

AGENDA ITEM 18 – AMENDED BY THE SIGNATORIES OF THE MOTION

This Council notes with serious concern:

(i) That the Government is planning to review and potentially reform Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and long-term sickness benefits through an upcoming Green Paper.

(ii) That PIP is a non-means-tested benefit, designed to support people with the additional and unavoidable costs arising from disability or chronic ill health. It is not linked to employment status and provides vital support for transport, care, mobility, equipment, and daily living.

(iii) That Government briefings and national media reports suggest potential measures including freezing PIP payments from 2026 and tightening eligibility criteria, including more frequent reassessments.

(iv) That such proposals would represent a significant regression in social policy and risk inflicting harm on millions of disabled and long-term sick individuals, including many vulnerable residents within Kirklees.

(v) That since the submission of this motion, the Government has stated that no final decisions have been made, and that it intends to consult on possible reforms through a Green Paper. However, serious risks remain regarding the future scope, eligibility and cash value of PIP.

This Council further notes:

(i) That the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recently confirmed, in response to a Freedom of Information request by the Benefits and Work campaign group, that 1.3 million people could lose their PIP entitlement under the Government's proposed changes.

(ii) That recent research by Health Equity North conducted by academics from the universities of Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield, along with the Northern Health Science Alliance has modelled the financial impact of these cuts at a constituency level.

(iii) That the research shows areas in the North East and North West would be among the hardest hit, with 92 of the 100 worst-affected constituencies facing the steepest losses.

(iv) That the same study estimates that the Huddersfield constituency alone stands to lose £17 million per year, which will have devastating human

consequences for local residents, as well as a seriously negative impact on the local economy and public services, including the NHS.

(v) That one of the report's authors, Professor Clare Bambra, warned: "Those areas that will lose most from this proposal were already decimated by austerity, COVID and the cost of living crisis. They have worse health than other regions and their local services and economies are already struggling. Losses of this magnitude risk worsening the situation for everyone living in these deprived constituencies. Parliament cannot risk rushing proposals like these through without fully considering how they affect local areas that are already struggling."

(vi) That the Resolution Foundation has also warned that freezing PIP payments would result in a real-terms income loss for approximately four million people, with 70% living in low-to middle income households.

(vii) That these changes would place significant new pressures on already-stretched local authorities, including Kirklees, in areas such as social care, housing, crisis support, public health, and mental health services.

This Council believes:

(i) That any reduction, restriction, or revaluation of PIP or long-term sickness benefits is wrong in principle, unjustified in evidence, and unacceptable in a just society.

(ii) That this Council has a responsibility to stand up for disabled and chronically ill residents and to oppose policies that risk increasing hardship, dependency, and poverty in our communities.

(iii) That the wellbeing, independence, and dignity of all residents, regardless of health or disability status, must be defended and upheld.

This Council therefore resolves:

1. To formally oppose any Government proposals to reduce, freeze, restrict, or downgrade entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or long-term sickness benefits.
2. To write immediately to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing this Council's strong opposition and calling for all planned cuts or regressive reforms to be withdrawn.
3. To write to all Kirklees MPs urging them to oppose any such measures in Parliament and to publicly support the rights of disabled constituents.

4. To publish this position through the Council's communication channels and work in collaboration with local disability groups, charities, and advocacy organisations to raise awareness of the potential impact of the Government's proposals.

5. To request that the Council's scrutiny function assesses the likely implications of the proposed changes on Kirklees services and residents once detailed Government proposals are published, ensuring that contingency planning is in place.

6. To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions seeking formal assurances that:

- no existing claimants will lose their PIP support during the consultation period;
- any proposed changes are subject to full Equality Impact Assessments and engagement with disabled people's organisations; and
- local authorities will be properly resourced to deal with any increased pressures on care and support services.