

## **Glasgow Centre for Population Health statement on the DWP consultation**

January 2017

The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) highlights the potential impact of the proposed jobcentre closures on widening, even further, the inequalities in health experienced by vulnerable groups in the areas earmarked for jobcentre closures.

The GCPH cites evidence of existing inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups in terms of ill-health and disability, and high child poverty rates.

Some examples are:

- Almost a quarter of working-age adults in the city report having a disability.
- The child poverty rate for Calton and Bridgeton (where one of the closures is planned) is 7<sup>th</sup> highest of all Glasgow neighbourhoods.

Closure of the Castlemilk jobcentre, where almost 40% of children are living in poverty, will result in service users having to travel to Newlands (where the child poverty rate is 11%). This move is contrary to the recommendations of the Scottish Government Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities that public services that support people should be available in areas with the highest need<sup>1</sup>.

One of the main issues is the narrowing of access to vital statutory support and social protection which is likely to increase the risk of sanctions, as well as a proposed shift towards digital services. The highest levels of digital exclusion in Scotland are found in Glasgow neighbourhoods, some of which fall within proposed jobcentre closure areas. In more deprived areas of Glasgow, fewer than half of households have internet access.

The GCPH highlights the importance of maintaining anchor organisations to make communities more resilient, particularly in this time of economic and political uncertainty.

The GCPH feels it is important to have information on the rationale for the proposed site closures in the form of data on footfall and use at every jobcentre in Glasgow to better understand the basis on which these decisions are being made.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government. *Briefing paper on health inequalities*.  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/06/09160103/2>