project and see what it's like to work inside a cofferdam in the river. A cofferdam is a dry working area created in the river by driving in sheet piling. The last cofferdam is now in place while the final moveable weir is constructed.

The event will also see the launch of the 'Cones on the Waterfront' children's book written by Chris Madeley, a waterfront safety book following a group of cones characters as they navigate potential waterway hazards. The story includes waterway construction areas, and was written based on the work of the flood risk reduction scheme being built in Leeds.

Copies of the book, sponsored by Leeds Scheme contractors BAM Nuttall, will be available in exchange for a charitable donation for the Leeds Children's Charity. The author will also be there to sign copies of the book. There will also be live performances throughout the weekend event to explain the story behind the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The site works for Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme commenced in January 2015 and are scheduled to be completed this coming September. It is one of the largest river flood risk reduction schemes in the country which when complete will provide an increased level of protection from flooding from the River Aire and Hol Beck for residents and businesses in the city centre. The scheme also includes defences at Woodlesford.

The project team is currently working on options for Phase 2 of the scheme, which will adopt a catchment-wide approach meaning the entire River Aire catchment area will be considered to help reduce flood risk in Leeds. Consultation on potential options is due to be carried out from September.

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[Mali and the Sahel: EU strengthens its action in support of secu](#)

Today, the Council adopted a decision to support the **regionalisation of EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in the Sahel region**, namely EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUTM Mali.

The Council decision allows for the establishment of a **regional coordination cell** based within one of the EU civilian missions, EUCAP Sahel Mali. The regional coordination cell include **internal security and defence experts in G5 Sahel countries**, deployed in Mali but also in EU delegations in other G5 Sahel countries, namely Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.

In a first phase, the regional coordination cell will conduct an assessment of G5 Sahel countries' security and defence needs and gaps with a view to the development of a CSDP regional implementation plan that will make recommendations for any subsequent phase. It will also facilitate the **organisation of training courses** by the EU CSDP Missions in the Sahel for G5 Sahel countries security and defence trainees.

The objectives of reinforcing a regional approach in the EU work in the region is to support **cross-border cooperation in the Sahel** and regional cooperation structures, and to enhance national capacities of the G5 Sahel countries.

The EU supports the efforts the G5 Sahel countries and will work together against terrorism and any other threat to security and peace. On 19 June, the Council adopted conclusions on Mali and the Sahel which, in particular, strongly condemn the terrorist attack of 18 June in Bamako (Mali). The conclusions recall that the EU has a **strong integrated approach towards achieving stabilisation of the region**, including a full range of relevant instruments in the field of diplomacy, long-term development cooperation, support to human rights, stabilisation efforts, resilience building, humanitarian assistance, migration management and security, including CSDP missions.

[Joint Statement on World Refugee Day 2017](#)

*On the occasion of World Refugee Day, Frans **Timmermans**, First Vice President, Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Neven **Mimica**, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs, and Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, made the following statement:*

“As we mark 60 years of European unity, let us not forget that only a few generations ago many of us in Europe were refugees too. With that same human desire to escape conflict and violence, but also to rebuild our lives, and seek a safer future in freedom.

Today around the world more than 65 million people are forced to leave their homes due to conflicts and violence, natural disasters or the very real consequences of climate change. These are 65 million lives, 65 million different stories. And we support them, within and beyond our borders.

As the leading global aid donor, the EU is providing humanitarian assistance and long-term support to refugees and internally displaced people all over the world. We work closely with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and international partners, and we are contributing to the development of the UN Global compact on Refugees.

Our support reaches those displaced by conflicts in countries from Colombia to Afghanistan, from Iraq to Yemen, from Somalia to South Sudan and Libya. The European Union has mobilised almost €10 billion to support people who have fled the war in Syria. EU assistance provides them with access to education, health care and basic needs. Through this support, the EU gives a lifeline to millions of Syrians inside the country and across the region, while we have also put in place longer-term projects focussed on social

inclusion and gender equality.

Along the migratory routes, we are working with urgency to save people's lives. We are fighting the smuggling networks, and are conducting search and rescue operations at sea, with the support of the European Border and Coast Guard and EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia. These efforts help to save thousands of lives every month.

When we think of refugees, we should never forget where they come from: many have fled conflict and terror; others were born in displacement and know only the life of being a refugee. The most vulnerable of all are children – and the European Union provides millions of them with education, healthcare and protection.

In 2016, EU Member States have granted protection to more than 700,000 asylum seekers. In the European Union we are committed to providing a safe haven for those in need of protection, abiding by the Geneva Convention. This is why we need to reach, without delay, an agreement on the reform of the Common European Asylum System based on the principles of responsibility and solidarity.

While improving the living conditions of refugees in Europe, we are working together with our Member States on establishing more legal and safe pathways in order to replace dangerous and irregular smuggling routes. More than 16,400 people in need of international protection have already been resettled to the European Union since July 2015 and the EU is on track to reach its commitment of 22,504 by September 2017. Beyond that, the European Commission has proposed an EU Resettlement Framework for the future, and is hoping that Member States will move forward on this in an ambitious way.

This is a challenge that neither a single Member State nor the European Union can face alone: global action by the international community is needed. Only by sharing this responsibility can we uphold the safety, dignity and human rights of refugees, and give not only a shelter but most of all, a chance for a future to those who need it most. It is a moral duty, and it is also the best investment we can make in our own security and stability.”