



Disability Unit



Easy
Read

About our meeting on 19 May 2026

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



Easy Read

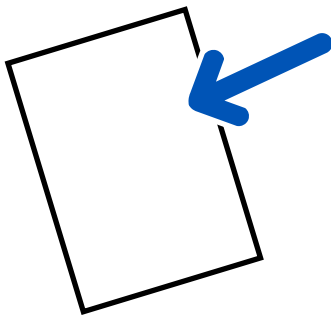


This is an Easy Read version of some information.

It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are **bold** to show they are important.



We explain bold words if they are hard to understand.

What is in this booklet

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About this booklet



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

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

Every 3 months, there are meetings
between:



- The **Chairs of the Regional Stakeholder Network**.

We will tell you more about this on
the next page.

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
19 May 2026.

About the Regional Stakeholder Network



The **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 RSN's local groups are made up of:



- Local disabled people.



- Parents and carers of disabled people.



- Organisations that help disabled people.



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

The **RSN Chairs** are the people who run the local groups.

About the meetings



Every 3 months, the RSN Chairs and Minister Timms have a meeting.



The RSN Chairs tell Minister Timms what people in their local group think about the problems that disabled people face.



Every meeting has a theme. This means we talk about 1 main topic.

The theme for the meeting on 19 May 2026 was the Timms Review of **Personal Independence Payment**.



Personal Independence Payment is a **health and disability benefit**.

Sometimes, it is known as PIP for short.

Health and disability benefits are extra money some people can get from the government.



The money is to help pay for extra things you need to help you because of a disability or health condition.

What Minister Timms said at the meeting



Minister Timms welcomed the RSN Chairs to the meeting.

He thanked everyone for sharing their ideas at the last meeting, which was about **SEND**.



SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Children and young people with SEND need some extra support.



He said that the extra questions the RSN Chairs asked have been sent to the **Department for Education**.

The **Department for Education** is the part of the government that is in charge of education, which means learning things.

Plan for Disability



Minister Timms told the RSN Chairs about the government's Plan for Disability.

The Plan for Disability will explain:



- How the government wants to support disabled people in the future.
- What the government is already doing to support disabled people.



The Disability Unit will work on the plan along with other departments in the government.



It is important that the government listens to disabled people when making the plan.



Minister Timms said that the government will be asking disabled people and organisations about the plan later this year.



There will be events around the country for disabled people to talk about what they need in the plan.

The disability pay gap



The **disability pay gap** means the difference in pay between disabled people and people who are not disabled at work.



The government shared its plans to make large **employers** say if they have a disability pay gap.



Employers are companies and organisations that hire people to work for them.



The government asked people what they thought about these plans through a **consultation** in 2025.



A **consultation** is when the government gives people information about plans and asks people what they think about it.



The government have used the feedback from the consultation to plan how large employers would say if they have a disability pay gap.



The government will work more on this as soon as it can.

Independent Disability Advisory Panel



The **Independent Disability Advisory Panel** is a group of people with health conditions and experience of disability.

The panel is led by someone called Zara Todd.



It helps the government understand how to support disabled people.



There are 11 people on the panel.



The panel will look at what changes could be made to **Access to Work**.

Access to Work is extra support at work that the government pays for.



It would be good for the RSN Chairs to meet with Zara Todd soon.

Access to Work



The government has said it will hire 480 more staff to work on Access to Work claims.

This means over 1,100 staff will be working on it in total.



A lot of people are waiting to have their Access to Work claim looked at.



The government wants to make this better by September 2027.



The government is thinking about changes to Access to Work.



It will share ideas for this when it can.

Disability Confident scheme



The **Disability Confident scheme** is for employers to support disabled people in work.



Minister Timms knows about the meeting that the **Department for Work and Pensions** had with the RSN Chairs to tell them about the work.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

We call the **Department for Work and Pensions** the **DWP** for short.



DWP is the part of the government in charge of employment support and benefits.



Minister Timms wants to make sure the Disability Confident scheme works better in the future.



The DWP are working on a survey to find out what people think of the scheme.

They would like to work with the RSN Chairs on writing the survey.

The Timms Review and what the RSN Chairs said



The theme for this meeting was PIP.



The **Timms Review** is a group of 12 people who will look at PIP. 3 people will run the group and 1 of them is Minister Timms.

A **review** is when you look into something to see if it can be better.



The government is running a **Call for Evidence** about PIP.

A **Call for Evidence** means asking people for their views and experiences. It will last until 28 May.



People from the Disability Unit and the DWP were at the meeting to hear what the RSN said.



Minister Timms talked about the information needed for the Timms Review.



He would like the RSN to share information about PIP with the Review.

What RSN North West said



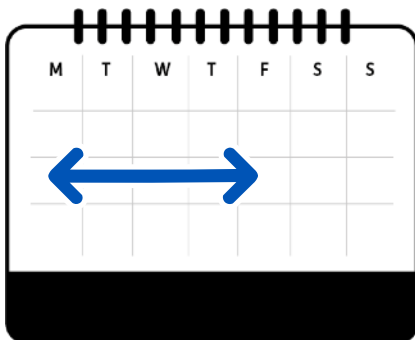
- The system of getting PIP still depends on proving illness rather than the problems people face in living their lives.



- This leaves people feeling very sad and tired. They feel like they are not believed.



- The PIP forms are long and confusing.



- The system of getting PIP does not think about how normal life works, where someone's condition might change from day to day.



- Applying for different types of help means giving the same information lots of times, like applying for PIP and a blue badge for parking.



- The people who check if someone can get PIP do not have enough training about disabled people's lives.



- Changes to PIP should support disabled people instead of making things harder for them.

What RSN South East said



- PIP is being spent on everyday costs like food and heating because people do not have enough money to pay for the things they need to live.



- When people hear that the government wants to spend less on health and disability benefits, it worries people who get PIP as this is important support.



- The checks to see if people should get PIP are stressful.



- The people who check if someone can get PIP do not know enough about different health conditions.



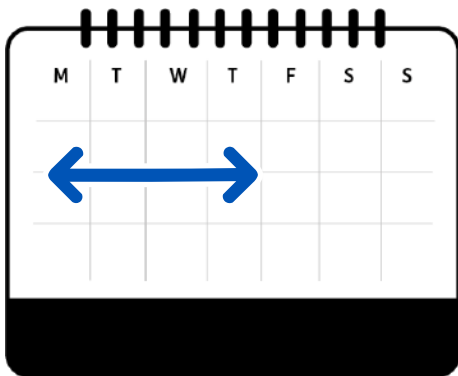
- The forms to claim PIP are complicated and stressful, and focus on what people cannot do.

What RSN Yorkshire and the Humber said



- The system of checking if people should get PIP is harming people, instead of helping them.

The assessments are very stressful for people.



- The system of checking if people should get PIP does not work for people whose conditions change from day to day.



- Health information from doctors is often ignored, which means people are not assessed right for PIP.



- Lots of decisions about PIP are changed when the person **appeals**.

An **appeal** means asking for a decision to be checked again to see if it is right.



- The long waits for PIP mean some people do not have enough money to live on.



- People are worried about PIP being linked to whether people can do a job rather than what their needs are.



- People who have conditions that will affect them for their whole lives should not have their PIP checked again and again.



- Disabled people should be included in planning how PIP should change.

What RSN East Midlands said



- PIP is important help for disabled people and makes a difference to everyday life.

Only a very small number of people use PIP to pay for general things instead of helping them with their disability.



- People are worried that the checks to see if someone should get PIP are not done fairly and in the same way for everyone.



- People who know how to fill in the forms to apply for PIP are more likely to get PIP.



- It can be hard for parents or carers to describe the difficult parts of a person's life.



- Some people feel that they do not know how to give information about their conditions in the right way.



- Some people are not sure if they should get PIP or not. Some people think having a health condition is enough to get PIP, but it can be about how it affects your life.

What RSN Greater London said



- People who check to see if someone should get PIP often work for private companies and have to do many checks every day.



- It feels like the PIP system is set up against people rather than to help them.



- The amount of PIP is not enough in London as everything costs more there.



- Some people have problems claiming PIP because English is not their first language.



- PIP is often the only support people in work get, so having their PIP checked again is very stressful for them.



- There should be changes to PIP that think about the needs of people specific to living in London.

What RSN West Midlands said



- PIP should be seen as important support to help people live their lives.



- The check to see if someone should get PIP looks at them being able to do certain tasks, not how their condition affects their whole life.



- The money people get for PIP does not match the cost of the support they need to pay for.



- PIP is important to help people move around.



- The amount of information that people have to give to support their PIP claim is too much.



- Workplaces and the world have changed, but PIP has not changed to meet these changes.



- There are less local support services and high costs of living, leaving many people only getting support from PIP.

What RSN South West said



- People have had text reminders about PIP appointments on the same day, without hearing about the appointment before.

This makes people very stressed at their appointment.



- People aged 22 to 24 have their PIP payments sent to their parents. They want to know why it cannot go to them.



- It takes a long time to process PIP claims, and this can affect other applications, like for blue badges for parking.



- Some young people with epilepsy are being told by council workers that they can get PIP when they cannot.

This shows that the rules for getting PIP should change.



- When people are paid a large amount of PIP money that they are owed, this can affect other benefits that they get.



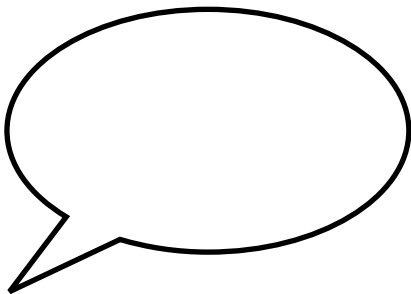
- The government needs to share information between different services about how much people are being paid from different benefits.

What RSN North East said



- PIP needs to match the **Care Act**, to help people get the lives they want and should be able to live.

The **Care Act** is a law that gives people the care they need.



- The DWP, the NHS and other services use different words to describe people's conditions.



- This means that the people checking to see if someone should get PIP may not fully understand someone's condition.



- The government could save lots of money by getting rid of the PIP checks and using information from health professionals instead.



- People who check PIP at the moment often get decisions wrong. Health professionals would know more about people's needs.

What RSN East of England said



- The rooms in support organisations where people are helped to apply for PIP have tissues and water.

This is because it is quite painful for some people to talk about their health issues.



- Someone's disability can make basic things like going shopping more expensive.

PIP does not help with this at the moment.



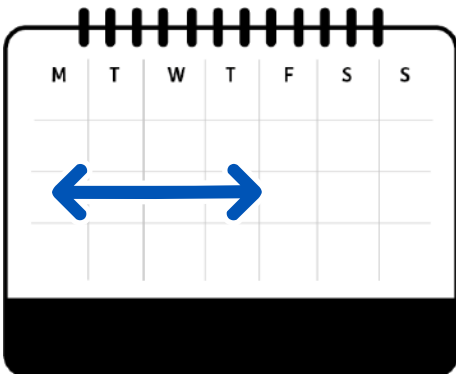
- PIP assessments could be reviewed for improvements more often, rather than making big changes less often.

What someone from the DWP said



- The ideas from the different RSN regions were very interesting.

- The comments have been recorded about:



- People's needs changing from day to day.



- The bad experiences of people who are having their PIP claim checked.



- These comments have been heard by the Timms Review group too.



- What the RSN said will be shared with the other people who run the Timms Review group.



- The RSN should share their thoughts with the Timms Review.

What Minister Timms said



Minister Timms ended the meeting by saying thank you to everyone.



He asked the RSN to share their information with the Timms Review by 28 May.



He said there will be a chance for organisations to host discussions about PIP for the Timms Review.



Minister Timms said he would like the RSN to carry on being involved in the Review.



The next meeting will be in September or October 2026.



The next theme still needs to be decided.

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