

Minister for Social Security and Local Government submission of 31 January 2023

PE1854/P: Review the adult disability payment eligibility criteria for people with mobility needs

I am pleased to inform you that I have today published a public consultation on the Adult Disability Payment mobility component eligibility criteria. I have attached a copy of the consultation with this letter for further information. The consultation is also accessible at: <https://consult.gov.scot/social-security/adult-disability-payment-review>.

This consultation is part of the first stage of the review of Adult Disability Payment. We have been engaging with disabled people, stakeholders and academics in order to build a broad evidence base for people to consider within the consultation.

This consultation does not advocate a Scottish Government position on mobility component eligibility criteria. It is an opportunity for disabled people and stakeholders to consider the evidence we have gathered and to present their own views in response. It is also an opportunity to make comments and set out views on what works well, to challenge and to suggest creative approaches. In particular, we are seeking views on:

- whether the eligibility criteria for the mobility component is clear and easy to understand;
- any gaps there may be in our understanding of the existing evidence base on the application of the eligibility criteria for the mobility component;
- the impact of changes already introduced by the Scottish Government to address issues identified with the application and decision-making processes for Personal Independence Payment (PIP); and
- whether there are any further changes that respondents would propose and the potential impact of making these changes to the eligibility criteria for the mobility component.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks and will close on 25 April 2023. I would like to request that you share this consultation with others so that interested people and stakeholders are aware and can contribute. I am keen to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to

contribute, whether through responding directly to the consultation or by attending a consultation event.

The analysis and responses to the consultation will be passed to the independent review to consider later in 2023 and, in the interests of transparency, they will also be published. Further information on the remit of the independent review and how it will be conducted will be published in the coming months.

Whilst it would be premature to speculate on the outcomes of the independent review itself, it is important that we are realistic about the practical and financial implications of any proposed changes.

The financial situation facing the Scottish Government is, by far, the most challenging since devolution. This will require difficult decisions about how to prioritise spending across all our public services. Any significant changes which result in new, additional spending will therefore not be deliverable within this parliamentary term. Substantive changes will require policy development, consultation and detailed implementation planning, and it is crucial we do not risk the delivery of other social security benefits that are yet to be launched.

We have therefore asked that respondents consider any cost or operational delivery challenges, together with wider related issues, such as the implications of changes for people also in receipt of UK Government benefits, as part of their consultation response.

I appreciate that there is considerable interest in how we deliver Adult Disability Payment and a desire to see changes and for these to be made quickly. However, I believe it remains vital that we get decisions right. That includes reflecting carefully on evidence, and not taking decisions in isolation on the mobility component alone.

Allowing the independent review the opportunity to consider all of the evidence, including experience from the initial operation of Adult Disability Payment, and the eligibility criteria holistically, will ensure consistency and coherence. It will also ensure we remain focused on our commitment to delivering a safe and secure transition of people's payments, which the vast majority of disabled people and stakeholders have told us should be our key priority.

I look forward to working with the Committee throughout the review. I am grateful to the Committee members for their continued interest and constructive engagement on this matter.