

BBS Current response to Green Paper

You can view our replies below which we have inserted to the (5) questions – and we will alter and amend those answers according to the volume and nature of replies we receive FROM YOU!

Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Chapter 2: Reforming the structure of the health and disability benefits system

1.What further steps could the Department for Work and Pensions take to make sure the benefit system supports people to try work without the worry that it may affect their benefit entitlement?

To encourage more people to try work without fearing benefit loss, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) could implement several changes, including improved information and support, and better collaboration with employers. A key aspect is to remove barriers to trying work, such as by easing Work Capability Assessment (WCA) requirements and providing a grace period before reassessments.

Many individuals with disabilities and long-term health conditions are experiencing significant anxiety and fear regarding potential Personal Independence Payment (PIP) benefit cuts, particularly with upcoming policy changes. These concerns stem from the potential loss of financial support, which is often crucial for covering daily living expenses, healthcare costs, and essential equipment. Furthermore, losing PIP can trigger the loss of other vital benefits and support, further exacerbating financial hardship and impacting overall well-being.

2.What support do you think we could provide for those who will lose their Personal Independence Payment entitlement as a result of a new additional requirement to score at least four points on one daily living activity?

To mitigate the impact of losing PIP entitlement due to the new "four-point" rule for the daily living component, a multi-faceted approach involving financial, practical, and emotional support is crucial. This includes enhanced access to welfare benefits advice, tailored employment support, and increased provision of social care and community support services.

The primary fear surrounding potential changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is the potential loss of benefits due to revised scoring criteria for the daily living component. Specifically, the government plans to introduce a rule requiring claimants to score at least 4 points in at least one daily living activity to qualify for the daily living component. This change, scheduled for November 2026, could disqualify individuals who currently qualify based on a cumulative score across multiple activities.

3.How could we improve the experience of the health and care system for people who are claiming Personal Independence Payment who would lose entitlement?

To improve the experience for those losing Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and relying on health and care services, the government should provide targeted financial support, ensure fair assessments, and offer comprehensive support services. This includes dedicated funding for assistance dogs, access to practical and emotional support during assessments, and better coordination between PIP, Universal Credit, and local health and social care services.

Many disabled people and disability advocacy groups are strongly opposed to replacing cash benefits like Personal Independence Payment (PIP) with vouchers, one off grant payments etc. They view this as a harmful and restrictive measure that would limit their independence, choice, and access to essential goods and services.

4. How could we introduce a new Unemployment Insurance, how long should it last for and what support should be provided during this time to support people to adjust to changes in their life and get back into work?

A new Unemployment Insurance Benefit is proposed from 2028 which encompasses contributory ESA and contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance. We do not yet know what that looks like but it will be time-limited (see A new Unemployment Insurance Benefit). DWP is consulting on the new Unemployment Insurance Benefit.

A new unemployment insurance program could face several drawbacks, including potential disincentives to work, the possibility of extended unemployment spells, and challenges in implementation and administration. Specifically, more generous benefits might reduce the urgency for job seekers to find new employment, leading to longer unemployment durations. Furthermore, the program's design, especially if it involves decreased benefits over time or a limited duration, could create hardships for those facing prolonged unemployment.

Several types of illnesses can prevent a return to work, including serious or chronic physical and mental health conditions, and certain infectious diseases.

Even with a disability or health condition, employees may require reasonable adjustments to their work environment to enable them to return, such as modified duties or flexible hours.

5. What practical steps could we take to improve our current approach to safeguarding people who use our services?

The government's current approach to safeguarding disabled people involves a multi-faceted strategy focused on inclusion, accessibility, and support for independent living. This includes legislation like the Equality Act 2010, the Disability Action Plan, and initiatives aimed at improving services, information, and participation for disabled people.

To enhance safeguarding practices, focus on proactive measures like comprehensive staff training, clear policy implementation, robust risk management, and fostering a culture of open communication and reporting. Additionally, actively involve service users in the process, provide accessible support systems, and ensure consistent monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding efforts.

Good safeguarding for disabled people facing benefit-related anxieties includes ensuring their rights are respected, providing clear and accessible information, and offering support from trusted individuals and organizations. It also involves promoting empowerment, proportionality, and accountability within the benefits system itself.