Pat McFadden admits Timms Review could cause DWP PIP cuts

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DWP

Pat McFadden has finally admitted that the Timms review into Personal Independence Payment (PIP) could trigger benefit cuts. The head of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Pat McFadden, told the Work and Pensions Committee that there was â??nothing to stopâ?• the review from recommending reforms that would cut welfare spending on PIP.

McFadden desperate for DWP PIP cuts

Responding to the fact that many interpreted the terms of reference as discouraging reviewers from recommending any reductions in PIP spending. But of course, Labour wouldnâ??t want to come across as caring about vulnerable people.

McFadden said:

> What we were saying in the terms of reference was we were sending a signal to the reviewers not to come forward with a big increase in cost package.
>
> Thereâ??s nothing to stop them coming forward with measures that reduce costs, but we didnâ??t want them to come forward with a review that simply said, â??letâ??s pay much more into the system.â??

So basically, of course, they were always going to cut benefits, and anyone who thought otherwise was kidding themselves.

The main message of the Timms review has always been that they want to work with disabled people to make the PIP system work better for them. But this has easily been disproved at every turn, from the way they pretended to work with DDPOs to them only appointing 12 whole disabled people. And letâ??s not forget that the farce of a consultation asked questions like if the PIP had already been cut.

DWP called out for stoking media narrative

McFadden was also called out by the committee for stoking the â??strong media narrative that welfare spending is out of controlâ??, despite the fact that the DWPâ??s own statistics show this isnâ??t true.

Lib Dem MP John Milne pointed out that welfare spending as a percentage of GDP hasnâ??t changed much since the Thatcher days. He also explained that around half of the new PIP claimants exist because of the rise in state pension age, along with other factors.

Milne asked McFadden:

> Do you think thereâ??s a responsibility on government to put out a more balanced view of the statistics, because if you think the problem is twice as big as it is, your policy response might overreach by twice as much as it needs to.

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In response, McFadden gave some bull about how GDP spending had risen by about 1% over â??six or sevenâ?? years.

As Disability News Service pointed out, this isnâ??t strictly true. OBR figures show that over the last seven years, the proportion of GDP spent on social security has fluctuated between 10 and 11.9% and now stands at 10.9%. In 2019-20 it was 10.2%, rising to 11.9% in 2020-21. But it then went back down to 10.4% in 2021-22 and jumped around between 10 and 11.

From 2024-25 to the predicted forecast for 2025-26, it will only go up by 0.2 percentage points. Thatâ??s hardly â??quite significantâ??.

McFadden bending the truth

By saying itâ??s gone up by almost 1% and not including that itâ??s wildly fluctuated in between that, McFadden is proving Milneâ??s point; heâ??s picking and choosing figures as he pleases, knowing the public wonâ??t go looking for the extra context.

Itâ??s clear that McFadden is hellbent on cutting disability benefits and willing to bend the truth so much that even when pulled up by a committee, he will still continue to lie.

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By Rachel Charlton-Dailey

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