



UK Mission to the
United Nations
in Geneva

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Geneva, 21 January 2026

The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to submit its response to communication OL 12 2025 further to the letter dated 4 September 2025 from the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 21 January 2026

Special Procedures Branch
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Response to Special Procedure communication OL GBR 12 2025 from the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

The UK Government is committed to helping disabled people fulfil their potential and play a full role in society. The reforms to the UK's social security system set out in the [Pathways to Work Green Paper](#) and [Universal Credit Act 2025](#) are designed to support this ambition.

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned analysis

The UK Government has fulfilled its duties under the UK [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) which requires impacts¹ to be considered before making policy decisions and will continue to do so.

We included some reforms in the [Green Paper](#) that were not part of the consultation so that readers could see our proposals in their wider context and provide more informed views. The Green Paper was clear on which proposals were and were not subject to consultation. These included the changes delivered in the [Universal Credit Act](#), which were needed urgently to increase the adequacy of the Universal Credit standard allowance for all claimants and tackle perverse incentives that drive people into dependency. The UK Parliament had the opportunity to fully debate, scrutinise, vote on and propose amendments to the reforms.

Specifically, regarding the [Universal Credit Act](#), we published [impact assessments](#) alongside the Bill in the usual way, upon introduction on 18 June. These set out who will be impacted, the financial implications of the changes and included an equality analysis (earlier analysis was also published for the wider package of Green Paper reforms alongside [the Spring Statement](#)). To account for the changes to the Bill, the

¹ Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) the UK Government is required to consider how its function, including in its policy making, will affect people with different protected characteristics. There are eight protected characteristics listed in the PSED, including and not limited to disability, age and sex.



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equality analysis was revised as part of the updated impact assessment, and re-published on 7 July, ahead of Commons Committee Stage. For further information, please see the full UK response below.

2. Please provide information on compliance of the Universal Credit Bill and measures announced in the “*Pathways to Work*” Green Paper with commitments under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and on any related assessments conducted in this respect.

The UK takes its international obligations, including those covered by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), very seriously.

The measures announced in the [Pathways to Work Green Paper](#), and those implemented in the [Universal Credit Act](#) are in accordance with this Government’s commitment to help disabled people fulfil their potential.

Our obligations under international human rights law including the CPRD were brought to the attention of Parliament^{2,3} and considered during the passage of the [Universal Credit Act](#) in accordance with parliamentary process.

The [Universal Credit Act](#) will introduce, for the first time ever, a sustained above inflation increase to the UC standard allowance for all claims. The biggest boost to out-of-work support since 1980, according to the independent [Institute for Fiscal Studies](#), worth hundreds of pounds to low-income families.

3. Please provide information on mechanisms and measures to ensure close and meaningful consultations with persons with disabilities, including their representative organisations, in the drafting and adoption of any future law and policy reforms that impact on their lives, and particularly on any future reforms associated with the Green Paper.

This Government values the input of disabled people and people with health conditions, in addition to the representative organisations and people that support them. That is why we brought forward a [Green Paper](#) and opened a public consultation – which received over 47,500 responses before closing on the 30 June. We ran a programme of

² [Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

³ [Universal Credit Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)



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consultation events to hear from people directly, including 7 virtual events and 11 in-person events across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. We are now carefully reviewing responses as we further develop proposals, alongside facilitating other ways to involve disabled people in the reforms.

We launched the Collaboration Committees on the 2 July 2025, which bring together groups of disabled people and other experts for specific work areas to collaborate and provide discussion, challenge, and recommendations.

The Government is also engaging with disabled people and their representatives as part of the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment, which aims to ensure we have a system that supports disabled people to achieve better health, higher living standards and greater independence, including through employment. We have committed to co-producing the Review with disabled people, the organisations that represent them and other experts, ensuring lived experience is at the heart of its work.

On 30 October, The Minister for Social Security and Disability set out further details about our approach to the Timms Review. He will co-chair the Review alongside Sharon Brennan and Dr Clenton Farquharson CBE. We will oversee a steering group, which will provide strategic direction, shared decision making and overall leadership for the Review. It will be recruited through an open and accessible Expression of Interest (EOI) process, and the majority of its members will be disabled or representatives of Disabled People's Organisations.

We are also in the process of establishing the Independent Disability Advisory Panel, which was announced in the [Get Britain Working White Paper](#), to convene and connect the expertise of deaf and disabled people and people with long-term health conditions into our policy and strategy design and delivery. The Panel will have a broad remit across all of health and disability policy and will be a lived experience panel, focused on connecting into the health and disability community at a strategic level, to provide advice, build trust and strengthen relationships with the sector.

Disability rights expert and consultant Zara Todd was appointed as the Chair of the Panel on 21 August; she will take a guiding role in the development and focus of the Panel. A public expression of interest was launched on 1 September to appoint up to 10 Panel members.

4. Please clarify what steps your Excellency's Government is taking to guarantee the right to an adequate standard of living and social security to persons with



disabilities and other groups at disproportionate risk of poverty, without discrimination and retrogression.

Total welfare spending in Great Britain is 10.6% of GDP and 23.5% of total government expenditure in 25/26⁴. Whilst this overall expenditure is broadly stable, the proportion of GDP spent on health and disability benefits is increasing over time, currently 2.5% (25/26), an increase of a quarter from 2% in 21/22 and is forecast to grow to 6% of total government expenditure. £26.5 billion was spent on PIP in 2024/25 (in 2025/26 prices). This has increased from £15.8 billion in 2019/20 in real terms and is forecast to rise to a new peak of £34.9 billion by 2029/30⁵.

Evidence shows that that where people are working, their risk of being poor is significantly reduced. This is why supporting those who can work to do so is the foundation for the UK Government's approach to tackling poverty.

The UK Government has set out ambitious plans for employment, including disability employment. The [Get Britain Working White Paper](#), backed by an initial investment of £240 million in 25/26, will target and tackle economic inactivity and unemployment and join up employment, health and skills support to meet the needs of local communities. An additional £115 million has been invested in rolling out a supported employment programme, Connect to Work, in England and Wales, helping more disabled people, those with health conditions and people with complex barriers to employment to find sustainable work.

Alongside this, the UK Government is delivering the biggest employment support package for disabled people and people with health conditions in more than a generation. Backed by £1 billion a year of new, additional funding by 2030 we will build towards a guarantee of personalised work, health and skills support to improve returns to work and prevent economic inactivity. Our Pathways to Work Guarantee will ensure there is an offer of work, health and skills support for disabled people and those with health conditions claiming out of work benefits.

Universal Credit (UC) supports people on a low income or out of work and is claimed by more than 7.5 million people, and the UK Government recognises the critical role it plays in tackling poverty and making work pay. The [Universal Credit Act](#) includes important changes to rebalance UC – to tackle perverse incentives in the UC system that drive people into dependency by rebalancing the core payment and health top

⁴ [Guidance and methodology: Benefit expenditure and caseload tables - GOV.UK](#)

⁵ [Benefit expenditure and caseload tables 2025 - GOV.UK](#)



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up. This includes legislating for the first permanent, above-inflation rise in the UC standard allowance and protecting existing claimants on UC health element and those who meet severe conditions criteria and special rules for end of life going forwards.

Scotland

Non-means tested disability benefits in Scotland are devolved to the Scottish Parliament and are delivered by the Scottish Government under the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018.

Scottish Disability Assistance is comprised of Child Disability Payment, Adult Disability Payment, Pension Age Disability Payment, and Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance which provide financial support to mitigate the additional costs of being disabled or living with a long-term health condition.

In line with our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disability benefits in Scotland are designed to help cover the additional costs of everyday tasks, and of leaving the house and getting around. They were co-designed with disabled people and organisations that represent them.

5. Please provide information on measures to raise awareness and combat stigma and negative attitudes toward benefit claimants and persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial disabilities and people requiring access to mental health care and support.

We do not agree with the suggestion made in the letter, that senior governmental officials and politicians used language that stigmatizes benefits claimants.

The UK Government strongly values disabled people and is committed to championing them. That is why every government department has a lead Minister for Disability to represent the interests of disabled people and champion disability inclusion and accessibility. As we drive forward progress on the Government's manifesto commitments and five missions, we will continue to champion the rights of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.