

Timms Review of the PIP Assessment

Terms of Reference

This government is committed to ensuring that Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a non-means tested cash benefit which is there for people, now and into the future. While we are acting now, via the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill, to make sure the system is sustainable to support generations to come, we are committed to doing this in the context of holistic reform. That is why we are also launching a wider review of the PIP assessment as a whole, to make sure it is fair and fit for the future in a changing world and helps support disabled people to achieve better health, higher living standards and greater independence.

Rationale for the review

PIP was first introduced in 2013, to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for adults. It is now over a decade since the assessment criteria were designed and much has changed during that time. While there have been two independent reviews of the PIP assessment in 2014 and 2016, these focussed on the quality and consistency of decision making and the claims process. The assessment itself has never been fully reviewed.

Since PIP was introduced, there have been shifting trends in long-term health conditions and disability, as well as changes in wider society and the workplace. Close to 10 million working age people are disabled (23%), and this number has grown by nearly 3 million since 2013/14. There have been greater increases in the prevalence of disability among young people and a rise in mental health conditions.

Alongside this, PIP claims have grown very considerably in recent years. In 2019, there were 2 million working age people in receipt of PIP. This number grew by 50% in the following five years, and is set to more than double from 2 to over 4 million people by the end of the decade. More people are living with a disability, but the increase in the number in receipt of disability benefits is double the rate of increasing prevalence among working-age adults in England and Wales. Increases in claims have led to a doubling of spending on PIP, from £11 billion in 2019/20 to £22 billion for working age claimants last year (with spending forecast to rise to over £30 billion a year by 2029/30).

To ensure the sustainability of the safety net in this context, the Government is legislating to target support towards those with greater needs, via a requirement that all new claimants to PIP must score a minimum of four points in one Daily Living activity. We have also announced that the PIP assessment will become the single gateway for health-related and disability benefits when the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) is scrapped, placing additional importance on this element of the

system. We will be setting out plans for how access to the health element of UC will work when the WCA is removed as part of the forthcoming White Paper.

Against this backdrop it is critical that the public and most importantly disabled people themselves, can trust in the fairness and fitness of the PIP assessment.

We are therefore undertaking this wider review with the aim of making sure that the assessment fairly reflects the reality of the impact of people's conditions in the modern world. PIP is intended to improve people's independence. Given the insight assessments provide into the challenges people face, we also want to ensure that Government is not missing opportunities to connect people to a system of active support that helps them manage and adapt to their long-term condition or disability in ways that expand their functioning and improve their independence. It will generate recommendations and proposals for change, for consideration by Ministers and Parliament.

Scope

The review will be led by the Minister for Social Security and Disability, Sir Stephen Timms, and be coproduced with disabled people, along with the organisations that represent them, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. The review will ultimately report to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for final decisions.

The review will include consideration of:

- The role of the PIP assessment – as the future single gateway to health-related and disability benefits – in enabling disabled people and those with long term conditions to live independently and fully participate in society.
- The assessment criteria – including activities, descriptors and associated points – to consider whether these effectively capture the impact of long-term health conditions and disability in the modern world. The review will consider both the Daily Living and Mobility elements of the PIP assessment.
- Whether any other evidence should be considered alongside the functional assessment to fairly reflect the impact of living with a long-term health condition or disability, including related to an individual's personal circumstances and environment.
- How the PIP assessment could provide fair access to the right support at the right level across the benefits system.
- What role the assessment could and should play in unlocking wider support to better achieve higher living standards and greater independence.

Principles

The review will be underpinned by several key principles:

- The goal of the review is to ensure that the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future – reflecting the reality of people's conditions and their goals and

ambitions – taking account of changes in society since it was first devised and introduced.

- The review will ensure that PIP remains a crucial part of the health-related and disability benefits system, providing non-means-tested support, because anyone can be impacted by a long-term condition or disability.
- The review will be co-produced with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. We will engage widely over the summer to design the process for the work of the review, including to ensure that expertise from a range of different perspectives is drawn upon.
- The review will take account of other reforms announced in the Pathways to Work Green Paper, in particular the work underway on how access to the health element of UC will operate, via the PIP assessment, when the WCA is removed. The Government will set out its approach to this issue in the forthcoming White Paper.
- The review will take account of related work underway across the wider health and social care system and other linked benefits and services, including the independent commission into adult social care chaired by Baroness Louise Casey.
- The purpose of the review is to ensure the assessment is fair and fit for the future rather than to generate proposals for further savings.

Because of our commitment to coproduce, the precise timeline for the review will be determined over the summer, based on the design work with stakeholders to ensure the review can fulfil its aims. But we expect it to conclude by Autumn 2026. The review will report to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, so that the Government can then make any decisions flowing from it. These could take the form of changes to primary legislation, secondary legislation, as well as a range of potential non-legislative actions.