



DWP urged to guarantee lifetime disability benefits for people with terminal illness

## Description

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DWP office Caxton House nameplate

The [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\)](#) shouldn't force people living with terminal illness and progressive, life-limiting conditions to undergo stressful, costly and unnecessary disability benefit reassessments.

So says a coalition of more than 30 organisations, led by [end-of-life charity Marie Curie](#) in an open letter to DWP minister Stephen Timms.

Sent on 28 May to coincide with the Call for Evidence deadline for the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payments, the open letter describes the reform as a "clear and compassionate" way to protect people living with terminal illness and those with progressive life-limiting conditions.

## DWP has a chance to make things better

The coalition argues that PIP reassessments represent an unacceptable burden. They force people already suffering with their health to prove they are unwell enough to receive support they will always need.

Instead, they should have assured and constant financial support until they die, so they can focus on what really matters - staying as well as possible and spending time with loved ones.

Signatories include, among others:

- Age UK.
- Amnesty International.
- MS Society.

- Parkinson's UK.
- Trussell Trust.

The coalition adds:

- PIP is designed to help with the extra costs of disability. But for people who are dying or living with progressive, life-limiting conditions, reassessments can cause needless distress, uncertainty and financial anxiety at a time when every moment matters.
- Reassessing people whose conditions will only worsen adds little value for the DWP. Just 2% of PIP awards for people with Parkinson's, dementia and Motor Neurone Disease are reduced on review. That's despite each assessment costing around £282, raising concerns about both the human and financial cost.
- Lifetime awards for people in receipt of PIP via the Special Rules route are already in place in Scotland. This shows that a more compassionate system is both possible and practical.

Becca Stacey, Marie Curie senior policy manager, Financial Security, said:

Too many people living with terminal illness and progressive, life-limiting conditions are being forced to prove just how unwell they are, which is simply wrong.

These reassessments rarely change the outcome, but they cause real distress and uncertainty at a time when people should be focused on comfort, care and time with loved ones.

The UK government has a clear chance to fix this now. Ending reassessments and introducing lifetime awards for people with terminal and progressive, life-limiting conditions would create a fairer, more compassionate system that treats people with dignity.

Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK, said:

At Age UK we think it is inhumane to burden people in these sad situations, and their loved ones, with a full PIP reassessment.

It is also wasteful since in these circumstances there is usually no prospect of the reassessment concluding that the recipient is ineligible for support, for however time-limited the period they may need it.

That's why we support Marie Curie in calling for these reassessments to end, and we sincerely hope that the Timms Review will provide the mechanism to enable this to happen.

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By [The Canary](#)

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1. News

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