



Disability Unit

About our meeting on 10 March 2025

with the Minister for Social Security and
Disability and the Disability Unit
Regional Stakeholder Network Chairs



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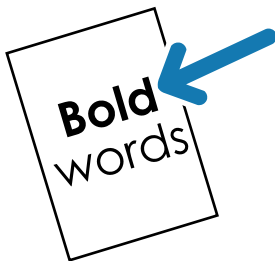
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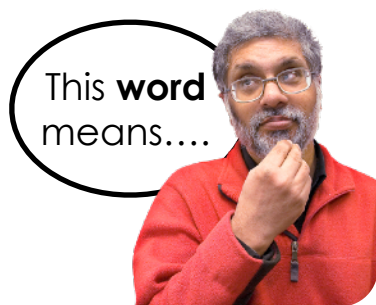
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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You can fill in a quick survey to say what you think about this Easy Read booklet: info.easy-read-online.co.uk/easy-read-feedback-survey

About this booklet



Disability Unit

This booklet is from the Disability Unit, which is part of the **Cabinet Office**.

The **Cabinet Office** is part of the government, which runs the country.

Every 3 months, there are meetings between:



- The **Chairs of the Disability Unit Regional Stakeholder Network**. We will tell you more about this on the next page.

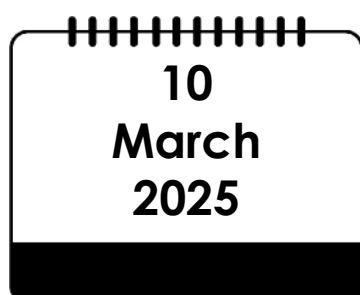
The **Chairs** are the people who run the regional networks.

and



- The **Minister for Social Security and Disability**, Right Honourable Sir Stephen Timms MP

In this booklet, we will call him **Minister Timms**.



This is a record of what happened at the meeting we had on 10 March 2025.

About the Disability Unit Regional Stakeholder Network



The **Disability Unit Regional Stakeholder Network** is a group that makes sure the government thinks about what disabled people need.



We call it the **RSN** for short.



The RSN has 9 local groups for the 9 **regions** of England.

A **region** is a part of the country, like the North West or the South East.

The local groups are made up of:



- Local disabled people.

The local groups are also made up of:



- Parents and carers of disabled people.



- Organisations that help disabled people.



Each local group has an **RSN Chair**.



The **RSN Chairs** come to the meetings with Minister Timms every 3 months.



They tell him what people in their local group think about the problems that disabled people face.

What Minister Timms said at the meeting



Minister Timms welcomed the RSN Chairs to the meeting.



He said well done to Sam, the RSN Chair for the South West.



She won an award for her charity's project that helps disabled people set up businesses for themselves.



Minister Timms thanked the RSN Chairs for the information they gave him at the last meeting on 9 December about helping disabled people to find a job.

Get Britain Working



Minister Timms told the RSN Chairs that the government is continuing its work on a plan to help more people find jobs.



The plan is called Get Britain Working. You can read the plan here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-britain-working-white-paper



The government is working with other groups to find out how to make the plan work well.



A report about what employers can do to help keep people working will be shared in Spring 2025.

Work Coaches



A **Work Coach** is someone who helps people find a job.

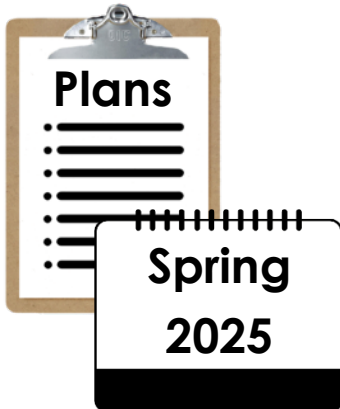


The government is getting 1000 Work Coaches to help around 65,000 sick or disabled people find work.



This will give sick or disabled people more of a chance to find a job.

Health and disability benefits



In spring 2025, the government will tell everyone about their new plans to change health and disability **benefits**.



Benefits are money from the government to help people pay for the things they need.



The government will then do a **consultation** to find out what disabled people think about the planned changes.



A **consultation** is when we give you information and then ask you to answer some questions to tell us what you think about it.

What the Regional Stakeholder Network (RSN) Chairs said about changes to benefits



Each meeting has a theme. Minister Timms asks the RSN Chairs to tell him what their groups think about the theme.

Benefits



The theme for this meeting was **changes to health and disability benefits.**



Staff from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were also at the meeting to hear from the RSN Chairs.



The RSN Chairs will send more detailed information to the Disability Unit, which will pass it on to the DWP.

What RSN East Midlands said



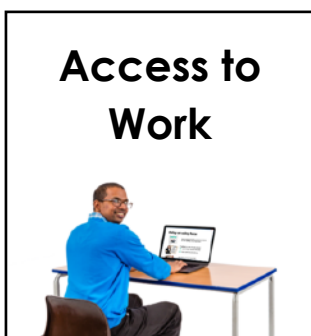
People are worried about changes to benefits.



They are worried that people might be made to go back to work and lose the support they get.



They think that people who do not know about disabilities make decisions about disabled people.



People who can work when they have support do not want to lose their **Access to Work** help.

Access to Work can give disabled people support to find or keep a job.



They are worried some people will be badly affected by being made to look for work.



Some young people with disabilities can work, but their families try to stop them because they might lose benefits.



Minister Timms said the government would share their plans for benefit changes soon.



He hoped this would make things clearer for people.



He asked the RSN Chairs to ask their members to tell the government what they think of the plans once they have been shared.

What RSN West Midlands said



People are worried about changes to benefits.



They want to make sure that a benefit called **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** is seen as support with disabilities, rather than being about work.



Some people have found applying for PIP hard.



The way that people can **appeal** against PIP decisions needs to be looked at.

An **appeal** is when you ask for a decision to be looked at again.



Some people have been moved to a different benefit called Universal Credit.



They found this stressful and felt like they were made to apply for jobs that were not suitable for them.



Many of the employers did not understand that disabled people need changes at work to support their needs.



It should be easier for people to try out different kinds of work.



Minister Timms asked the RSN Chairs to share any stories of people being forced to do jobs that were not suitable for them.

What RSN Greater London said



Some people are worried about PIP being reduced, as it can be linked to being able to work or care for someone.



They are also worried about how much things cost.



It is hard to tell the DWP about changes in people's lives that might affect how much PIP they can get.



Some people with disabilities that last their whole lives are being checked again to prove they are still disabled.



This is stressful for the person and costs the government a lot of money.



There should be a way to show you have a disability that does not change, that can be used by the government.



Some people are worried about the benefits for disabled people who are also carers.



Some carers can get **Carer's Allowance** while others cannot because they work for themselves rather than an employer.

Carer's Allowance is a benefit to support people who care for others.



Minister Timms said work is happening to stop people being paid more Carer's Allowance than they should be.

What RSN South West said



Some people did not want to go to the meeting about benefits because they felt scared about the topic.



People should not be checked they are allowed benefits again if they will never get better. For example, if they are blind.



The staff who help with Universal Credit do not know a lot about the struggles people face.



People feel worried about explaining their struggles to the Universal Credit staff.



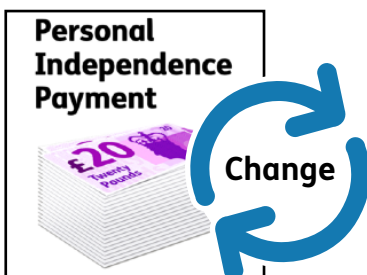
People are worried about losing their jobs and getting benefits if they need them.



The date that a blue badge ends is the same as the date that a PIP assessment ends.



But it can take a long time to get PIP, so people have a long wait for their blue badge.



People are worried about whether PIP will change, and whether people who are working might get less PIP.



Some forms from the DWP are hard for people with a learning disability to fill in.



Some people have to pay someone to fill in the forms for them because it is too hard.

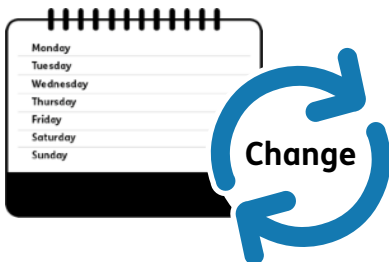
What RSN North West said



People are worried about changes to benefits.



They are worried because of what they have seen in the news.



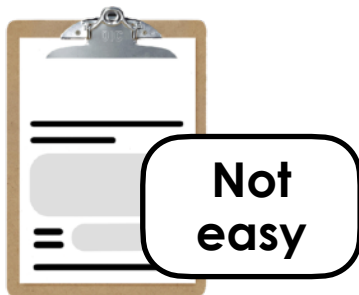
Some people's conditions change from week to week.



But PIP staff do not think about that when checking if someone can get PIP.



It is not helpful to check people's needs again when their disability has not changed.



The forms for PIP are not always easy to use.



This is especially true for people with a learning disability, who need help with the forms.



People with many different needs find applying for PIP hard and worry about any changes to PIP.



They want an easier way to get the support they need.

What RSN East of England said



People are scared of getting a letter saying their benefits will be reduced.



TV and newspapers can say bad things about disabled people and make other people think they are bad.



More people need to say good things about disabled people on TV and in newspapers.



It is hard for some people to fill in forms to get the benefits they need.

There needs to be more help for these people.



It can take a long time to get the support people need through Access to Work.



Applying for benefits can make people sad because it is hard to talk about how they are feeling and what they can do.



We need to keep helping carers who look after disabled people without getting paid.



We need to help bosses to know how to support disabled people at work.



It can be hard to help disabled people move from benefits to working.



There needs to be lots of different ways to support people.



Minister Timms said he would like to hear ideas about how claiming benefits could be made less stressful.



He said there are long waits for Access to Work because many people have applied for it.



There will be more work done on Access to Work.

What RSN Yorkshire and Humber said



There are problems with people moving from other benefits to Universal Credit.



Universal Credit staff do not understand the needs of people with disabilities.



The staff keep changing, so people have to tell their story over and over again. This can make people feel bad.



The system for checking people's health conditions is not fair and some conditions do not count.



People are scared of the process to get support because it is so difficult and stressful.



Millions of disabled people are in work but they can face extra costs to work.



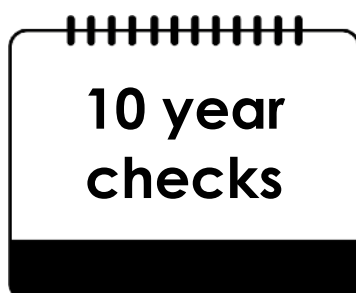
Bosses need to do more to hire disabled people and understand their needs.



Minister Timms said the DWP had made some changes to improve the way people's needs are re-checked, with some people offered simpler 10 year checks.



He would like to hear what people think.



The staff from DWP said the first 10 year checks were starting and they would like to hear what people think about them.

What RSN North East said



People are worried about their benefits being reduced and being made to work.



It would be good if the government said that it will help people who are able to work to find a job.



There is less Access to Work help for people.



People are not sure about getting back to work and what help they can get.



The form for PIP needs to be done in 4 weeks, but it takes 2 weeks for the form to come from DWP.



This can feel very stressful, especially for people with brain conditions.



It can be hard to give proof from doctors because they do not always say how bad people's health is in their letters.



Minister Timms said he knows that a lot of people would love to work if they had the right support.



He said the changes are not about forcing people to find a job but supporting them.

What RSN South East said



Not as many people came to the RSN meeting because the topic of benefits is stressful.



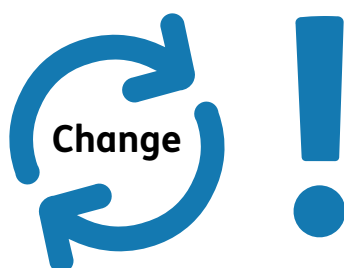
People are worried and unsure about what will happen with the changes to PIP.



This worry can make people's health worse.



There are still problems moving people from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP.



This must be sorted out before more changes happen.



It can take a long time to get benefits and this has a bad effect on how people can live their lives.



TV and newspapers often see disabled people as the problem.



But they should think about the reasons why disabled people have difficulties living their lives.



Many disabled people want to work but are scared they will lose benefits if they work too much.



Staff who check benefits can make mistakes.

For example, they may offer different help to people with the same condition.

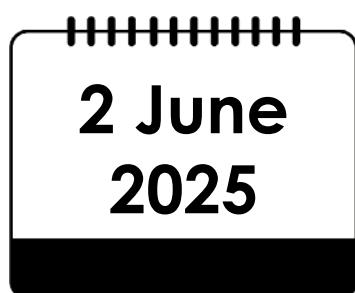
At the end of the meeting



Minister Timms thanked the RSN Chairs for the information they gave him.



He said the RSN Chairs can send more information to the Disability Unit, and it will be passed on to him.



The next meeting with Minister Timms and the RSN Chairs will be on 2 June.



It will be about **assistive technology**.

Assistive technology is equipment or systems that help disabled people do daily tasks that are difficult for them because of their disability.



An example of assistive technology is a screen reader, which helps blind people read information on a computer.



The Disability Unit will give the RSN Chairs advice about what kind of information on assistive technology to ask their members about.



The Disability Unit will also discuss what the meetings in September and December will be about.



They will let the RSN Chairs know.