

09 April 2025

Liz Kendall MP

liz.kendall.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Ms Kendall,

As two leading local charities working on behalf of people affected by disability and sight loss across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, our service users have raised concerns about proposed changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

People living with disability and sight loss face additional, unavoidable costs. The rise in living costs coupled with recent benefit changes is adding to the pressure. Benefits such as Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are a lifeline for people affected by sight loss.

More than 35,500 people are visually impaired in Leicestershire. Of the 25,000 people accessing PIP in the region, one fifth are likely to be sight impaired. Changes to the living component of PIP is causing anxiety for people with sight loss.

Changes risk denying people much needed support, making life even harder for people already facing barriers to living well and risks putting additional pressure on statutory services and the NHS. People are telling us how this is affecting them and the impact these proposed cuts may have on their lives and wellbeing.

"When I heard the announcements about PIP my blood ran cold. I feel that we [people who are visually impaired] are easy targets."

"We've had the winter fuel payment stopped for thousands of OAPs and now the living allowance cut will be the next thing and then an attack on the mobility part of PIP. I hope I'm proved wrong."

'As I'm sure many of you know claiming PIP is a long arduous journey over a long period of time when you first have to get over the long application form and then possibly have a face-to-face interview or a telephone consultation and then another long wait before you find out if you are eligible.'

www.vistablind.org.uk

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Vista is the working name of The Royal Leicestershire, Rutland and Wycliffe Society for Blind.

Reg. office: Vista, Provincial House, 37 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 6TE

As you start to review the details of the proposed changes, we along with other local charities would be happy to share areas of most concern so that any proposed changes can mitigate risks of putting people who are most deserving of the support PIP offers continue to get the support they deserve.

Our offer of sharing our concerns and recommendations stands as an open invitation.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Wright - Vista
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