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Colm Gildernew MLA
Chairperson of the Committee for
Communities

1 July 2025

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice
Committee, Senedd Cymru

Collette Stevenson MSP, Convener,
Social Justice and Social Security
Committee, Scottish Parliament

Dear Colm, Jenny, and Collette

Thank you for your letter raising concerns about the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper. The Secretary of State has asked that I reply on her behalf, as the lead minister for this policy.

Firstly, I want to emphasise how critically important it is to me to hear from disabled people, people with health conditions and those that support them. This is why, as you mention, we have held 11 face-to-face consultation events across England, Wales and Scotland, as well as supporting an event in Northern Ireland as part of the consultation. In addition, we have held 8 virtual events to allow maximum participation allowing those with accessibility issues and others to join from anywhere and have their voice heard. We have also had an online survey open throughout the consultation period. This has been accessible to all, at any time that suits. We have received a substantial number of responses in this manner. All input, face to face, virtual or on the survey will be carefully reviewed as part of the consultation process.

We understand that for some individuals, particularly those who have specific access needs, travel and planning for attendance can take significant effort. That is why we worked to maintain clear ticketing and safety procedures to minimise disruption and ensure fair access. We have also offered

reimbursement for reasonable travel costs to help people to these events and ensure they are listened to.

Our conversations with disabled people and people with health conditions, as well as experts, have already shaped and informed this Green Paper and we are committed to continuing this dialogue and drawing on a wide range of insights and experiences to get these reforms right.

That is why we continue to facilitate ways to meaningfully involve disabled people. Throughout the PIP assessment review, we are working closely with disabled people and stakeholders to ensure that the voices of those who go through the PIP assessment, and those with expertise in the system are embedded in the review. We have committed to co-produce the review with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. I recognise that PIP has been devolved in Scotland and replaced by Adult Disability payment – we will continue to engage closely with Scottish Government to consider interactions between the reserved and devolved systems.

We are also in the process of establishing Collaboration Committees to further develop the reforms set out in the Green Paper. These will bring together groups of disabled people and other experts for specific work areas to collaborate and provide discussion, challenge, and recommendations. The Equality Analysis and Impacts for the Spring Statement changes announced on 18 March 2025 were published on 26 March 2025. The purpose of this analysis was to understand the overall impact of the measures where they are the responsibility of the UK Government (Great Britain for Universal Credit and England and Wales for PIP). The Equality Analysis is undertaken to understand the impact on policies of the whole package on people with protected characteristics, which does not include region or country breakdown.

However, there have been a number of data tables which were released in the Green Paper evidence pack published in full on 2 May that do break down data geographically and we are transparent in how these are set out.

Finally, I know that many people are concerned about the changes announced in the Green Paper. I would like to reassure you, and those that you represent, that changes are not happening immediately. The changes to the UC rates and PIP eligibility will be implemented from 2026, subject to parliamentary approval. Our reforms will ensure the most vulnerable and severely disabled people are protected, so they can live with dignity and security, while supporting those who can work to do so.

That is why we will protect existing claims as we bring forward the changes set out in the UC and PIP Bill. As the Secretary of State set out in her Oral Statement, no one who already has a PIP award when the new 4-point

minimum comes into force will lose out as a result of this change. For existing claimants of the health element of Universal Credit, we are also protecting the combined rate of the Universal Credit standard allowance and LCWRA in real terms. This protection also extends to new claimants who meet the Severe Conditions Criteria or where Special Rules for End of Life apply. Once again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to write to me and I would like to reassure you that we will continue to engage at both Ministerial and official level with devolved administrations as policy develops. I look forward to continuing to work together to support our shared goals.

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister of State for Social Security and Disability