



BuDS Disability Service

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PRESS RELEASE

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BuDS Disability Service Responds to the Interim Report from the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

BuDS Disability Service has expressed concern about the future direction of the Timms Review, based on the 'incomplete', 'less than honest' and 'calculatedly misleading' content of the Review's Interim Report.

The user-led charity, which has engaged with the DWP for nearly 20 years, says that the Interim Report entirely fails to acknowledge that PIP was designed in 2012 by the then Government primarily to cut the cost of disability benefits by a fifth. This was an objective openly acknowledged by the Government at the time. Many of the faults in PIP noted by the Review, such as the complicated scoring system, the traumatic assessment and re-assessment process, and the use of unaccountable private assessment companies, are not system defects which have arisen over time, but deliberately designed features of PIP.

This incomplete and less than honest account of the origins of PIP, says the charity, sets the wrong tone, corrupts the evidence base, and raises concern that the Review is unduly influenced by departmental interests.

BuDS has also noted the repeated references in the Interim Review to overriding cost limits. These include that any recommendations must remain "within the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR) projections for future spending on PIP" (para 4), that "final recommendations must sit within the OBRs projections for future spending on PIP" (para 45) and "The steering group will therefore need to carefully consider how to balance the focus of the Review between rights, fairness, independent living, and sustainability within fixed financial limits" (para 46).

BuDS points out that societal changes are inevitably creating more disabled people. The population is aging, the ongoing Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis are significantly impacting both physical and mental health, and deteriorating health and care services are leading to worsening health. The Review, says the charity, is calculatedly dishonest about these facts.

If the Review has already accepted a fixed ceiling for the amount that the Government is willing to pay to support an increasing number of disabled people, BuDS says, then the Review has no choice but to rob Peter to pay Paul: to cut support from some disabled people to preserve it for others. The Interim Report fails to make this clear, says BuDS, which is another calculated dishonesty.

BuDS Disability Service, which is a disabled-led charity and community of disabled people across England, will continue to participate in the Timms review and represent the interests of disabled people.

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