



Dr Elliott Johnson, a Vice Chancellor's Fellow in Public Policy at Northumbria, was among the subject experts to receive an invitation to join a roundtable discussion with the Minister for Social Security and Disability.

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Public policy researcher among experts invited to join roundtable

A Northumbria University academic who studies the health and social impacts of work and welfare systems, especially in relation to disabled people, was invited to take part in a roundtable discussion with the Minister for Social Security and Disability, Sir Stephen Timms.

[Dr Elliott Johnson](#), a Vice Chancellor's Fellow in Public Policy at Northumbria, was among the subject experts to receive an invitation to join the meeting,

held last week at the Department for Work and Pensions headquarters in London, to discuss Government plans to support more disabled people into work, including through reforms to the health and disability benefits system.

As announced in the Autumn Budget, the Government plans to set out reforms to health and disability benefits in 2025 with a stated aim of ensuring the system supports people who can work to remain in or start employment, in a way that is fair and fiscally sustainable.

For Dr Johnson, who works within Northumbria's Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing, his participation in the roundtable followed a visit to the House of Commons in October with economist and Senior Research Fellow in Public Policy, [Dr Howard Reed](#), to provide a pre-budget briefing to MPs.

Dr Johnson explained: "After the Global Financial Crisis, austerity, Brexit, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, it's crucial that we see the introduction of system which improves the day-to-day economic circumstances of the whole population, particularly disabled people, through effective public spending investment that targets the social, economic and physical determinants of health at the earliest opportunity."



Dr Elliott Johnson

Understanding health impact, economic feasibility, and public acceptability

as part of the development of evidence-based public policy is at the heart of Dr Johnson's research. As a member of the [Common Sense Policy Group](#) (CSPG) at Northumbria, he has played a leading role in the development of a blueprint for policy reform which aims to bring an end to poverty and inequality in Britain. [Act Now: A vision for a better future and a new social contract](#) takes inspiration from the [Beveridge Report](#), which provided a recovery plan for post-war Britain. *Act Now* was co-authored by CSPG members and published as a book in advance of the General Election.

A core area of research focus for Dr Johnson, which is also featured in *Act Now*, is the examination of the public health case for a [Basic Income](#) – a regular and unconditional payment from government to cover the basic needs of all citizens.

“As part of the charity [Basic Income Research Group](#), I'm currently engaging with [Disability Rights UK](#) to understand how a Basic Income Plus could work best for disabled people in practice. My colleagues and I believe that a Basic Income Plus, with supplements for disability and additional needs, is key to improving support for those who need it most,” Dr Johnson added. “Our research suggests that even a scheme featuring modest regular payments would reduce poverty and inequality to their lowest rates since the late 1970s. In the short term, much can be done by minimising stress, bureaucracy and disincentives for claimants, and instead providing security and certainty for the future.”

[Dr Joanne Atkinson](#), Head of Department for Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University, said: “As a society, we need to care for the most vulnerable people and Dr Elliott Johnson's work shows us how we can deliver social policy in an innovative and impactful way. He is recognised as a leading disability researcher with a track record of impacting national debates through work such as [The Activity Trap](#), a report examining fear among disabled people of losing disability benefits, such as Personal Independence Payment, as a result of being seen to be more active. This, and his work on *Act Now*, is reflected in his invitation to advise Government on this socially and economically critical area of disability welfare reform.”

Discover more [here](#) about research within the department which aims to challenge inequalities across education, social care and health, and develop the next generation of research-informed professionals.

Northumbria University is dedicated to reducing health and social inequalities, contributing to the regional and national workforce and improving social, economic and health outcomes for the most marginalised in society. Through its new [Centre for Health and Social Equity, known as CHASE](#), researchers will be delivering world-leading health and social equity research and creating innovative, evidence-based policies and data-driven solutions to bring impactful change across the region, the UK and globally.

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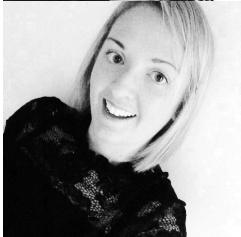


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