



North East Scotland Advice Forum is a local network for people working in advice services to share information and experiences. The Forum meets quarterly throughout the year.

March 2025 Newsletter

If you would like an article included in the next bulletin, please contact admin@nesaf.co.uk

www.nesaf.co.uk/contact/' and a link to previous bulletins: 'Previous Benefit Bulletins can be viewed and downloaded at nesaf.co.uk/info/nesaf-benefit-bulletins/'."/>

Sign up to receive latest news and information at www.nesaf.co.uk/contact/

Previous Benefit Bulletins can be viewed and downloaded at nesaf.co.uk/info/nesaf-benefit-bulletins/

Benefit calculator

Our benefits calculator will help you find out what benefits you can claim. The calculator is free to use, and the details you provide are anonymous.

Before you start, make sure you have information about your savings, income, pensions and existing benefits (for you and your partner).

If you run out of time, you can save your calculation and come back to it later, and pick up right where you left off.

- ⇒ *Should take 10 minutes to complete*
- ⇒ *Please complete all fields with an asterisk(*)*



[START >>>](#)

What do the government's disability benefits proposals mean?

The government published its Pathways to Work green paper proposals for reforming disability benefits on 18 March.

We would encourage everyone to take part in the [public consultation](#) by 30 June 2025. This is an opportunity to feedback on some of the proposals.

Not all of the proposals are being consulted on. Some will need legislation to come into effect. This means the government will have to [bring a bill \(proposed law\) to parliament](#). It will be debated, potentially amended and will need approval from both Houses of Parliament, then Royal Assent to become law.

It may help to know:

- they are proposals
- nothing will change immediately – a [white paper](#) will follow later in the year with more details
- you can take part in the public consultation
- you can [contact your MP](#) and help shape the parliamentary debate

There are further details farther on in this newsletter.



[Download](#) CPAG's response to Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper



**INITIAL STATEMENT
IN RESPONSE TO:**

**Pathways to Work:
Reforming Benefits and
Support to Get Britain
Working Green Paper**

Open consultation: Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper

This consultation seeks views on the approaches government should consider around reform of the health and disability benefits system and employment support.

This consultation closes at 11:59pm on 30 June 2025

Consultation description

This consultation sets out plans and proposals to reform health and disability benefits and employment support. This Green Paper is an important staging post on a journey of reform, building on the vision and approach set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper in November 2024. It sets out our vision, strategy and proposals for change.

We want to improve and refine our plans by consulting on certain measures as described within this paper. We are committed to putting the views and voices of disabled people and people with health conditions at the heart of everything we do.

Who the consultation is aimed at

We are keen to hear views from a wide group of people, in particular disabled people and people with health conditions and disability organisations.

This consultation applies to England, Wales and Scotland. All the proposals apply in England. Note that the proposals in the consultation will only apply to the UK Government's areas of responsibility in England, Wales and Scotland.

Public consultation events

To seek the views of disabled people and their representatives, DWP will be running a number of accessible virtual and face to face events on the consultation. More information on the details of these events and on how to register will be advertised on this page in due course.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/pathways-to-work-reforming-benefits-and-support-to-get-britain-working-green-paper

Social security benefits uprating 2025/2026

New legislation has been issued in relation to the up-rating of social security benefits for 2025/2026. The Scottish Government will bring forward corresponding provisions in respect of devolved benefits.

[SI.No.295/2025](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) is available from [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Press release Pathways to Work: Green Paper FAQs

Published 27 March 2025

We understand that many people have questions about the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper.

To help clarify what this means for you, we have published some FAQs addressing some key concerns.

https://youtu.be/G_5xDxEVcbw

When will the changes to health and disability benefits be made?

Legislation will need to be passed by Parliament before any changes can be brought into effect. We are also consulting on some of our proposed changes to health and disability benefits. The consultation will be open for at least 12 weeks from when all accessible versions are published and no changes will be made until we have reviewed all the responses. You are welcome to take part in the consultation.

www.gov.uk/government/news/pathways-to-work-green-paper-faq

Pathways to Work
Green Paper FAQs





Adult Disability Payment statistics to 31 January 2025

Key figures

- From 21 March 2022 to 31 January 2025, there were 310,155 part 1 applications and 253,415 part 2 applications received. There were 283,130 applications processed with a decision made by 31 January 2025, of which 48% were authorised, 48% were denied and 4% were withdrawn.
- The median average processing time from part 2 of the application being received for “normal rules” applications has decreased from 49 days in October 2024 to 42 days in January 2025.
- As of 31 January 2025, 433,050 people were in receipt of Adult Disability Payment. Of those, 145,090 (34%) were new applicants and 287,960 (66%) had their award transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions.
- Between 21 March 2022 and 31 January 2025, the total value of Adult Disability Payments issued was £2.9 billion.
- As of 31 January 2025 142,555 reviews had been completed of which 3,540 resulted in a decrease in award, 29,595 resulted in an increase in award and 109,425 resulted in no change in award.

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Adult-Disability-Payment-to-31-January-2025-Publication.pdf

Pension Age Disability Payment statistics to 31 January 2025

Key Findings

- In Scotland, from 21 October 2024 to 31 January 2025:
- 1,390 part 1 applications were registered for Pension Age Disability Payment. During that period, 860 part 2 applications were received.
- 915 applications were processed with a decision. Of these 78% were authorised, 9% were denied and 13% were withdrawn.
- £602,925 was issued to clients in the pilot areas of Argyll and Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands.

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Pension-Age-Disability-Payment-statistics-to-31-January-2025-Publication_2025-03-26-102615.pdf

Child Disability Payment: statistics to 31 December 2024

Key figures

- From 26 July 2021 to 31 December 2024, 73,135 part 1 applications were received for Child Disability Payment. In total, 65,190 applications were processed with a decision made by 31 December 2024. Of these, 75% were authorised, 22% were denied and 4% were withdrawn.
- The median average processing time has increased from 56 working days in September 2024 to 73 working days in December 2024. The proportion of applications processed in 141 or more working days decreased from 5% in September 2024 to 4% in December 2024.
- Since launch, over £1.0 billion has been paid to children and young people. As of 31 December 2024, it is estimated that 87,475 children and young people were in receipt of Child Disability Payment.
- The most common category of condition was Mental and Behavioural disorders, accounting for 74% of the caseload in December 2024. • As of 31 December 2024, 19,395 Child Disability Payment reviews have been completed. Of these 11,645 resulted in no change in award, 7,215 resulted in an increase in award, and 540 resulted in a decrease in award.

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Child-Disability-Payment-statistics-to-31-December-2024-publication.pdf



Community Link Workers in Scotland

March 20, 2025 SPICe



This blog explores the role of community link workers in Scotland. It begins by outlining what community link workers are, how many are currently working in Scotland, and how the service is funded. It then summarises the impact of community link workers in Scotland so far, and the challenges facing the service.

What are community link workers?

Community link workers, sometimes known as [social prescribing](#) link workers, are [generalist social practitioners](#). They are usually based within GP practices in socioeconomically deprived areas. They work with people to address some of the [broader issues affecting their health and wellbeing](#), such as poverty, debt, housing issues, social isolation, and abuse.

Community link workers take [a person-centred approach](#) to supporting patients, and can spend more time discussing the issues a person is experiencing than a standard GP appointment can offer, over multiple appointments if needed. The support offered by community link workers depends on the needs of the patient, and may include connecting people with local physical activity groups, homelessness charities, substance use support services, financial support organisations, arts-based interventions, or social connectedness initiatives.

spice-spotlight.scot/2025/03/20/community-link-workers-in-scotland/

Disability Benefit Reform – implications for Scotland

March 18, 2025 SPICe



The [UK Government has announced reforms](#) to health and disability benefits.

This blog looks at how the proposals for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) could affect Scotland. PIP was devolved to the Scottish Parliament in 2020 and is being replaced over time by the Adult Disability Payment. As a devolved benefit, the Scottish Government receives funding which, broadly speaking, should meet the costs of a directly equivalent benefit in Scotland.

spice-spotlight.scot/2025/03/18/disability-benefit-reform-implications-for-scotland/

Over 326,000 children currently supported by Scottish Child Payment

Date published 5 March 2025

[New figures](#), show that as of 31 December 2024, the families of 326,080 children under 16 years of age were receiving vital support from [Scottish Child Payment](#).

Scottish Child Payment is unique to Scotland and provides financial support for families, helping with the costs of caring for a child. It is a weekly payment, currently worth £26.70, for every eligible child that a parent or carer looks after who's under 16 years of age.

Scottish Child Payment is one of the five family payments parents and carers may be eligible for along with [Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods](#).



Pension Age Disability Payment extends to more areas

A new benefit for pensioners is now open for applications in 13 more local authority areas in Scotland. [Pension Age Disability Payment](#) has been extended to Aberdeenshire, Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, Moray, Na h-Eileanan Siar (Western Isles), Perth and Kinross and Stirling. The payment first launched in five local authority areas on 21 October 2024 and will be available throughout Scotland from 22 April this year.

Pension Age Disability Payment is for disabled people or those with a long-term health condition that means they need help looking after themselves or supervision to stay safe. It is available to people of State Pension age and is also available to pensioners who are terminally ill.

It is not means-tested and is worth between £290 and £434 a month depending on the needs of the person who gets it (increasing to between £295 and £441 a month from 1 April 2025).

Pension Age Disability Payment is replacing Attendance Allowance from the Department for Work and Pensions in Scotland. We have started transferring the awards of 169,000 people in Scotland who currently receive Attendance Allowance to the new benefit.

People currently getting Attendance Allowance do not need to take any action; the transfer will happen automatically in phases throughout 2025. Everyone will continue to receive their payments on time and in the right amount.

More information about Pension Age Disability Payment including who is eligible and how to apply can be found at: www.mygov.scot/pensiondisability

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/news-events/news/pension-age-disability-payment-opens-for-applications-in-13-local-authority-areas

Delivering free school meals

Published 11 March 2025

Proposed regulations to support next phase of rollout.

Families could get quicker access to free school meals under proposed new regulations laid in Parliament. If agreed by MSPs, the regulations would see Social Security Scotland given new powers, allowing them to share Scottish Child Payment data with local authorities. This would allow councils to ensure eligible pupils receive their free school meals.

The latest phase of the free school meals programme will include all pupils in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment in Primaries 6 to 7 and S1-S3 in eight local authority areas.

Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth said:

“Free school meals are a crucial element of the Scottish Government’s ambition to eradicate child poverty, and the provision is currently available to over 273,000 pupils across Scotland, saving families who take up the offer around £400 per child per year.

“The next phase of the rollout will significantly build upon this, with an additional 25,000 pupils being able to benefit from this vital provision. Through further support for data sharing, local authorities will be able to more quickly identify those eligible for this next phase.

“That is why we have proposed these changes to streamline the process to help more families and remove any administrative burden for local authorities. I would encourage members of the Committee to back these proposals to ensure more families can easily access the support they need.”

BACKGROUND

The Education, Children and Young People will vote on the regulations on Wednesday 2 April. If approved, they will come into effect from 19 May 2025.

www.gov.scot/news/delivering-free-school-meals



Consultation: Mitigation of the two-child cap

Overview

This consultation seeks views on the Scottish Government's proposed approach to mitigate the two-child cap policy applied by the UK Government. The two-child cap restricts support through Universal Credit (UC) to the first two children in a family except in some limited circumstances. The Scottish Government is committed to developing systems to alleviate the impact of the two-child cap in Scotland in 2026. The consultation paper sets out more fully the proposed approach which intends to deliver mitigation payments at pace and in line with the Scottish social security principles.

The Scottish Government is proposing to mitigate the two-child cap in Scotland by making a flat-rate payment equal to the UC child element for each third and subsequent child in Scotland.

Mitigation of the two-child cap is not a straightforward task. It will require significant policy and technical work to develop and implement an appropriate solution. This includes co-operation from the UK Government around systems development, data sharing and legislation. The technical delivery of the mitigation must carefully consider risks, issues and dependencies such as data sharing with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The Social Security Programme has commenced the 'discovery' phase of the project, which will impact delivery options, including joint work with DWP to agree, build and test additional data sharing functions and create a joint delivery plan.

The responses to this consultation, alongside the outputs of that discovery process, will inform the Scottish Government's approach to drafting the legislation that will be necessary to deliver the payments.

[Read the consultation paper](#). The consultation paper contains full background information for this consultation. You may find it useful to read or refer to while responding.

Give us your views [Begin consultation](#)

New Scottish adult disability living allowance (SADLA) decision making guidance

New guidance has been issued by Social Security Scotland, providing official interpretation of legislation for decision makers including in relation to case transfers from DLA and general entitlement conditions

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/guidance-resources/guidance/decision-making-guide

Over £4,900 a year for student carers

Date published 20 March 2025

Carers in full and part-time education could be entitled to over £4,900 a year in financial support from Social Security Scotland.

It is estimated that there are over 30,000 students at college or university in Scotland providing unpaid care for a family member, friend or neighbour.

Together, [Carer Support Payment](#) and [Carer's Allowance Supplement](#) could provide over £4,900 a year to unpaid carers.

Students aged 16, 17 or 18 may be able to get [Young Carer Grant](#) if they aren't eligible for Carer Support Payment.





UPDATE – Disability benefit reforms: implications for the Scottish Budget

March 26, 2025

Today Rachel Reeves provided more detail on the forecast savings from the [changes to Personal Independence Payment \(PIP\) eligibility announced on 18 March](#). This blog updates [last week's SPICe blog](#) on the potential impact in Scotland.

If PIP spending in England and Wales falls, then the funding from the UK Government to the Scottish Government also falls by a similar proportion through a lower 'Block Grant Adjustment' (BGA) for PIP. The Scottish Government's equivalent to PIP is known as Adult Disability Payment (ADP).

We've now got some more detail on the expected reductions in PIP.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has forecast that PIP spend in England and Wales will be £4.1 billion lower in 2029-30. ([OBR table 3.4](#)).

Last week, the [Fraser of Allander Institute](#) said that, as a rough rule of thumb, for every £1 billion reduction in UK government spending on PIP, there would be a £115 million reduction in the PIP BGA. This would suggest a reduction in the PIP BGA of £470 million in 2029-30.

Even before these reforms, the Scottish Government was forecast to spend £381 million more on ADP in 2029-30 than it received through the PIP BGA due mainly to differences in the approach to assessment. Assuming no changes to the current Scottish Government policy for ADP, the UK Government's PIP reforms could increase that additional spending requirement over time, increasing by £470 million in 2029-30 to a gap of around £850 million.

There will also be an impact on the BGA for Carer's Allowance. The OBR forecast that the PIP reforms will result in around 400,000 fewer people receiving PIP (OBR, table 3.3). The carers of those losing PIP will also lose entitlement to Carer's Allowance. The OBR does not give details, and the impact is difficult to predict as not everyone on PIP has someone caring for them who gets Carer's Allowance. However, it is likely to result in some reduction to the BGA for Carer's Allowance. Again, if the Scottish Government continues with its current plans, this will mean the Scottish Government has to make up any shortfall in the spending forecast for the Scottish 'version' of Carer's Allowance, the Carer Support Payment.

These figures are just a rough estimate based on a spending forecast that the OBR describes as 'highly uncertain'. However, they do give an indication that there will be significant additional pressure on the Scottish Budget from the PIP reforms, if the Scottish Government sticks with current plans for the equivalent benefits. And that's before anybody suggests mitigating the cuts to Universal Credit which will apply across the UK, including in Scotland.

Other pressures on the Scottish social security budget

This is not the only pressure on the Scottish social security budget. According to the [Scottish Fiscal Commission](#), the Scottish Government is already forecast to be investing £1.5 billion above the total social security BGAs by 2029-30. That's mostly on ADP and the Scottish Child Payment.

And finally, the child poverty figures are due out tomorrow. Meeting the 2030 child poverty targets is likely to require significant additional investment. [IPPR Scotland](#) have said that:

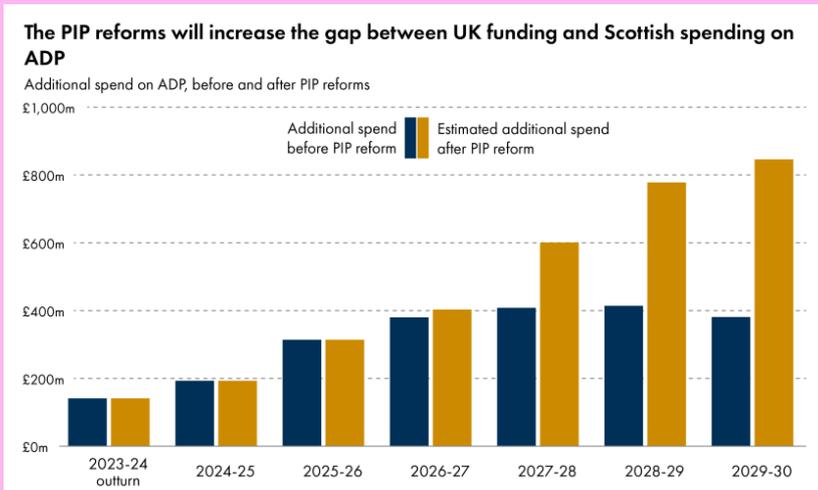
"the inescapable conclusion of our analysis is that hitting the 2030 target will be nigh on impossible without additional fiscal commitments."

The [Fraser of Allander Institute](#) came to a similar conclusion, setting out a package of, mostly social security, measures that would meet the targets, but at a cumulative cost around £4.6 to £4.9 billion.

The Scottish Government will publish its Medium Term Financial Strategy on 29 May, alongside updated Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasts. These will provide the first official estimates of social security BGAs to take account of the proposed UK welfare reforms.

It is clear that there are very significant budget pressures on the Scottish Government as it tries to meet its ambitions on social security and child poverty.

spice-spotlight.scot/2025/03/26/update-disability-benefit-reforms-implications-for-the-scottish-budget/





Report: Jumping through hoops: Reducing the complexity of the social security system for older people



The UK's social security system is a vital safety net for people in later life. Unfortunately, many older people don't receive this support, despite being eligible and in desperate need of it.

Our research highlights one of the reasons for this: the complexity of the social security system in the UK is preventing many older people from receiving all the money they are entitled to.

www.independentage.org/policy-and-research/jumping-through-hoops

Report: Cheques and imbalances: How income varies throughout the year for Universal Credit households



Income volatility can have serious consequences for low income families on Universal Credit, affecting their ability to budget and plan ahead. When earnings fluctuate from month to month, even small changes can impact household budgets and benefit awards, and the way councils handle administration and billing.

Volatile income makes it difficult to budget which means that families are at higher risk of falling into problem debt and financial difficulty. Financial instability takes up mental bandwidth and is linked to poorer physical and mental health outcomes, while increasing the poverty premium by, for example, making it harder to pay by direct debit.

In a new study, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, we show the level of income volatility faced by a subset of households receiving Universal Credit.

By following over 70,000 Universal Credit households across seven local authorities from April 2022 to March 2023, we find that:

1. Almost a third of Universal Credit households experience income volatility
2. Universal Credit dampens earnings volatility for working households, sanctions and deductions exacerbate income volatility and leave households worse off
3. Income volatility for Universal Credit recipients can impact entitlement to other benefits and eligibility for local support

policyinpractice.co.uk/publication/cheques-and-imbalances-how-income-varies-throughout-the-year-for-universal-credit-households/

Cuts to push 250,000 into poverty as living standards for the poorest under continuing assault



"The Chancellor said today that she would not do anything to put household finances in danger, yet the government's own assessment shows that their cuts to health related benefits risk pushing 250,000 people into poverty, including 50,000 children. This will harm people, deepening the hardship they already face.

www.jrf.org.uk/news/cuts-to-push-250000-into-poverty-as-living-standards-for-the-poorest-under-continuing-assault



One in three pensioners, equivalent to 4.1 million older individuals, feel less financially secure than a year ago says Age UK



Published on 24 March 2025

In a new report, Age UK warns groups of pensioners are 'still' struggling with the cost of living, with the situation worse than last year. Older disabled people, older renters and those living on low and modest incomes are most affected.

In a new report out today, [**Back to cutbacks: How older people are managing the cost of living in a time of rising energy prices**](#), Age UK warns the situation is worse than last year for all pensioners, particularly for some sub-groups including older people with a disability, older renters and those on low-to-modest incomes.

The Charity's [**new report**](#) highlights its concerns about the impact on older people of energy costs that just keep rising and the struggles older people face affording the basics, especially after the loss of the Winter Fuel Payment for many on low and modest incomes, including those with health conditions.

Full article - www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/one-in-three-pensioners-equivalent-to-4.1-million-older-individuals-feel-less-financially-secure-than-a-year-ago-says-age-uk/

Housing Systems: Combating poverty and sustaining tenancies.

Long awaited back payments of the TSDPE have now started

The Transitional SDP Element is included in a claimant's Universal Credit award where:

- they were the main claimant, or partner, on a claim for Income-Related ESA, Income Support or Income-Based JSA, and this award included a Severe Disability Premium for them, and
- they were getting this in the month before their UC award started, and
- they still met the qualifying criteria for the SDP on the first day of their UC award, and
- they were not entitled to a managed migration Transitional Element.

Following successful legal challenges, the Transitional SDP Element was introduced in January 2021 to compensate for the loss of the Severe Disability Premium. Both new and existing UC claimants received the TSDPE from this date if they met the entitlement conditions.

However, the amount of the TSDPE was challenged further and in January 2022 the High Court ruled that the amount of TSDPE that is payable should be increased where the claimant was also entitled to some other disability Premiums / Elements.

The government finally published the Regulations governing these increased TSDPE amounts to take effect from 14th February 2024. So, where a claim for UC was made on or after this date, the claimant has received a higher rate of TSDPE if they are entitled to it.

Since then we have been waiting to hear how those that missed out prior to 14th Feb 2024 would be compensated.

We have now received these details from the DWP.

Full details at www.housingsystems.co.uk/News/News-Articles/id/190



Scottish policies “are working to shift the dial on child poverty”

Published on Thu 27 Mar 2025



Interim child poverty targets missed but child poverty down 4 percentage points in Scotland whilst rising to record highs across rest of UK

Across the UK child poverty rose to a record high with 4.5 million (31%) now living in poverty. New analysis from Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) shows child poverty will rise even higher under the current UK government - to 4.8m by the end of this parliament (2029/30) - unless it takes urgent action including scrapping the two-child limit in its forthcoming child poverty strategy and stepping back from benefit cuts.

Read the full press release [HERE](#).

[Further news articles from CPAG](#)

NAWRA calls for Green Paper to be reissued with all proposals open for consultation

Published by [nawra](#) on 24/03/2025



NAWRA has written to the Secretary of State to express our extreme concern that many of the key proposals within the Green Paper – particularly those with financial implications – are not open for consultation.

Highlighting that the purpose of a Green Paper is to allow feedback from relevant organisations, and also pointing to DWP’s statement in the Paper that it is ‘putting the views and voices of disabled people and people with health conditions at the heart of everything we do’, NAWRA says it is –

‘... calling on the government to reissue the Green Paper opening up all proposals for a full consultation, and to commit to genuinely taking the views of disabled people into account when progressing its reforms.’

Read [NAWRA’s letter to the Secretary of State](#)

Problems with your energy supplier? We’re here to help

We provide free, practical advice and information on energy-related matters to the citizens of Scotland.

We can provide advice and information if you:

- Have an energy enquiry relating to your supplier (no matter how complex)
- Wish to understand your energy supplier’s complaints process
- Are experiencing any problems with your energy bills

Call 0808 196 8660 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

For full details and information visit energyadvice.scot/





Thousands of carers receiving new debt letters as review into Carer's Allowance overpayments continues

Press release 20 March 2025

- The number of carers facing overpayment debts continues to rise
- The number of people with an outstanding Carer's Allowance debt rose by over 9,000 between May 2024 and February 2025
- Carers continue to be impacted since the Government commissioned an independent review of Carer's Allowance overpayments in October 2024.

Unpaid carers are still receiving debt notices from the Department for Work and Pensions despite an ongoing review of Carer's Allowance overpayments – to assess how these have been accrued on such a vast scale.

Thousands of people caring for an ill, elderly or disabled relative or friend have been asked to repay an overpayment debt since the independent review, being led by Liz Sayce OBE, was announced by the Government in October 2024.

Between May 2024 and February 2025, the number of outstanding Carer's Allowance overpayment debts increased by over 9,000, with a staggering 143,922 people now affected. The number of carers who received new debt letters during this period is likely to be higher still – with some people appealing amounts and some opting to settle debts.

With the total number of carers living with an overpayment debt continuing to rise, charity Carers UK and 107 other organisations have written to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Liz Kendall, asking for the creation of new overpayment debts to be halted until the independent review has concluded and its recommendations are implemented.

Carer's Allowance is available if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring, is currently paid at a rate of £81.90 per week. The earnings limit for Carer's Allowance is currently £151 per week and carers who go over this limit, even by just a few pence, need to pay back 100% of their Carer's Allowance for that week.

Unpaid carers juggling part-time work and care are often not aware they have breached the earnings limit. Carers UK has found that in many cases, the DWP has not taken swift action – causing overpayments to build up into large sums. This has a devastating effect, with debts impacting entire households, including children and disabled family members.

In its letter, Carers UK has asked the Government to commit to publishing its report into Carer's Allowance overpayments in early summer, to implement the recommendations quickly and to write off existing substantial overpayments debts where carers could have been notified sooner by DWP.

www.carersuk.org/press-releases/thousands-of-carers-receiving-new-debt-letters-as-review-into-carer-s-allowance-overpayments-continues/

Welfare Green Paper: what we know and what we don't know

Work and Pension Secretary Liz Kendall made a statement to the House of Commons outlining the main areas of '[Pathways to Work](#)', the UK Government's Green Paper that has been in the rumour mill for weeks. The statement contained some well trailed announcements and some new details, although there are also still some significant gaps in our understanding.

fraserofallander.org/welfare-green-paper-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont-know/



Fraser of Allander Institute
The University of Strathclyde



What do the government's disability benefits proposals mean?

The government published its Pathways to Work green paper proposals for reforming disability benefits on 18 March. We would encourage everyone to take part in the [public consultation](#) by 30 June 2025. This is an opportunity to feedback on some of the proposals.

Not all of the proposals are being consulted on. Some will need legislation to come into effect. This means the government will have to [bring a bill \(proposed law\) to parliament](#). It will be debated, potentially amended and will need approval from both Houses of Parliament, then Royal Assent to become law.

It may help to know:

- they are proposals
- nothing will change immediately – a [white paper](#) will follow later in the year with more details
- you can take part in the public consultation
- you can [contact your MP](#) and help shape the parliamentary debate

Below is an outline of some of the main proposals – [you can read the full details in the green paper](#):

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (Needs legislation)

- proposal to tighten eligibility. Under these plans, qualifying for the **daily living component** will still require eight points or more. But you will need to score **at least four points on a single activity**. With the focus moving to those with higher needs, some people will lose their daily living award. Note that these proposals do not affect PIP's mobility element.
- The government is not consulting on this proposal, although it will **need to pass legislation** before any change can happen. This is expected in November 2026. It will apply to new claimants, and to existing claimants when they're next reviewed.
- The main reforms to PIP are not due to take effect until after April 2026, by which time it's expected that everyone on PIP in Scotland will have transferred to the Scottish 'version' of PIP, Adult Disability Payment (ADP). [The Scottish Government has ruled out similar changes to ADP](#). It is possible that these proposals may have a knock-on effect on allocated budgets to Scotland.

Universal Credit (UC) (Needs legislation)

The government will legislate to change Universal Credit payment rates during this parliament. These plans may take effect from April 2026 and mean:

- the standard allowance for Universal Credit will rise for all new and existing claimants. This amounts to £98 from April 2026 to £106 by April 2029 (according to the Spring Statement)
- new claimants of the health element of Universal Credit will receive less money from April 2026 when this falls to £50 a week (from £97). It will be held at this amount until April 2030
- existing claimants of the health element will have their top-up payment frozen from April 2026 until April 2030.

The government states in [chapter 2 of the green paper \(section 1, 131\)](#):

- they will guarantee that the UC health element entitlement will not change for those in the limited capability for work and work-related activity group (LCWRA) before April 2026 **and** after their reassessment. They will also ensure this group does not fear losing their benefit rate from working.
- they will ensure that those with the most severe, life-long health conditions, who will never be able to work, will see their incomes protected. This includes an additional premium for new claims. There will also be no future reassessment. The list of conditions has not been shared.

Work capability assessment

- The work capability assessment is **expected to be scrapped in 2028**. It means if you need an assessment for the health element of Universal Credit, you will have a PIP assessment. This proposal is not being consulted on and will require legislation before it can take effect.
- As PIP cannot be claimed in Scotland it is still unclear how this will affect UC claimants in Scotland.

New Unemployment Insurance benefit

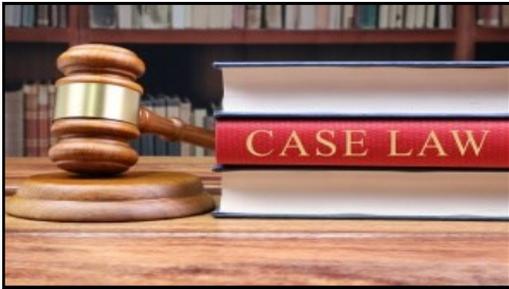
- The green paper plans to replace the Employment Support Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance with a new benefit called Unemployment Insurance. This would not require a health assessment and would be based on your National Insurance contributions. Self-employed people would also be able to access the new benefit.
- If it goes ahead, it is not expected until 2028.

[Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working green paper](#)

[Pathways to Work: Annex A: Summary of Policy Measures and Consultation Questions](#) (includes a breakdown of the proposals, whether they will be consulted on, and proposed timescales)

The [Spring Statement 2025](#) included two additional 'adjustments' to those set out in the Green Paper -

- freezing of the universal credit health element for new claimants from April 2026 instead of it rising with inflation; and
- a reduction of around £1 per week to the planned increase in the universal credit standard allowance.



Note:

While PIP case law has some relevance in Scotland, PIP is being replaced by the Adult Disability Payment (ADP), and Scottish tribunals and courts will decide how much weight to give PIP case law when interpreting ADP regulations, with some principles from case law incorporated into the ADP regulations

MN-v-Department for Communities (UC) [2025] NICom 10 Decision No: C9/24-25(UC)

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

In the case of [MN v Department for Communities \(UC\) \[2025\] NICom 10](#), the Northern Ireland Commissioner addressed the admissibility of medical evidence that was diagnosed after the original tribunal hearing. The Commissioner ruled that such evidence is admissible in appeals, emphasizing that tribunals should thoroughly consider all relevant medical records presented. This decision underscores the importance of comprehensive evaluation of medical evidence in determining entitlement to benefits.

KT-v-Department for Communities (PIP) [2025] NICom 8 Decision No: C29/24-25(PIP)

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

In [KT v Department for Communities \(PIP\) \[2025\] NICom 8](#), the Northern Ireland Social Security Commissioner examined the application of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment criteria, particularly focusing on the interpretation of the term "safely" when performing daily living activities. The case involved a claimant with hearing impairments who argued that their inability to hear alarms while washing or bathing posed a significant safety risk.

The Commissioner referred to the precedent set in [KT and SH v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \[2020\] UKUT 252 \(AAC\)](#), which established that when assessing whether an activity can be performed safely, both the likelihood of harm occurring and the severity of potential consequences must be considered. The decision emphasized that even if the probability of an adverse event, such as a fire, is low, the serious nature of the potential harm means it cannot be ignored in the assessment. This ruling underscores the importance of evaluating both the probability and potential severity of risks when determining eligibility for PIP, ensuring that claimants who face significant safety concerns receive appropriate support.

CF v Department for Communities (PIP) [2025] NICom 11

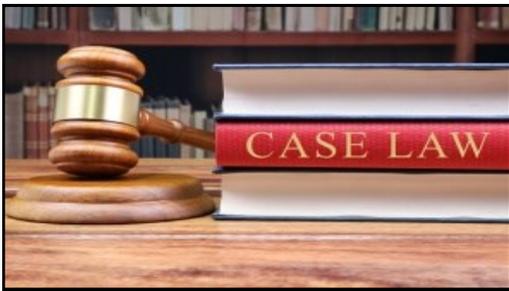
PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

In the case of [MM and BJ v. Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \(\[2016\] UKUT 490 \(AAC\)\)](#), the Upper Tribunal examined the scope of 'taking nutrition' under the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) regulations.

The appellants argued that their limited diets, resulting from digestive issues and the need for encouragement to eat adequately, were not properly considered in their PIP assessments.

The Tribunal concluded that 'taking nutrition' refers strictly to the physical and mental actions involved in eating and drinking—such as cutting food, conveying it to the mouth, chewing, and swallowing—without regard to the nutritional quality of the food consumed.

Therefore, the need for prompting to encourage eating or to take nutritional supplements does not fall within the assessment criteria for this activity under PIP.



WB v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (PIP): [2025] UKUT 070 (AAC)

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

In the case of [WB v. Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \(\[2025\] UKUT 070 \(AAC\)\)](#), the Upper Tribunal reviewed the First-tier Tribunal's decision regarding WB's Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim. WB had been awarded the standard rate for both daily living and mobility components but appealed for a higher award. The First-tier Tribunal upheld the initial decision after a notably brief 16-minute hearing.

Upon appeal, the Upper Tribunal identified several errors in the First-tier Tribunal's approach:

- **Procedural Irregularity:** The Tribunal's hearing was insufficiently thorough, spending just over four minutes on daily living activities and neglecting to question WB on several disputed activities, such as preparing food and managing toilet needs.

Inadequate Fact-Finding and Reasoning:

- **Preparing Food:** The Tribunal failed to assess which aspects of meal preparation WB could perform independently and where he required assistance, despite evidence of significant pain during such activities.
- **Engaging with Others:** The Tribunal did not evaluate WB's ability to establish relationships, an essential component of social engagement under PIP criteria.
- **Mobility Assessment:** The Tribunal overlooked the impact of WB's pain on his ability to move around, not adequately considering how pain affected his functional mobility.

Due to these shortcomings, the Upper Tribunal set aside the First-tier Tribunal's decision and remitted the case for a fresh hearing with a new panel, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and fair assessment of WB's PIP entitlement.

JA v Social Security Scotland 2025 UT 13

Procedural irregularity

In the case of [J.A. v. Social Security Scotland \(2025UT13\)](#), the Upper Tribunal for Scotland reviewed a decision by the First-tier Tribunal (FTS) concerning J.A.'s application for Adult Disability Payment.

Initially, J.A.'s application was denied, leading to an appeal filed on February 14, 2024, where J.A. designated Glasgow Welfare Rights as her representative. Subsequently, on August 13, 2024, Social Security Scotland received authorization to share information with a new representative, Ian MacCorquodale of Glasgow Disability Alliance, but failed to inform the FTS of this change.

The FTS conducted a teleconference hearing on October 2, 2024, expecting representation from Glasgow Welfare Rights. Neither J.A. nor her representative attended. Unaware of the updated representation, the tribunal proceeded in their absence and upheld the initial decision.

Upon appeal, the Upper Tribunal identified a procedural irregularity due to Social Security Scotland's failure to notify the FTS of the change in representation. Although the responsibility to inform the FTS of representation changes lies with the appellant, Social Security Scotland's usual practice was to forward such information, which did not occur in this instance. Recognizing this oversight as a failure to comply with procedural duties, the Upper Tribunal quashed the FTS's decision and remitted the case for a new hearing before a differently constituted tribunal.