

AGENDA ITEM 15

Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Cuts to Disability and Long Term Sickness Benefits

Motion as Amended by Signatories

To consider the following Motion submitted in the names of Councillors Scott, H Zaman, Masood Ahmed, Hussain, Moore, A Zaman and Anwar;

“This Council notes with serious concern:

To delete the following text

- (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.*

And replace with the following

“That the Government has passed the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill, implementing parts of the earlier Pathways to Work Green Paper published in March 2025.

That the original Green Paper proposed wide-ranging reforms to PIP and long-term sickness benefits, including:

- stricter eligibility thresholds (such as the “4 points in one activity” test),
- reductions in support for people with mental health conditions,
- and a shift toward linking disability benefits more closely with work and health treatment.

That while some of these proposals were dropped following public and parliamentary opposition (notably the new PIP scoring rule), others remain in force or are being implemented in stages — particularly those related to Universal Credit, the Work Capability Assessment, and health-related conditionality.

That the Government has confirmed existing PIP claimants will not be immediately affected, but that new claimants from late 2026 onwards may face stricter rules depending on further guidance and secondary legislation.

That changes to Universal Credit include plans to remove or reduce the “limited capability for work-related activity” element for new claimants, especially under-22s — potentially leaving thousands of vulnerable people with significantly less support.”

This Council further notes:

To delete the following text

- (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.*

And replace with the following

That campaigners and expert organisations including Citizens Advice, Health Equity North, and the Resolution Foundation have warned of substantial financial losses and increased hardship under the reforms.

That research by Health Equity North estimates Huddersfield constituency alone could lose £17 million annually under the original package of proposals — with lasting consequences for residents, the local economy, and essential services.

That many of the worst-affected areas are in the North, with longstanding structural inequalities, poorer health outcomes, and stretched public services — including Kirklees.

That local councils like Kirklees are likely to face additional pressures on:

- Adult social care
- Housing and homelessness services
- Welfare support, advice, and crisis payments
- Mental health and public health provision
- without any clear guarantees of increased funding or capacity.

This Council believes:

To delete the following text

- (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.*

And replace with the following

That the reforms represent a regressive shift in disability and sickness support, undermining the rights, dignity and independence of people with long-term conditions.

That there is insufficient evidence that the reforms will lead to improved outcomes for disabled people — and growing concern they may increase poverty, reduce access to support, and worsen health inequalities.

That Kirklees has a duty to speak out against national policies that will directly harm its most vulnerable residents and shift costs onto already overstretched local services.

This Council therefore resolves:

1. To formally oppose

To delete the following words '*...any Government proposals to reduce, freeze, restrict, or downgrade entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or long-term sickness benefits.*'

And replace with '*the changes to Universal Credit and disability benefits as enacted under the Universal Credit and PIP Bill, and any future secondary legislation that restricts access to PIP, particularly for people with mental health conditions or fluctuating needs.*'

2. To write immediately to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer

To delete the following words '*...expressing this Council's strong opposition and calling for all planned cuts or regressive reforms to be withdrawn.*'

And replace with '*to (i) express the Council's objection to the enacted reforms (ii) call for a halt to any further erosion of disability-related entitlements (iii) and request a cross-party review of the long-term adequacy of disability and sickness benefits.*

3. To write to all Kirklees MPs urging them to

To delete the following words '*...oppose any such measures in Parliament and to publicly support the rights of disabled constituents.*'

And replace with '*oppose any additional regressive measures in forthcoming legislation, speak up for disabled and chronically ill constituents and support amendments or repeal of the most damaging elements of the reforms.*'

4. To publish

To delete the following words '*...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.*'

And replace with '*...a public statement outlining the Council's position, and commit to working with local charities, advocacy groups, carers and disabled residents to monitor and raise awareness of the changes.*'

5. To request that

To delete the following words '*...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.*'

And replace with '*...the Overview and Scrutiny function undertakes a full impact review of the reforms on local service demand, financial risk to the Council and lived experience of Kirklees residents — particularly in relation to care, health, and income security.*'

Add the following

6. To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions seeking formal assurances that:
 - existing PIP claimants will not be reassessed under any new rules without full consultation and safeguarding;
 - all further benefit changes will be subject to published Equality Impact

Assessments;

- and that local authorities will receive sufficient funding to manage additional demand and hardship resulting from national reforms.