The potential options for reforming personal independence payment (PIP) in England and Wales are spelt out in a green paper, Modernising Support for Independent Living.

Although disability benefits are devolved to Scotland these proposals have implications for PIP’s Scottish replacement, Adult Disability Payments (ADP), and also access to the health-related component of Universal Credit.

Among the options for reform being suggested by the DWP are –

- Retaining the current PIP assessment, but tightening the eligibility criteria making it more difficult to qualify for support.

- Lengthening the time that the impact of an impairment or health condition has been present from 3 months, and increasing the length of time this impact is likely to last from 9 months.

- Replacing how social security contributes to a person’s disability-related costs – currently done through PIP’s cash payments – with other means of support. This could be by –
- Offering a disabled person a list of aids to choose from
- Providing them with vouchers to contribute towards the cost of disability aids;
- forcing them to claim back the cost of equipment by providing receipts to DWP;
- offering a one-off grant for major purchases
- replacing PIP cash payments with improved access to support such as health care, social care or respite services.
- imposing a duty on local authorities and the NHS to “improve services and support for individuals”, such as equipment, personal assistance, health, respite services etc. in place of all or part of PIP.

Although the PIP reform speech by Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, stressed the increase in the number of successful PIP claims from people with mental health issues the consultation itself does not place a huge emphasis on mental health. Though they may be amongst those badly affected by any changes to the eligibility criteria and also by any lengthening of the qualification periods.

Disabled people living in Scotland might be saying “So what?” to all of these proposals as control over our own disability benefits is devolved to Scottish Government but in doing so they would be mistaken.

If entitlement criteria are tightened in England and Wales, and/or qualification periods or if one-off vouchers/grants for disability aids replace ongoing payments then far fewer people in England and Wales will be receiving PIP. If that happens the amount of cash the Scottish Government gets from the UK to pay for its own disability benefits will be substantially reduced (potentially by hundreds of millions of pounds).

Secondly the UK Government are also planning to make entitlement to PIP the only way that disabled people and those with long-term health conditions can qualify for the health related component of Universal Credit. Those who don’t qualify for it will receive less help from Universal Credit and be subject to the full sanctions regime with no relaxation because they are not fit for work.

That too would have consequences in Scotland. That’s because the Scottish Government has to pay the UK Government for any additional spending on benefits it incurs because the our social security system is more generous.

Taken together this double financial “whammy” might force Scottish Government into making it more difficult for disabled people to qualify for ADP. That’s why Inclusion Scotland is opposing these proposals even though, at first sight, they don’t seem to affect Scotland. However, we need your support in doing so.
Make A Difference - Get Involved!

Steps you could take to oppose these proposals:


2. Write to your MP expressing your concerns about how these proposals could deprive disabled people of the financial help that they desperately need and deserve. You can find out who your MP is and how to contact them here - [https://www.theyworkforyou.com/](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/)

3. Write to your MSPs expressing your concerns about the knock on impact on Scottish disability benefits. You have both a local MSP and several elected via the regional list. You can find out who they are and how to contact them here - [https://www.theyworkforyou.com/msp/](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/msp/)

4. Join Inclusion Scotland and add your voice to those of hundreds of other disabled people and their local organisations across Scotland. More details here - [https://inclusionscotland.org/become-involved](https://inclusionscotland.org/become-involved)

5. If you’re already an Inclusion Scotland member or if you become one get involved in our Poverty & Social Security Lived Experience Group to help shape our policy on benefits and the cost of living crisis. To find out more contact – info@inclusionscotland.org

Contact details: Visit our website: inclusionscotland.org
Twitter: twitter.com/InclusionScot
Facebook: facebook.com/InclusionScotland
Instagram: instagram.com/inclusionscotland