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The Information Centre
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

15th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6), Thursday, 15 May

Welfare Reform

Introduction

This roundtable will consider the UK Government's welfare reforms and the implications for Scotland.

Participants in the round table are:

- Dr Rianna Price, Policy and Research Officer, Inclusion Scotland
- Hannah Randolph, Economist Fellow, Fraser of Allander Institute
- Fiona Collie, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Carers Scotland
- Chris Birt, Associate Director for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Emma Jackson, Head of Social Justice, Citizen's Advice Scotland

A submission was received from Citizens Advice Scotland.

Background

This section summarises the UK Government reforms and sets out the latest forecast spend on devolved social security benefits. Annex 1 gives further detail on trends in ADP and PIP caseload and Annex 2 outlines key features of how the ADP/PIP 'points' system and the Universal Credit 'health element' work.

UK Government Reforms

The UK Government's welfare reforms include changes to PIP and Universal Credit, which are intended to slow the growth in spending. The Scottish Government has [called for the reforms to be abandoned](#).

These reforms include:

- Making it more difficult to qualify for PIP
- Reducing the 'health element' in Universal Credit
- Replacing the 'Work Capability Assessment' with PIP

Making it more difficult to qualify for PIP

From 2026-27 a minimum of 4 points will be needed on any descriptor in order to qualify for the daily living component of PIP. This is forecast to [save £4.5 billion across the UK by 2029-30](#). (See Annex 2 for how 'points' work in PIP/ADP).

In Scotland PIP is being replaced by Adult Disability Payment, administered by Social Security Scotland. By the end of this year - before the UK reforms are expected to be brought in - everyone currently in receipt of PIP in Scotland is expected to have been moved to Social Security Scotland's Adult Disability Payment (ADP).

Increasing the standard rate of Universal Credit, but reducing the 'health element' addition

The UC Standard Allowance will be increased above inflation over the forecast period. For single claimants over 25 it will increase to £106 per week in 2029-2030 with an equivalent increase for other claimants. This is [forecast to cost £1.9 billion across the UK in 2028-29](#).

The UC health element rate will be [frozen at £97](#) per week for existing claimants until 2029/30. For new claimants it will be reduced to £50 per week in 2026/27 and then frozen until 2029-2030. This is [forecast to save £3 billion across the UK in 2028-29](#). There will be a new premium for "those with the most severe, life-long conditions who have no prospect of improvement and will never be able to work." ([Equalities Analysis](#)).

These changes don't have a direct effect on the Scottish budget but will affect people in Scotland claiming Universal Credit.

Abolishing the Work Capability Assessment (WCA)

The WCA is currently used to assess eligibility for the additional 'health element' in Universal Credit. The UK Government [propose using PIP instead](#). This is [due to start from 2028-29 and is not being consulted on](#). This was not included in the spring statement and there are no detailed costings

The DWP will need to decide whether ADP in Scotland can be treated as the equivalent of PIP for the purposes of qualifying people for the health element in Universal Credit.

Employment support

The UK government has announced [£1 billion annual funding, by 2029-2030](#), for measures to support those with disabilities and long-term health conditions into employment. Employability is devolved. In Scotland, the Scottish Government has [provided £5 million in 2025-26](#) for additional Specialist Employability Support. This funding is intended to ensure an enhanced offer of support for disabled people and people with long term health conditions is in place in every local authority area.

Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry

The [Westminster Work and Pensions Committee is currently doing an inquiry](#) into the UK Government's green paper, Get Britain Working: Pathways to Work with evidence sessions on 22 April and 7 May. Witnesses included the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, who we are hearing from today.

Devolved Social Security Spending

The latest spending forecasts from the Scottish Fiscal Commission are set out in the table below. It shows how ADP is the largest devolved benefit – making up half (52%) of total devolved social security spend this year. (Figures for ADP include spending on PIP in Scotland). Spending on ADP is forecast to almost double between 2023-24 and 2029-30. (Increasing 91% from £2.6 billion in 2023-24 to £5 billion in 2029-30). It's therefore ADP which is the main factor in the growth of total devolved social security spending from £5.3 billion in 2023-24 to a forecast £8.8 billion in 2029-30

The next forecasts will be published later in May.

Table 1: Devolved social security spending forecasts

£ million	2023-24 outturn	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Adult Disability Payment	2,632	3,177	3,605	3,983	4,340	4,675	5,030
Best Start Foods	13	17	19	20	21	21	22
Best Start Grant	21	21	21	22	23	23	24
Carer's Allowance Supplement	48	54	62	67	70	73	76
Carer Support Payment	358	402	459	505	525	546	574
Child Disability Payment	425	524	618	675	708	732	755
Child Winter Heating Payment	8	10	12	13	14	14	15
Discretionary Housing Payments	82	91	97	104	110	116	122
Employability Services	52	60	73	70	70	70	70
Employment Injury Assistance	81	85	83	84	83	81	79

Funeral Support Payment	13	13	14	14	15	15	16
Pension Age Disability Payment	659	768	834	889	933	962	992
Pension Age Winter Heating Payment	blank	32	101	103	102	104	108
Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance	445	424	394	365	339	312	287
Scottish Child Payment	429	459	471	488	501	507	515
Scottish Welfare Fund	36	53	36	36	36	36	36
Severe Disablement Allowance	6	5	4	4	3	3	3
Winter Heating Payment	23	29	28	29	30	31	32
Total spending	5,330	6,224	6,930	7,471	7,922	8,321	8,754

Figures include spend on devolved benefits administered by DWP. eg PIP spend in Scotland.

The benefits highlighted in bold in Table 1 have an associated Block Grant Adjustment. This is an addition to the Scottish block grant for each benefit devolved. The baseline was the amount spent in Scotland on these benefits before they were devolved. That baseline amount increases each year in proportion to the change in spending in England and Wales and differences in the rate of population growth. BGAs are not ring-fenced to be spent on Scottish social security. For an explanation of how Block Grant Adjustments works see; Scottish Government, [Fiscal Framework Factsheet](#). The [total Block Grant Adjustment for social security in 2025-26 is: £5,605 million](#) which is around £1,325 million less than the Scottish Government is spending on social security. (BGAs are discussed further under Theme 2, below).

Themes for discussion

The following suggests four themes for discussion.

Theme 1: Growth in disability benefit caseload.

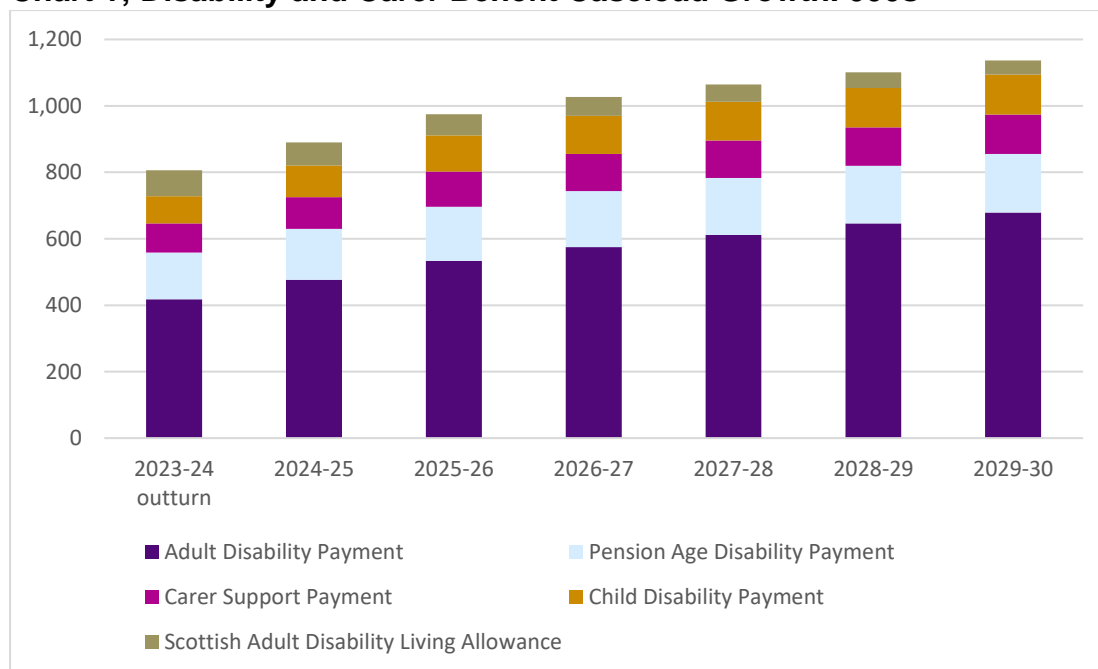
The table and chart below show the forecast growth in the number of people receiving the main devolved disability and carer benefits. ADP caseload is forecast to grow from 418,000 in 2023-24 to 679,000 in 2029-30.

Table 2: Disability and Carer Benefits, Caseload Growth. 000s

Payments, thousands	2023-24 outturn	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Adult Disability Payment	418	476	533	575	611	646	679
Pension Age Disability Payment	141	153	163	169	172	174	176
Carer Support Payment	88	96	106	112	113	116	119
Child Disability Payment	81	95	109	114	117	119	120
Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance	78	70	63	57	52	47	42

Source; [SFC, SEFF December 2024](#). n.b includes recipients DWP devolved benefits in Scotland. i.e ADP includes PIP recipients in Scotland.

Chart 1; Disability and Carer Benefit Caseload Growth. 000s



Source: [SFC, SEFF December 2024](#). N.B includes Scottish recipients of DWP equivalent benefits. Eg ADP caseload includes Scottish recipients of PIP.

- **ADP caseload** increase reflects UK wide trends and in addition, an initial spike in claims when ADP launched and fewer people having awards ended on review. ([SFC forecasts December 2024](#) para 5.11 – 5.27)
- **CDP caseload** has been higher than expected, reflecting a UK wide trend for more successful applications for child disability benefits, but with larger increases in Scotland. In August 2024, the caseload aged 15 and under in Scotland is 78 per cent higher than it was in February 2020 ([SFC forecasts December 2024](#) para 5.30)
- **Pension Age Disability Payment** caseload growth reflects UK wide trends. ([SFC forecasts December 2024](#) para 5.34)

UK Wide Increase in Disability Benefit Caseload

In their forecast evaluation report 2023-24, the Scottish Fiscal Commission estimated that:

“the higher UK-wide demand across CDP, ADP and Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP) explains £145 million of spending above our forecasts.”
([SFC, forecast evaluation 2023-24, para 4.13](#))

[The Institute for Fiscal Studies \(March 2025\) looked at changes in working age health across the UK since COVID-19](#). They reflect that:

“there is little consensus on what role worsening health has played in the rise” in disability benefit caseloads.”

However, they find:

“compelling evidence that mental health has worsened since the pandemic.”

Their key findings were:

- More than half of the rise in 16- to 64-year-olds claiming disability benefits since the pandemic is due to more claims relating to mental health or behavioural conditions
- Mental health conditions are becoming more common amongst the working-age population
- Working-age mortality rates have consistently remained above their pre-pandemic levels since 2020.
- There is disagreement between surveys on how the total number of people with health conditions has changed since 2019
- Sickness absence days per worker were 37% higher in 2022 than in 2019.

A subsequent IFS paper (May 2025) looked at whether there was a link to NHS waiting times. Their analysis:

“shows that at the local level, there is no clear relationship between changes in NHS waits and changes in working-age health-related benefit claims.”

The authors conclude:

“Our findings imply that reductions in waiting lists and waiting times, while welcome in their own right, would be unlikely to lead to a meaningful reduction in health-related benefit claims, and that further research is desperately needed to understand what factors are in fact driving increasing claimant numbers.” ([Warner, M and Zaranko, B. “Have increases in NHS waiting lists and waiting times contributed to the growing numbers of people claiming working-age health related benefits”](#))

In ‘[Under Strain](#)’ (2024) the Resolution Foundation looked at the growth in incapacity and disability benefits, highlighting that:

- There is a possible incentive to claim disability and incapacity benefits due to increasing cost of living and reduction in the real terms value of standard, means tested benefits.
- The change from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment since 2013 led to higher spending. One factor may be that the

standard and enhanced PIP award levels correspond to the middle and higher award levels in DLA. As the lowest award level was not replicated, this might have affected behaviour in claiming.

- A growing, ageing population and a rising State Pension Age increases the number of potential claimants.

Overall, they found that the rising incidence of disability combined with population change underpins 87 per cent of the increase in the disability benefit caseload between 2013 and 2023.

In their written submission, Citizen's Advice Scotland link the growing caseload to: cost of living, austerity policies, the impact of COVID and an ageing population.

Impact of Scottish policy on caseload

When they [initially forecast ADP in August 2021](#), the SFC considered that ADP would add around 70,000 people to the caseload:

“By 2026-27, we expect that the introduction of ADP will increase the caseload by an additional 70,000 clients on top of the 400,000 people who would have received PIP in the absence of ADP.” ([SFC SEFF August 2021](#), para 5.15)

Higher caseload was expected from:

- an initial spike in applications mainly due to communications activity around the launch, and people waiting for ADP to launch rather than applying for PIP.
- additional successful applications mainly because:
 - the new processes are directed at removing existing barriers to entry and increasing take-up rates
 - previous changes (from DLA to PIP) had resulted in increased successful applications
- light touch reviews resulting in an expected 5.4% people losing entitlement on review.

The most recent SFC forecast was that ADP caseload would be 575,000 in 2026-27 rising to 679,000 by 2029-30 ([SEFF, December 2024](#)).

As expected, the number of new **applications for ADP spiked** when the benefit was introduced but the application rate is now expected to gradually reduce. In addition, the **success rate is lower** than when the benefit first launched. These factors act to slow the growth in caseload. However, this effect is offset due to **fewer people than expected getting awards ended on review**, with 2% of awards ended on review compared to an expected 5%. ([SEFF, December 2024](#), para 5.12).

[Ray, Chaudhuri and Water \(2024\)](#) at the Institute of Fiscal Studies looked at trends in ADP and PIP. They discuss the large ‘initial spike’ in ADP applications in 2022-23 but find that:

“by July 2024 the number of new recipients in Scotland was ‘only’ 118% more than the pre-pandemic norm; below the 154% figure in that month for England and Wales.”

They find both benefits show an increase in young people and increase in mental health conditions and comment that:

“it is perhaps surprising that the introduction of ADP, which aims to change the experience of interacting with the benefits system significantly, seems to have had little impact on the type of people who receive it.”

[...]

“the decline in face-to-face PIP assessments and changes in award review outcomes seen in England and Wales do offer one explanation as to why Scotland’s reforms may have had – relative to England and Wales – a smaller impact on recipient numbers than predicted.”

Members may wish to discuss:

- 1. What do we know about the reasons for the increase in the disability benefit caseload in Scotland and in the UK as a whole**

Theme 2: Impact of the UK reforms on disabled people and their carers

The [Joseph Rowntree Foundation have published case studies](#) on what these changes could mean for different types of household.

The [UK Government’s summary of the impacts](#) and [Equalities Analysis](#) of the proposed reforms to PIP and UC estimate:

- Overall, 3.2 million families will financially lose out, (with an average loss of £1,720) and 3.8 million families will financially gain (with an average gain of £420)
- Slower growth in the PIP caseload, expected to be 400,000 lower in 2029/30 compared to previous forecasts.
- A further 150,000 people will not receive Carer’s Allowance or the UC Carer Element as a result.
- By 2029/2030 an estimated 800,000 people will not receive the Daily Living component of PIP who would have under current rules, although they may still qualify for the mobility component.
- By 2029/2030 an estimated 2.25 million people, the pre-April 2026 current claimants, will still be receiving the higher rate of the UC health element,

frozen at its 2025/2026 level. A further 730,000 are forecast to be receiving the new lower rate of the health element.

- An additional 250,000 working age people and 50,000 children in relative poverty in 2030 in Great Britain.

The [DWP has published a series of 'evidence packs'](#) with detailed analysis of the UC 'health' and PIP caseloads. This includes that:

- 88 per cent of claimants currently getting the **standard rate** of the Daily Living component score below 4 points.
- 12 per cent of claimants awarded the **enhanced** Daily Living rate score fewer than 4 points on any of the activities.

The evidence pack also looked at which activities people were most likely score highly, finding that PIP claimants were most likely to score 4 or more points on activity 1 (preparing food) and activity 9 (engaging with other people face to face) ([DWP evidence packs, chapter 2 'reforming the structure'](#))

A [PQ answered by Stephen Timms on 1 May](#) showed that the conditions for which people were most likely to score more than 4 points (and therefore most likely to qualify for PIP in future) were learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder.

Those least likely to score four points or more (and therefore the conditions less likely to qualify for PIP following these reforms) were arthritis and back pain. (see annex 1 for further detail).

In '[A Dangerous Road](#)' the IPPR state that:

"The changes to PIP are the biggest source of savings in yesterday's announcements. The Government gave no details of who would lose, but, if this change alone saves £5 billion, then it means between 800,000 and 1.2 million people losing support of either £4,200 (if receiving the standard rate Daily Living element) or £6,300 (if on the enhanced rate Daily Living element) a year by 2029-30."

Citizen's Advice Scotland discuss the increasing complexity of the mix of reserved and devolved benefits. In their written submission to the Work and Pensions Committee, they point out that many of their clients seek advice on both:

"In Quarter 1-3 of 2024-25, around 50% of the people that we supported with advice about ADP were also seeking advice about Universal Credit. The complicated system creates challenges for individuals in understanding the impact of combining work or education, or caring responsibilities with managing a health condition. It can also create financial precarity as various payments are lost or reduced as circumstances change."

Members may wish to discuss:

2. The potential impact on disabled people and carers in Scotland if the same reforms were made to Adult Disability Payment as are being proposed for PIP.
3. Other options for slowing the growth in the disability benefit caseload

Theme 2: Impact of UK reforms on the Scottish social security budget

The reduction in PIP spend will slow the growth in the funding coming to Scotland via the Block Grant Adjustment (BGA). [Current estimates are that](#) by 2029-30, the PIP BGA will be £380 million lower than currently forecast and the Carer's Allowance BGA will be £45 million lower than forecast.

“the forecast BGA for PIP will reduce to £4,270 million from £4,650 million by 2029-30, since the UKG Autumn Budget 2024. The Carers Allowance BGA will reduce to £480 million from £529 million by 2029-30.” ([Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, 7 April 2025](#)).

Charts 2 and 3 show the impact the changes to PIP on the Scottish budget.

In December the [Scottish Fiscal Commission forecast](#) that spending on ADP would reach £5,030 million by 2029-30.

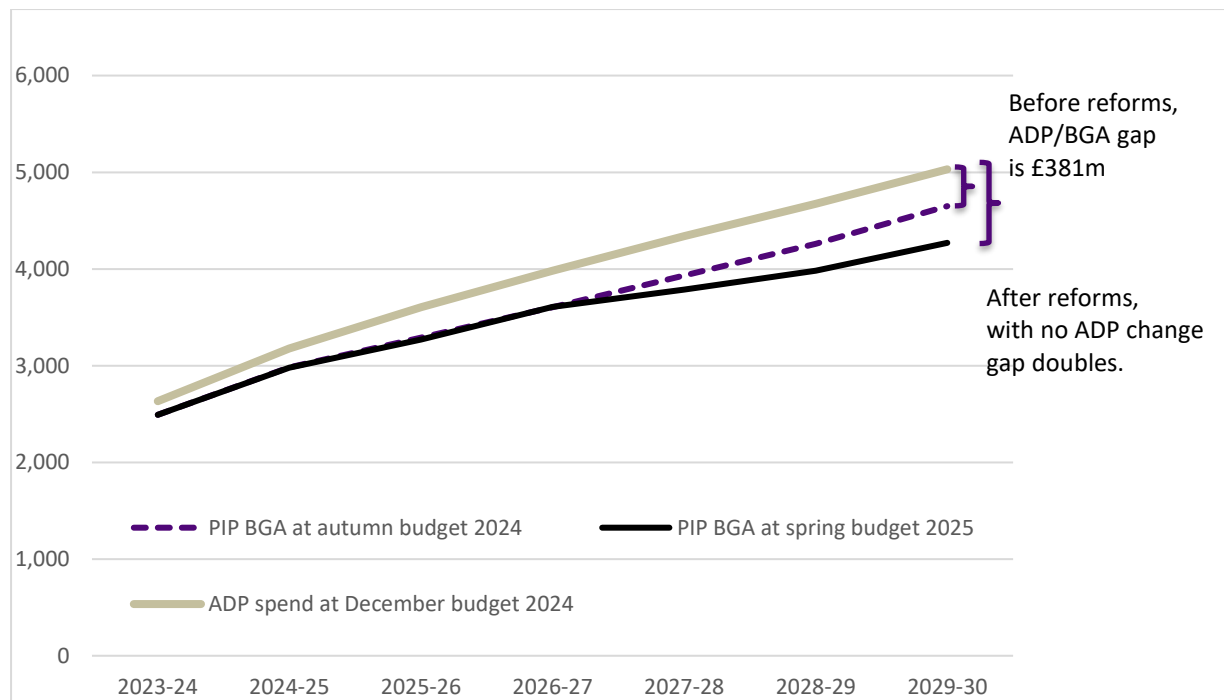
Before the spring statement PIP BGA was forecast to be £4,650 million that year. Following the spring statement it is forecast to be: £4,270 million.

Assuming ADP spend stays the same, this means that the 'gap' between spend on ADP and PIP BGA in 2029-30 is now likely to be around £760 million, rather than £381 million.

Before the reforms the PIP BGA represented 92% of ADP spend in 2029-30. Now, it is forecast to be around 85% of ADP spend that year.

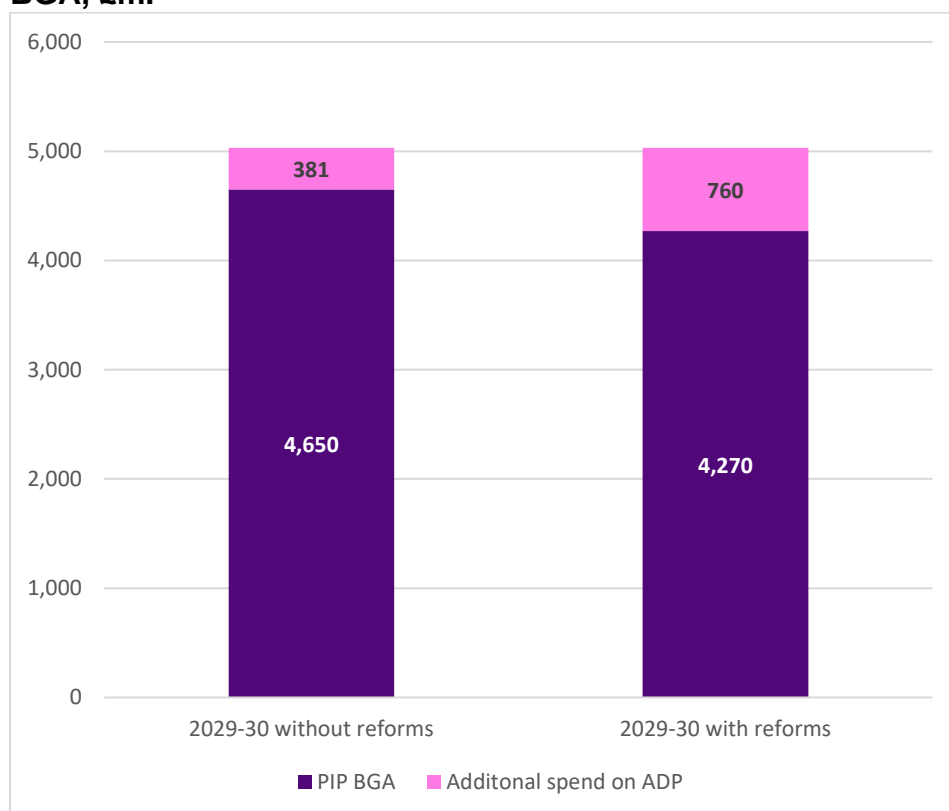
These figures may change as forecast spending on Scottish social security is due to be updated later in May by the Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Chart 2: Forecast ADP spend compared with BGA before and after spring statement, £m.



Sources: [Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, 7 April 2025](#), [SFC](#), [SEFF December 2024](#)

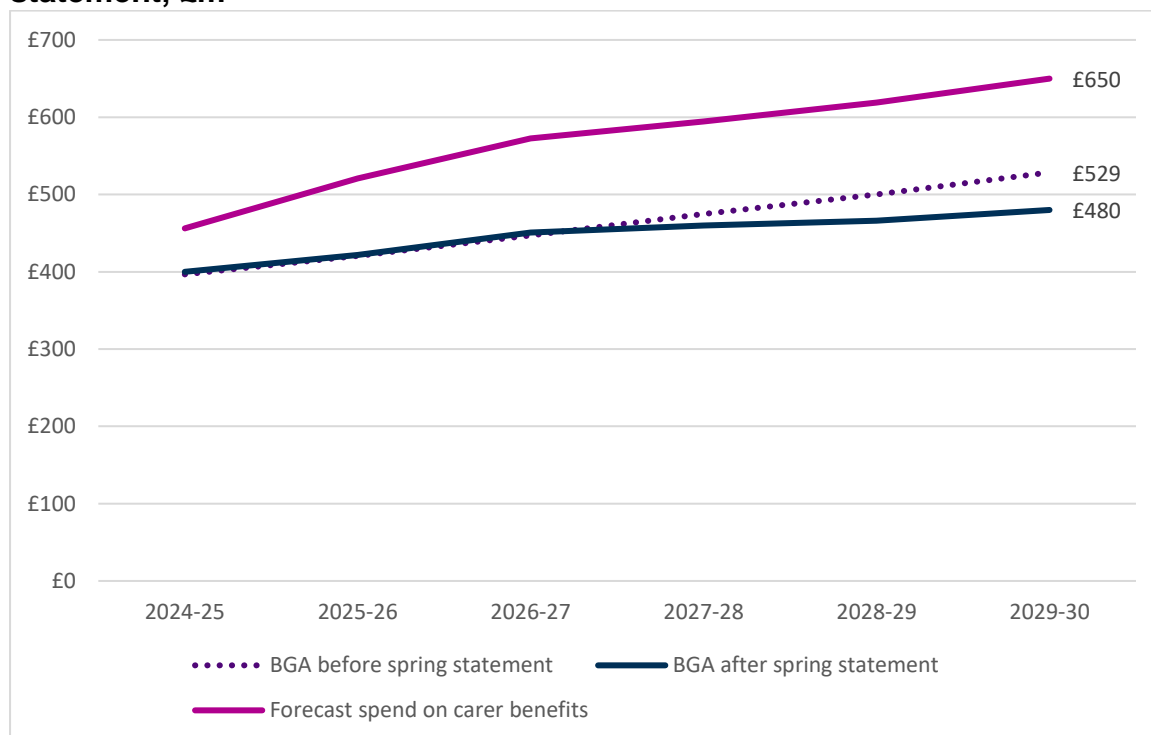
Chart 3: Impact of UK reforms on the difference between ADP spend and PIP BGA, £m.



Sources: [Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, 7 April 2025](#), [SFC](#), [SEFF December 2024](#)

The UK Government reforms to PIP will also slow the growth in Carer's Allowance. Chart 4 below shows that, in 2029-30, the Carer's Allowance BGA will be £480 million rather than £529 million, widening the gap between BGA and Scottish Government spending on carer benefits.

Chart 4: Carer benefit spend compared to BGA before and after spring statement, £m



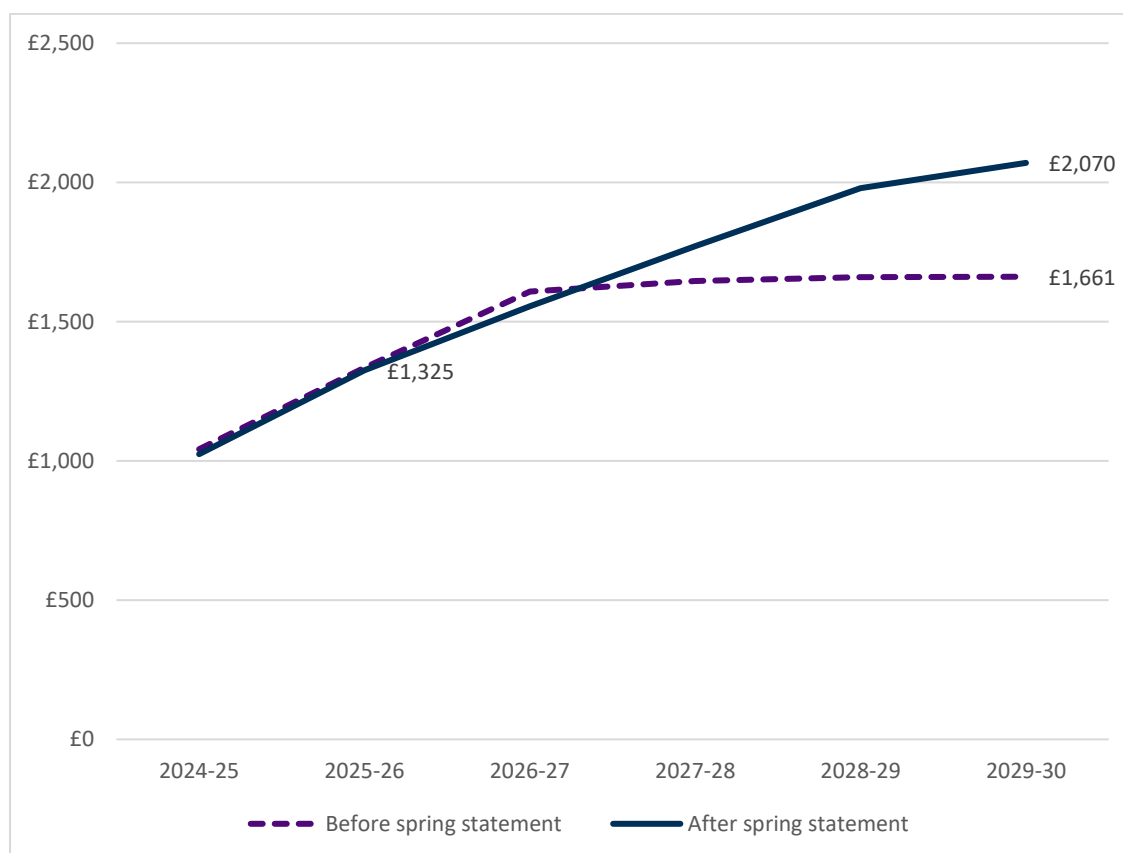
Notes and Sources: SFC December forecast. Scottish Government revised BGAs, April 2025. N:B carer benefit spend includes Carer's Allowance in Scotland, Carer Support Payment, Carer's Allowance Supplement and planned Carer Additional Person Payment. (Does not include Young Carer Payment which is around £1m spending per year).

Total Social Security Budget

In January, the Scottish Fiscal Commission forecast that, by 2029-30, social security spending would be around £1.6 billion more than the funds received through the social security BGAs. This includes the impact of the planned mitigation of the two child limit. Recalculating this using the revised BGA forecasts following the Spring Statement suggests that this difference between BGA and spend could now increase to around £2 billion in 2029-30.

In other words, by 2029-30, it now looks as though the Scottish Government will need to find about £2 billion from elsewhere in its budget to fund its current social security policy. This is a rough estimate based on the spending forecasts made by the SFC in January. More robust figures will be available when the SFC update their forecasts later this month.

Chart 5: Total devolved social security forecast spend above BGA: before and after spring statement. £m



Notes and Sources: 'Before spring statement' is taken from [Figure 8 in Scottish Fiscal Commission Mitigating the Two Child Limit and the Scottish Budget](#), January 2025. 'After spring statement' re-calculates this using the revised BGA figures in ['Block grant adjustments from the UK Spring Forecast 2025; Letter to finance and social security committees, April 2025](#).

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Shona Robison [told the Scottish Parliament on 2 April](#) that:

"in the Scottish Government, we will strain every sinew to protect disabled people from this deplorable action from the Labour UK Government. However, let me also be clear about how difficult that will be, given the scale of it."

In a [debate on the UK Government's disability benefit reforms on 23 April](#), the Cabinet Secretary, Shirley-Anne Somerville told the Chamber that:

"We need to take time to work through and fully consider the significant impact that those cuts will have, but it will be significant. The Scottish Government estimates that the proposed reforms will result in the loss of £400 million from the block grant adjustment by 2029-30."

That said, I reassure the people of Scotland that the Scottish Government's social security system will ensure that our fundamental principle of treating people with dignity, fairness and respect will continue to guide our approach."

In closing the debate she reflected that:

"The proportion of the budget that the Scottish Government has chosen to invest in order to enhance the social security offering, over and above the money that we get from the UK Government, is projected to be less than 3.5 per cent of the Scottish Government's total resource budget in 2029-30. Yes, there is a challenge, but that is the level of the challenge." ([Chamber Official Report 23 April 2025, col 66](#))

In their written submission Citizens Advice Scotland refer to the review of Adult Disability Payment, which is due to be submitted to Ministers in July, saying:

"The UK Government's proposed welfare reforms, and the potential budgetary implications for Scotland, could render the Review's recommendations undeliverable."

Members may wish to discuss:

- 4. The magnitude of the reduced funding and the affordability of current devolved social security policy.**

Theme 4: Abolishing the Work Capability Assessment

In '[A Dangerous Road](#)' the IPPR suggest that there are some good reasons for abolishing the WCA:

"There are some good reasons for this, for both the claimant experience as well as DWP, but many details will need to be worked through. In particular, there are currently 600,000 people receiving the LCWRA element within UC who do not get any PIP. Following this change, some of those people may try to claim PIP, but they will not all be eligible. The Government has said it may need to introduce special exemptions for, for example, those affected by cancer treatment, people with short-term conditions that get better and women with a high-risk pregnancy. Crucially, the tightening of PIP eligibility criteria that we describe above means that some individuals (from 2028-29 onwards) will lose eligibility for both PIP and UC-H as a result of the Green Paper reforms; the Government has not said how many people it expects to be in this group. As we show in Figure 5, anyone in this situation will be severely affected – losing at least £9,600 a year."

Overlap between PIP and UC Health Element

A [response to an FOI request \(14 April\)](#) showed that, of those in receipt of the LCWRA element in Universal Credit:

- 62% had a PIP daily living award.
- 32% had a PIP daily living award and scored a minimum of 4 points in at least one daily living activity.

Treating PIP and ADP the same

If PIP is to become the qualifying benefit for the UC health element, and the Scottish Government does not make the same changes to ADP as the UK Government is making to PIP, then this raises the question whether, in Scotland, ADP will continue to be treated as the equivalent to PIP.

The [DWP green paper on welfare reform](#) said:

“the interactions of the reformed system and the implications for Devolved Governments will need to be fully considered before being implemented. This will be particularly important in Scotland where consideration will be needed as to how entitlement to the new UC health element will be determined, given that UC is reserved and PIP is devolved and has been replaced by Adult Disability Payment.”

In the debate on disability reforms on 23 April, the Cabinet Secretary, Shirley-Anne Somerville said:

“even if we do not make any changes, I do not know whether the ADP will be able to be relied on if the work capability assessment is scrapped.” ([Chamber Official Report, 23 April 2025, col 65](#)).

This issue has arisen before in the context of discussing potential disability benefit reform under the previous UK government. In 2022, Andrew Latta, Deputy Director for Pensioner Benefits and Carer's Allowance, DWP told the Social Justice and Social Security Committee that the DWP would find a way to assess eligibility for Universal Credit if PIP and ADP diverge:

“The whole point of devolving the disability benefits, however, is precisely that the Scottish Government can take a different path from the UK Government. From a DWP point of view, we provide reserved benefits to everybody in Great Britain, and we will need to find the people who get the premiums. If we cannot use a Scottish Government benefit to do that because it has veered away from the English and Welsh benefit, we will need to find another way of doing so. Whatever we provide to people in England and Wales, we have to provide to people in Scotland. We have to find a way of achieving that.” ([Committee Official Report, 10 March 2022, col 16](#)).

Members may wish to discuss:

- 5. How people might qualify for the Universal Credit ‘health element’ in Scotland if the work capability assessment is abolished**

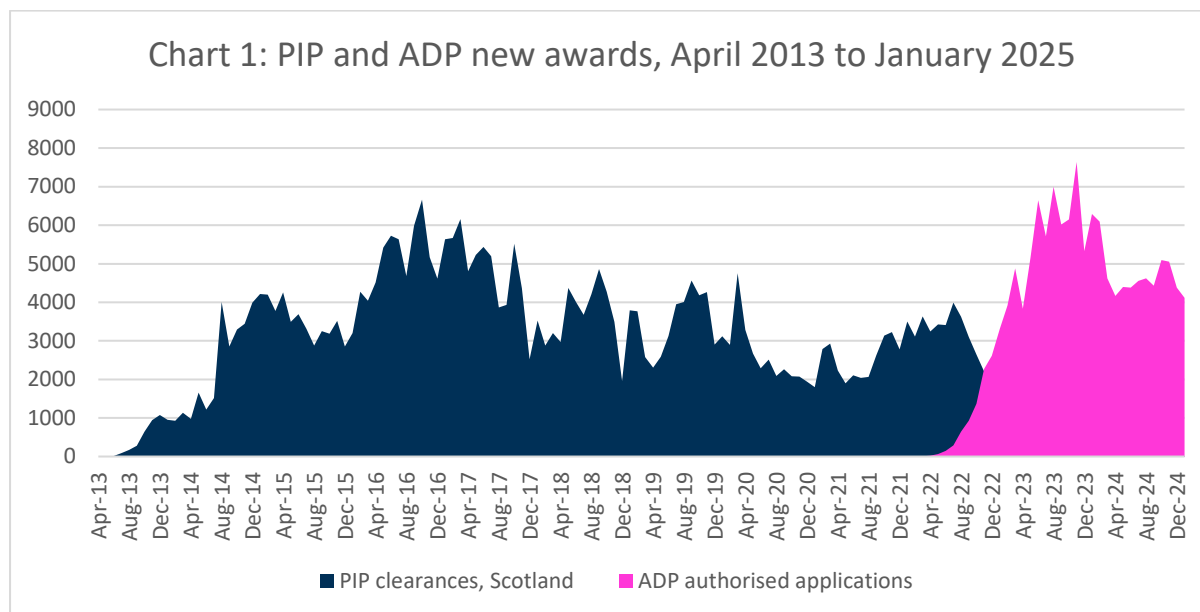
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**Camilla Kidner
SPICe 08 May 2025**

Annex 1: Trends in ADP and PIP caseload

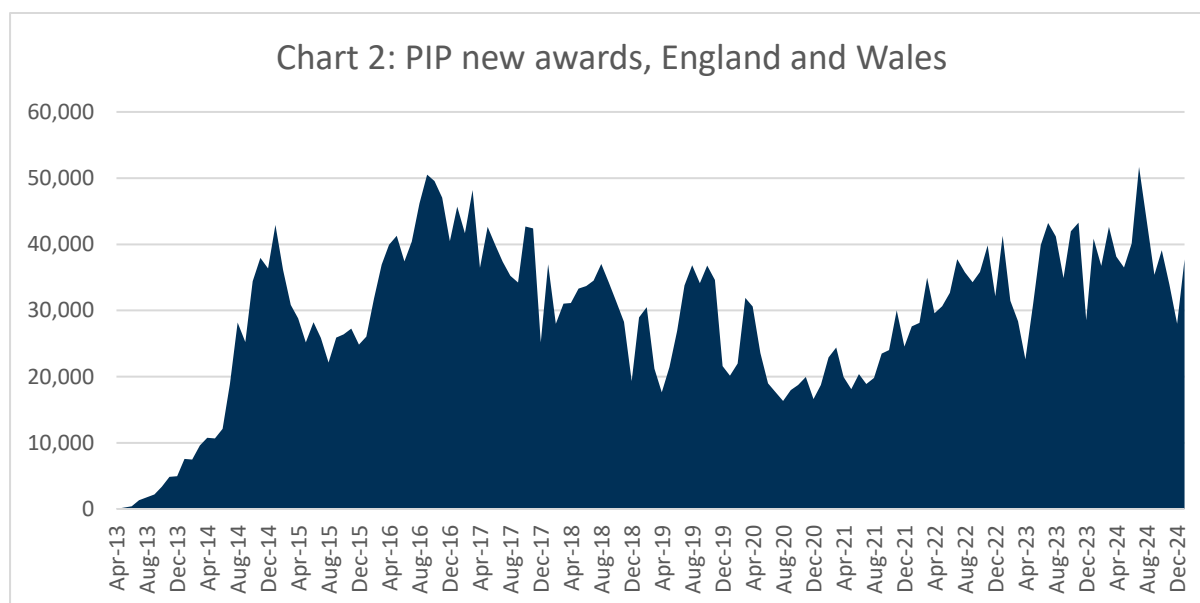
Newly authorised applications awarded by month.

Chart 1 shows the trend in new awards for PIP and, from 2022, ADP. It shows significant fluctuations over time, but there is a large increase starting from around late 2020. The introduction of ADP resulted in a drop in new awards followed by a spike in 2023-24. Since then, new awards have continued at a higher level than in the 2020-22 period.



Notes and sources: PIP clearances awarded. StatXplore. ADP applications authorised. Social Security Scotland.

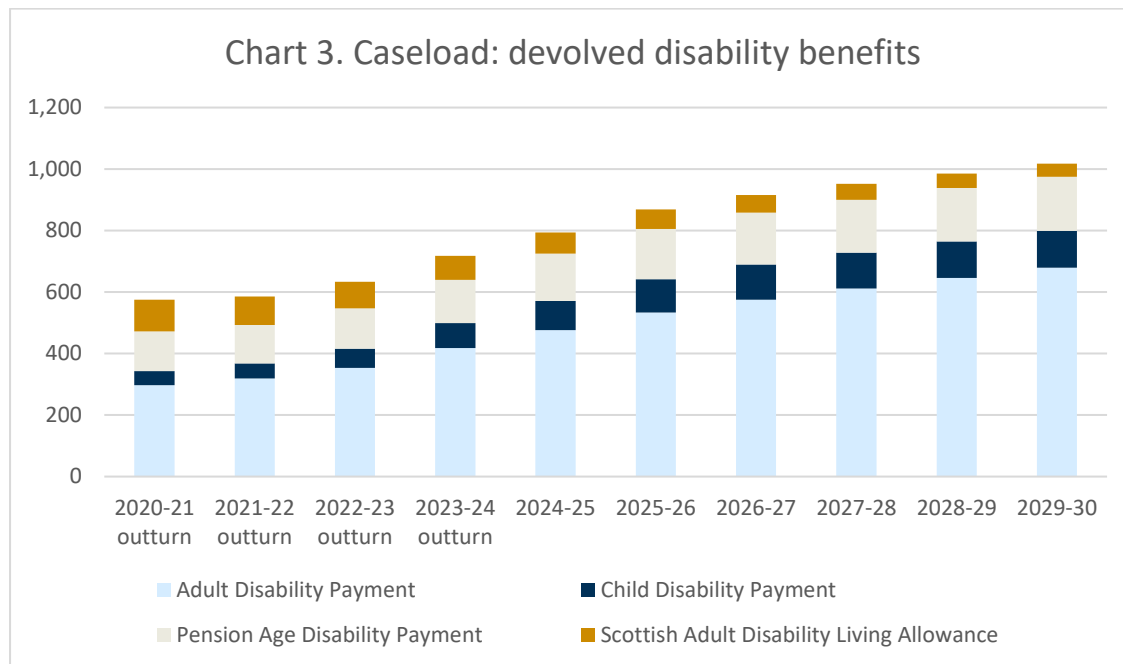
Chart 2 shows the trend in England and Wales. This shows increasing numbers of new awards from around August 2020 to August 2024.



Notes and sources: PIP clearances awarded. StatXplore

Caseload: actual and forecast

Chart 3 below shows the increase in caseload across the main devolved disability benefits since 2020-21 and the latest forecast up to 2029-30. Over the whole decade, the number of people in receipt of child DLA/CDP is forecast to increase 162% (from 46,000 in 2020-21 to 120,000 in 2029-30) and the number of people in receipt of ADP/PIP is forecast to increase 128% from 298,000 in 2020-21 to 679,000 in 2029-30.



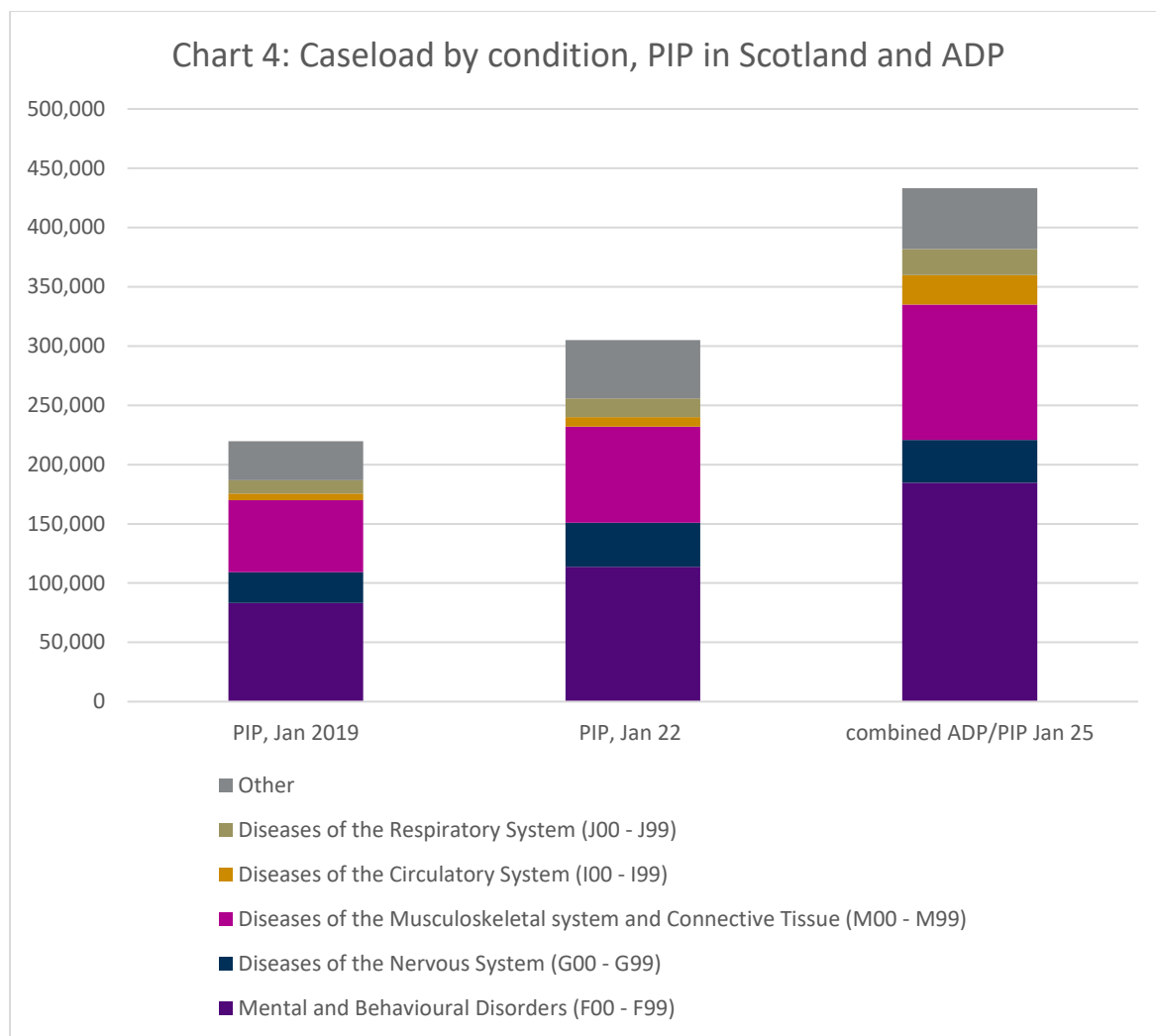
Source: SFC SEFF December 2021 onwards. ADP include PIP, CDP includes child DLA, PADP includes Attendance Allowance. SADLA includes adult DLA.

Main disabling condition

Over half of those in receipt of ADP or PIP have one of two broad groups of main disability;

- Mental and behavioural disorders – 38% of the caseload in 2019, and 39% of the caseload in 2025.
- Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue – 28% of the caseload in 2019 and 24% of the caseload in 2025.

Chart 4 shows that the total caseload has more than doubled between January 2019 and January 2025 (from 219,637 on PIP in Scotland in January 2019 to 468,470 on either PIP or ADP in January 2025).



PIP awards of four points

DWP data released on 15 April in response to an [FOI request](#) shows that 87% of working age claimants in receipt of the standard Daily Living component scored fewer than four points in all Daily Living activities.

	PIP claimants	Proportion awarded fewer than 4 points in all Daily Living Activities
Enhanced Daily Living	1,608,000	13%
Standard Daily Living	1,283,000	87%

Data for January 2025. England, Wales and Abroad. Working Age only. Normal Rules only.

Overall, 54 percent of people in receipt of the PIP daily living component scored a minimum of four points in at least one daily living activity as at January 2025.

The [response to a further request \(14 April\)](#) showed the variation by certain main disabling conditions.

Health Condition category	% scoring 4+ points in at least one daily living activity
Anxiety and depression	52%
Autistic spectrum disorder	94%
Learning disabilities	97%
ADHD/ADD	81%
Other psychiatric disorders	74%

A [PQ answered by Stephen Timms on 1 May](#) provided an analysis for the 18 most common disabling conditions in PIP showing the number and proportion of people who did not score four points in any Daily Living activity. The analysis is for England and Wales only. The table is reproduced below:

Health condition category	Volume of PIP Claimants in receipt of Daily Living component	Claimants awarded less than 4 points in all daily living activities	
		Volume in each condition group	Proportion in each condition group
Cancer	70,000	23,000	33%
Anxiety and Depression	587,000	282,000	48%
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	206,000	13,000	6%
Learning Disabilities	188,000	7,000	3%
ADHD / ADD	75,000	14,000	19%
Psychotic Disorders	112,000	26,000	23%
Other Psychiatric Disorders	90,000	25,000	28%
Arthritis	279,000	214,000	77%
Chronic Pain Syndromes	173,000	118,000	68%
Back Pain	194,000	154,000	79%
Other Regional Musculoskeletal Diseases	136,000	97,000	71%
Cerebrovascular Diseases	56,000	19,000	34%
Epilepsy	36,000	11,000	30%
Multiple Sclerosis and Neuropathic Diseases	80,000	38,000	48%
Cerebral Palsy and Neurological Muscular Diseases	47,000	11,000	24%
Other Neurological Diseases	97,000	35,000	36%
Respiratory Diseases	83,000	45,000	55%
Cardiovascular Diseases	61,000	38,000	62%

SJSS/S6/25/15/4

All Other Conditions	272,000	126,000	46%
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Source: PIP Administrative Data. PQ answered 1 May 2025. Data for January 2025, working age claimants only. Many claimants have multiple conditions. Only their main condition is recorded above.

Annex 2: PIP, ADP and the Universal Credit ‘Health Element’

How PIP and ADP work

The basic rules for Personal Independent Payment and Adult Disability Payment are the same.

PIP/ADP is **not means tested** and it is not relevant whether or not someone is in work. It is intended as a contribution towards the additional cost of long-term needs and disability.

It is primarily a benefit for those of **working age**, but if you already received PIP/ADP you can continue to get it after pension age. (19% of people getting PIP are of state pension age (Statxplorer)).

A **‘points’ system** is used to determine qualification for a higher or lower rate of a ‘Daily Living’ component and ‘Mobility’ component. Statements called ‘descriptors’ are organised under ‘activities’. For each activity, you score points according to the descriptor that best describes your level of need. You need a total of 8 points across the ten Daily Living activities to qualify for the Daily Living component. Similarly, you need a total of 8 points across the two ‘Mobility’ activities to qualify for the mobility component. You need 12 points to qualify for the higher rate.

For example: Daily Living activity one ‘preparing food’ has six descriptors ranging from: can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided (zero points) to ‘cannot prepare and cook food’ (eight points).

Currently, you can count any score to reach the threshold of eight points for Daily Living. The proposed change is that you will need to score at least four points in an Activity to count it towards your total. For example, the following score of 8 points would currently qualify a person for PIP. Under the reforms it would not, because none of the individual descriptors score 4 points.

- Activity six: Dressing and Undressing: Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to dress or undress – 2 points
- Activity seven: Communicating verbally – Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to speak or hear – 2 points.
- Activity four: Washing and bathing – Needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist – 2 points.
- Activity three: Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition – Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to monitor a health condition. 2 points.

[Payment rates for PIP/ADP in 2025-26](#) are:

- Mobility £29.20 per week (standard), £77.05 per week (enhanced)
- Daily living £73.90 per week (standard), £110.40 per week (enhanced)

Carer Benefits

A carer of someone in receipt of the 'daily living' element of PIP/ADP can get Carer's Allowance (Carer Support Payment in Scotland) (assuming other eligibility criteria are met, such as earning below a certain amount). They can also qualify for the 'carer element' in Universal Credit.

The 'Health element' in Universal Credit.

Universal Credit includes additional amounts for carers, a disabled child in the family, rent payment and 'limited capability for work related activity' (LCWRA), sometimes referred to as a 'health element'.

Unlike PIP, Universal Credit is means tested, and the 'health element' is related to ability to work.

In 2025-26 the LCWRA/'health' element is £423.27 per month in addition to the standard allowance (£400.14 per month for a single person aged 25 or over). There is also a lower rate Limited Capability for Work (LCW) addition that people could get if they claimed before April 2017. For new claims since then, being assessed as having LCW does not entitle someone to an additional payment.

The LCWRA is awarded following the 'Work Capability Assessment'. This is different to the assessment used for PIP. For example, difficulties must arise from specific bodily or mental disease or disablement. In addition there are some conditions which automatically qualify – for example high risk pregnancy, or undergoing chemo-therapy.

The [DWP report](#) that, across the UK, the number of working age people in receipt of incapacity benefits – Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) with a health condition – increased from 2.6 million in 2019 to 2020 to 3.3 million in 2023 to 2024. The increase in those with UC LCWRA or in the ESA Support Group over the same period was from 1.85 million to 2.5 million.

In Scotland, in August 2024 there were:

- 161,741 in the ESA 'support' group, and
- 143,552 in the Universal Credit 'LCWRA' group.