Reforming PIP: Briefing for parliamentarians

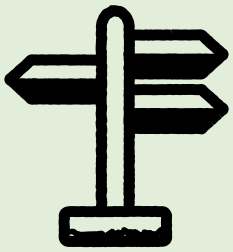
This briefing supports parliamentarians to engage with complex debates about reforming Personal Independence Payment (PIP). As a national charity, Turn2us offers support to navigate the social security system through our **information tools**.

Drawing on evidence and lived experience, this briefing explains what PIP is, the issues people face when accessing support and what practical solutions are needed.



Registered office: 33-39 Bowling Green Lane, London, EC1R 0BJ. VAT number 872571796. Turn2us is the operating name of Elizabeth Finn Care, a registered charity (207812/SC040987) and a company limited by guarantee (515297) registered in England and Wales. Copyright © 2026 Turn2us.

Why is PIP being reformed?



The government has said that PIP is no longer fit for purpose and needs significant reform so it can be fair and fit for the future. The Timms Review is looking to address the entire PIP assessment process, including its role, the application form and the assessment and appeals processes.

It is important to recognise there has been a rise in ill health and disability, which has been driven by several structural factors. This includes insecure housing, long NHS waiting lists, low pay, rising living costs, and a lack of accessible, secure work.

PIP supports people to manage their health, stay independent, and have the financial security they need to live with dignity, making it an essential part of our social security system.

Upcoming reforms present an important opportunity not only to improve the mechanics of PIP, but to reset the values that underpin it.

What is PIP?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is additional income for people who have care or mobility needs as a result of a disability.

There are two parts:

- The daily living component
- The mobility component

PIP is not means tested and the amount you receive depends on how many points you score in the PIP test for daily living and for mobility.

Who is PIP for?

You may be entitled to PIP if:

- You are aged between 16 and the State Pension age in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- You have a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability
- You have difficulty doing everyday tasks or getting around
- You expect the difficulties to last for at least a year

DWP statistics published in 2026 show that in England and Wales there are 3.9 million people claiming PIP[1].



[1]DWP (2026). Personal Independence Payment: Official Statistics to October 2025 - GOV.UK

How should PIP support people?

PIP should help people meet the extra costs of disability and participate in everyday life. The charity Scope found that disabled households need an extra £1,095 each month on average, just to have the same standard of living as non-disabled households[2]. This can include extra transport costs, care, practical support for cooking or cleaning, higher bills or help with attending activities, appointments or volunteering.

Our Co-Production Partners with lived experience of the social security system tell us that PIP payments mean they have more **freedom, autonomy** and **flexibility**. One of the strengths of PIP is that it is a cash payment which partners say allows them to use PIP in a way that works for them.

The assessment process for PIP should provide timely financial support through a fair, accurate and person-centred approach. It should treat people with dignity and respect, offer greater choice in how assessments are carried out, and ensure the process is transparent at every stage.

Is PIP related to work or other benefits?

PIP is not related to your ability to work. It is there to support people with the extra costs of living due to a disability or long-term health condition.

If you're unable to work due to ill-health or disability, you may be entitled to Universal Credit Health. This money is intended to support living costs, recognising that being seriously ill or disabled increases the risk of falling into poverty because it limits how much you can earn through work.

Although you can claim both, PIP and Universal Credit Health have different purposes and are claimed separately.

PIP can also provide access to other support known as passported benefits; it may make you eligible for:

- **Council Tax reductions**
- **Leisure discounts**
- **Further Motability support**
- **A Blue Badge scheme**
- **Carer benefits**
- **Exemption from the benefit cap**
- **Other local government schemes**



Our Co-Production Partners tell us how PIP has improved their lives

"I have the power to make decisions on the way that I want to live my life"

“I use it for social activities like membership classes in community groups as well”

“buying prepped food so that I don't have to try and cook from scratch, which can be extremely painful for me to do”

“I can use my time and energy for other things which don't cause me pain”

“I have been able to get taxis if I need to get a taxi”

[2]Scope (2025). Disability price tag. Disability Price Tag 2025 | Disability charity Scope UK

What challenges do people experience when accessing PIP?

The application process is long and complex

Initially, you are required to apply for PIP through an application form. Turn2us research has found that 82% of PIP claimants found it difficult to complete[3]. The application form is over 50 pages long and after completing and submitting it, it can take several weeks before being invited to an assessment.

Many of our Co-Production Partners find the PIP application process extremely complex, creating uncertainty about whether they are entitled to support.

The Turn2us PIP Helper tool, developed alongside people with health conditions and disabilities who have claimed PIP, aims to guide people through the application process and prepare people for what to expect. Without it, the complexity of the form can leave people feeling confused, ashamed or undeserving, and can make their health worse.

The assessment process lacks dignity and worsens people's health

You are then required to have an assessment either by telephone or in person. 64% of current PIP claimants say that the application process made their mental health worse[4].

As part of the assessment, you must communicate what you are like on your worst day and outline the most debilitating aspects of your condition. Therefore, the assessment often feels combative, with claimants feeling tested or as if the assessor is trying to catch them out, rather than an environment where they feel supported to explain how their condition affects their ability to manage everyday activities.

The design and delivery of the assessment do not fully recognise the complexity of living with multiple illnesses or disabilities, or the different ways these affect claimants. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to disability, and assessments should reflect this reality.

It is important that assessors consistently understand the interaction between ill-health and disability as many of our Co-Production Partners find decisions are subjective.

The assessment process often leads to unsuccessful claims with only half of claims initially successful, yet over 65% of these decisions are overturned at tribunal[5]. Furthermore, losing access to PIP following a reassessment can create a cliff edge moment and have a devastating impact on passported support e.g. carers benefits.

64% of current PIP claimants say that the application process made their mental health worse

Our Co-Production Partners who have engaged with the PIP process say

"Stop constantly trying to villainise people who can't work and constantly trying to suggest that people who can't work are a burden"

"There's a complete lack of compassion, lack of empathy and they are always trying to fit you into a box"

"Life gets very complex. And I don't really feel that PIP really acknowledges that that well"

"It's a fight and it shouldn't be a fight. It's an entitlement. You are entitled to claim this"

"For those that have been though the process, its such a horrible thing to sit and do"

[3]Turn2us/Bristol University (2025) Stigma in the System: Experiences of the UK social security system [4]Ibid. [5]DWP (2026). Tribunal Statistics Quarterly: January to March 2026 - GOV.UK

The narrative surrounding PIP deepens stigma

The focus on the rise of health and disability benefits take-up and spending in political and media discourse undermines people's trust in the PIP system, fuels public disapproval and deepens the shame people have when they access it. Turn2us research found only 6% of the public think the way politicians speak about welfare benefit claimants increases trust in the social security system[6].

A fair and effective social security system is built on inclusive, compassionate language that promotes dignity. Policies, language and framing should be rooted in fairness, offering opportunities to rebuild and thrive, rather than focusing on punitive measures and negative stereotypes.

Evidence shows that talking about social security as an investment in the future increases support for the system[7] which helps people to access the support they need, avoiding higher downstream costs in healthcare and crisis support.

When we create a shift from blame to support, we can foster trust and shore up people's faith in public services. This will lay the foundations for a system that is approachable, respectful, and sustainable.

PIP should be seen as part of a fair and effective social security system. It is an opportunity to promote the value and importance of support designed to enable disabled people to lead their lives.



[6]YouGov (2025). Nationally representative polling done by YouGov on behalf of Turn2us. Surveyed 18-19 February. [7]Together for social security (2026). How to grow support for the social security system.

What do we want to see?



Reform to PIP must reduce stigma, rebuild trust and ensure that disabled people are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

Turn2us is calling for the government to:

1. **Reduce unnecessary reassessments and improve the quality of assessments where they are needed**
   - Learnings from Social Security Scotland and the Adult Disability Payment evidence how the PIP process can treat people with greater dignity and respect, better reflect individual needs and circumstances, and reduce unnecessary stress for claimants.

2. **Improve and increase training for PIP assessors so they better understand the complex interactions between disability and ill-health**
   - This would support assessors to make more nuanced and accurate decisions, reducing rigid or prescriptive judgements and helping to rebuild fairness and trust in the system.

3. **Create a positive and accurate narrative about PIP and the wider social security system**
   - Use the Turn2us '**Talking about Social Security' guide** to promote the value of our social security system and avoid common misconceptions.

4. **Work with us to co-produce a charter for social security**
   - Turn2us is calling on the UK Government to develop a principle-based charter for social security, co-produced with people with lived-experience of financial insecurity.

5. **Introduce an Essentials Guarantee by increasing the rate of income replacement benefits**
   - This would ensure sick and disabled people have enough income to meet basic living costs, so PIP can be used for its intended purpose: to cover the extra costs of disability and supporting people to live independently.

public.affairs@turn2us.org.uk

People featured in images without name captions are part of the Turn2us image library but are not Turn2us staff, service users or co-production partners.
Registered office: 33-39 Bowling Green Lane, London, EC1R 0BJ. VAT number 872571796. Turn2us is the operating name of Elizabeth Finn Care, a registered charity (207812/SC040987) and a company limited by guarantee (515297) registered in England and Wales. Copyright © 2026 Turn2us.