Timms Review on Personal Independence Payment

Submission from Feeding Britain (May 2026)

About Feeding Britain

Feeding Britain is an award-winning charity with a vision of a UK where no one goes hungry. We support a national network of 150 regional and local anti-hunger partnerships comprising more than 700 frontline organisations – ranging from community centres and schools, to local authorities and social enterprises.

By piloting innovative and effective new projects, and showing how severe or chronic food insecurity can be prevented, we are designing a road map for eliminating hunger from the communities we serve. By sharing this knowledge with others, and using it to work for systemic changes at a national level, we will ensure hunger becomes a thing of the past.

Consultation response

What is the experience of people claiming PIP and does this vary for different groups of people?

For people who have come out of full-time employment due to a new health diagnosis, the length of time it can take to claim and receive PIP is difficult. Going from earning a decent income every month to suddenly being dependent on benefits can cause a dramatic change to finances which people struggle with as it is often a big reduction in income which can be difficult to adjust to initially. This is made even more difficult by the time it takes for PIP to come through as it can often take several months – an even lengthier process if the initial decision on an application needs to be challenged or appealed, before being subsequently overturned.

Having a disability makes it especially difficult to fill in the forms; whether it is due to vision loss, physical limitations, speech difficulties, and so on. For some people it is almost impossible to complete the application on your own, making it vitally important to ensure the ready availability of specialist advice services to help people through the application process.

Young people who have recently turned 16 and are transitioning from Disability Living Allowance to PIP sometimes struggle and can miss out on payments as you must make a new application for PIP. Parents are often busy caring for their child who has disabilities, making it hard for them to fill in the forms.

People who have experienced trauma and have several health issues need specialist support in claiming PIP due to unique and multiple range of health issues. For example, an adviser within the Feeding Wirral network was dealing with one PIP application of this nature; it took ten months to complete and for the client to receive funds, due to the complex nature of the application. The transition from DLA to PIP should be automatically removed.

People with poor mental health often need support with filling in PIP forms. Wirral Foodbank, within the Feeding Wirral network, cited another applicant they supported who had experienced two miscarriages and a suicide attempt leaving them with poor mental health. The caseworker supported the client to submit a PIP application including a high sum of backpay as the client was unable to complete the application on their own before.

In all too many cases, PIP assessments conclude with the claim being denied, only to be later overturned on appeal as it is found the assessment failed to properly consider, or record, the applicant's circumstances.

We strongly believe that all PIP assessments should be recorded as standard, to avoid this all too common scenario and ensure applicants who are in need receive their entitlement after the initial assessment, rather than after a lengthy appeals process.

We acknowledge and welcome the fact that, in 2025, the Government set out its intention to record assessments as standard. We now recommend that the Government immediately provides a firm and specific timetable for the full implementation of this proposal, as every day without its introduction results in more disabled people being denied the support to which they are entitled – exposing them to a period of hunger and food insecurity while they seek to appeal or challenge an incorrect decision.

What has changed in wider society and the workplace since 2013 (and might be expected to change in the future), how has this impacted PIP and does PIP need to change accordingly?

Low and inadequate incomes available from the labour market and other parts of the social security system have resulted in some households – including those having to access food banks – relying on PIP, at times, to support other essential costs, such as rent. The annual calculation of Universal Credit to take account of basic living costs, alongside the wider push toward a Real Living Wage, would help to ensure that PIP can fulfil its true purpose, of enabling disabled people to meet fully the extra costs they face.

On the flipside, divisive narratives have potentially caused some people not to claim PIP as they feel proud or feel a stigma towards claiming certain benefits. Digital by default policies can also mean that people are excluded by advice and services being online and via telephone only. The lack of face-to-face appointments creates a barrier for people applying to PIP, something that the Government should look to address through the effective use of Crisis and Resilience Fund budgets in reshaping the local advice landscape and co-locating or integrating multiple services under one roof at the heart of the community.