



Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working – Information for NAVCA Members

31 March 2025

The [*Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working*](#) Green Paper, was published by the Department for Work and Pensions on 18 March and updated following the Spring Statement on 28 March 2025. It outlines the government's proposals to reform the benefits system with the aim of reducing economic inactivity and supporting individuals with health conditions or disabilities in accessing employment opportunities.

Key Proposals

1. **Reforming Benefit Assessments:** The government intends to restructure the assessment processes for health and disability benefits to better identify individuals' capabilities and support needs. This includes potential changes to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments and Work Capability Assessments to ensure they accurately reflect claimants' abilities and potential for work.
2. **New Support Conversation:** The Green Paper introduces a 'support conversation' for individuals with health conditions or disabilities affecting their ability to work. Conducted by appropriately skilled personnel, this conversation aims to identify individual needs and goals, provide information on available support, and guide individuals towards suitable resources. The objective is to move away from assessments focused solely on incapacity and instead facilitate early, personalised support.
3. **Local Leadership in Tackling Economic Inactivity:** The government emphasises mobilising local leadership to address economic inactivity by better integrating work, health, and skills support. Each area in England is tasked with developing a local [*Get Britain Working*](#) plan, supported by new funding for the Connect to Work programme and various place-based initiatives. These efforts aim to create a coherent support system tailored to local community needs.
4. **Youth Guarantee and Benefit Reforms for Young People:** To prevent long-term economic inactivity among young people, the Green Paper proposes a 'Youth Guarantee,' ensuring that all individuals aged 18 to 21 have access to employment, education, or training opportunities. Additionally, the government is considering delaying access to the health element of Universal Credit until the age of 22, reallocating resources to enhance the quality and range of opportunities available to young people during this critical transition phase.

5. **Enhancing Employment Support:** An additional £1 billion investment is proposed to provide tailored and personalised employment support for individuals with health conditions or disabilities. This initiative aims to deliver the largest-ever investment in opportunities to work for this demographic, emphasising the importance of personalised assistance in facilitating employment transitions.
6. The UK Government has announced **significant changes to the welfare system**, particularly affecting Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). These changes aim to reduce welfare expenditure and encourage employment among individuals with health conditions or disabilities.

Universal Credit Health Top-Up Adjustments:

- **Reduction for New Claimants:** Starting next year, the health top-up for new UC claimants will be halved and then frozen at £50 per week until 2030.
- **Standard Allowance Modification:** By 2029-30, the standard UC rate is set to decrease from the planned £107 to £106 per week.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Reforms:

- **Stricter Assessment Criteria:** The government plans to tighten PIP eligibility by 2026, potentially disqualifying some current and prospective claimants.

Abolition of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA):

- **Implementation Timeline:** The WCA is slated for removal by 2028.
- **New Assessment Approach:** Post-WCA, eligibility for the UC health element will be determined through PIP assessments. This shift aims to streamline evaluations but raises concerns about individuals who may not qualify for PIP yet still face work limitations.

Implications:

- **Financial Impact:** Critics warn that these reforms could lead to significant financial losses for disabled individuals, with some potentially losing up to £400 per month.
- **Poverty Concerns:** Projections indicate that these changes might push approximately 250,000 individuals, including 50,000 children, into poverty.
- **Advocacy Response:** Over 100 disability organisations have urged the government to reconsider these reforms, emphasising the potential for increased hardship among disabled populations.

Implications for NAVCA and Local Infrastructure Organisations

The proposed reforms emphasise collaborative working between local authorities, health systems and the VCS. LIOs can facilitate partnerships and collaborations to: support affected individuals, families and communities; provide capacity building support for the VCS to help organisations to deliver effective employment services and adapt to the changes in the benefits system; and respond to demand for volunteering opportunities as a pathway to employment.

Next Steps

- **Engage in consultation:** Actively participate in the consultation process for the Green Paper to represent the interests and insights of the VCS. The Green Paper is currently out for consultation but with no stated closing date – see [here](#) for response form.
- **Collaborate with local authorities:** Work closely with local authorities to contribute to the development and implementation of local *Get Britain Working* plans, ensuring that the VCS is integrated into strategic planning and service delivery.
- **Prepare for increased demand:** Anticipate and plan for a potential rise in demand for services such as training, employment support, and volunteer coordination. Assess current capacities and identify areas where additional resources or partnerships may be needed.
- **Inform and support VCS members:** Disseminate information about the proposed reforms to VCS members, providing guidance on how they can adapt to and engage with the changes.