

# Analysis & Comments

## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

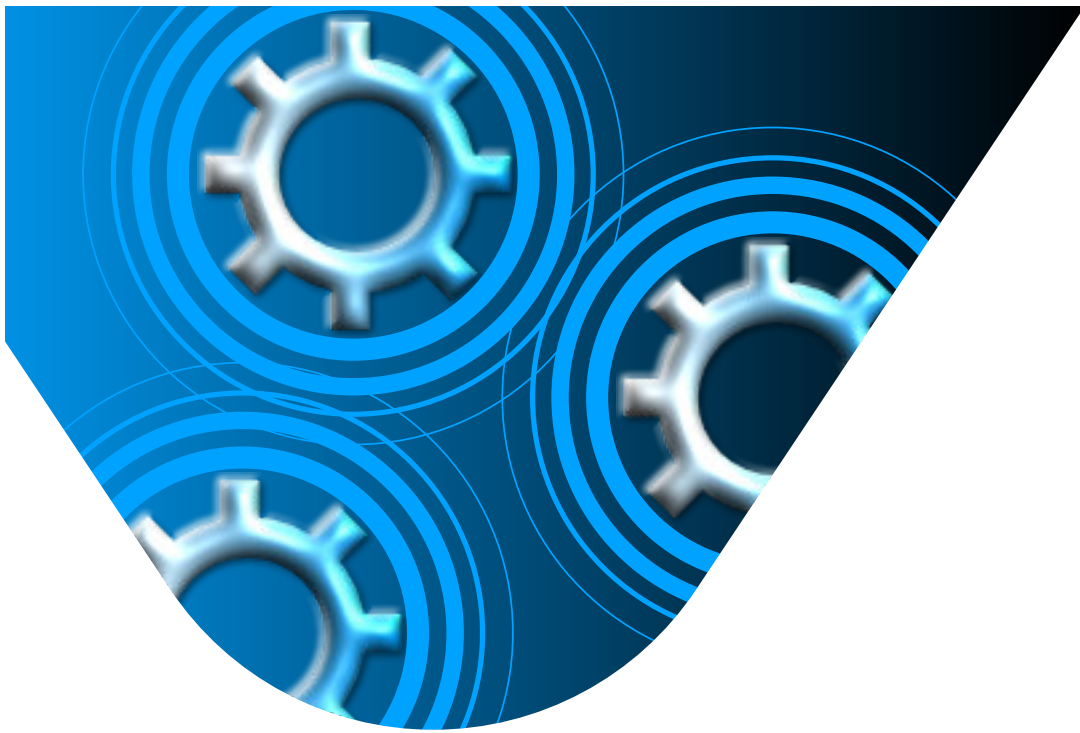
The Consultation response document for  
Department for Work & Pensions

This is a general public version of a  
detailed response to the  
consultation

▼ **Keith Mckenzie**  
**KMC**



The Response is written by Keith Mckenzie



# Contents

**Page 3: Introduction (Short)**

**Page 4: Response to the documents analysis**

**Page 5: Response to questions**

**Page 16: About Myself**

**Page 17: Useful Links**

**This document is written by Keith Mckenzie creator of neurodiversity awareness projects, a qualified graphic designer and a participant of community projects**

**Please note this document is a version for the general public.  
There is a personal version which includes the project director's experiences against the points mentioned.  
This is only available to members of parliament, ministers, government departments and staff associated with the DWP.  
Any request is available via getting in touch on Linked-in by visiting the website [keithmckenzie.dudaone.com](http://keithmckenzie.dudaone.com)**

**However, due to confidentiality, it will be the decision of the project director to who will access the personal version of the document.**

# Introduction

The information provides comments from the DWP consultation documents.

With the combination of my university education and through research through my awareness projects I have developed over the years I can also provide insight and analysis, providing a bigger picture.

Please note:

Some of the information focuses on the perspective of neurodivergent perspective with other aspects applies to all disabilities

# Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

## Response to the documents analysis

I agree that the introduction mentioned disabled people in those with health conditions should be able to have the same access of opportunities, choices and chances like everybody else.

The document mentioned that disabilities and health challenges want to work but are not supposed to do so.

However, the publication doesn't mention anything about the obstacles or challenges some are through discrimination and lack of recognition of the talents of people's difficulties.

### Personal experiences

I have faced many barriers when attempting to access opportunities including being persistently exploited and manipulated. This includes bringing up unrealistic expectations unannounced which were not mentioned in any application.

Anyone with short-term memory related difficulties one of the most fundamental barriers is able to attain specific academic qualifications. This means the door is automatically closed on your face does not have these qualifications. Also there is no room for allowance on in qualifications I would require GCSE qualifications even if you have equivalent qualifications such as City and Guilds or RSA in English and maths.

I've also faced situations where an interview of opportunity turns into a mental agility test when you are expected to memorise questions which you do not know what it planned to ask.

Any statistics presented in the consultation paper do not match lived experience so I feel that the publication is out of touch with experiences of disabilities and difficulties. It mentioned constantly about spending on health and disability benefits will be unsustainable for future years without any reform. while they are dressed in the economic factors I felt there's a lack of reality in the context and how the barriers hold back disabilities and difficulties cause this situation.

**Other examples of featured on my personal version of this document which includes some of my personal experiences.**

### Other factors

There are barriers related to if you risk getting work in the working environment that does not make reasonable allowance of your difficulties not only you could risk being fired but could also risk being homeless if you are in receipt of housing benefits previously. So, there is a sustainable risk as well as an economical factor.

I had to discontinue reading the earlier sections of the consultation document as it does not represent my experiences and challenges and I felt the matter dehumanises me & others with difficulties and disabilities as a liability.

Throughout my life when I face obstacles and opportunities I have been constantly told wasted talent.

This is why I feel this publication and the descriptions and the matters addressed are too dehumanising and derogatory without context and against lived experiences.

## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

# Response to Question 1

**The government wants people to try to work, or it may affect their benefits.**

The government wants people to try to work, or it may affect their benefits.

Any requirements and sanctions must be based on discretion on an individual's basis. However, reasonable allowances are essential based on a person's disabilities and difficulties.

As well as employment I feel it is also important to widen the approach to include training, education, apprenticeship (by business) and Enterprise start-up (for those particularly who are talented and highly ambitious)

For those who are talented and have specialist skills in the abilities and who are passionate, support must be improved based on their level of expertise.

The behaviour and attitude must be improved. This includes not disregarding a person's difficulties and then pressuring them to take opportunities that are not realistic and manageable because of their difficulties and lack of accommodation. This also applies to not pressuring people to particular jobs when the working environment is not accommodating because of a person's difficulties. While at the same time, they should stop making inappropriate job Employment and training suggestions that would downgrade their aspirations.

This applies to Jobcentre staff and providers of employment programmes for disabilities.

As well as a person's difficulties, some people also have specific strengths and positive attributes. So it should be important for employers to widen their approach to expectations. Instead, explore the possibilities of a person with disabilities and difficulties, strengths, attributes, specialist skills, expertise and lived experiences.

This includes an exploration process on when a person starts employment, discovering the possibilities and how they can be beneficial to the organisation and business through their talent, ambition, strengths, attributes, specialised skills, expertise and lived experience.

It would be inappropriate to downgrade talented and passionate people. For example if someone is educated and trained in art and design, it will not be appropriate to suggest opportunities to work at a butchery store.

I feel the government needs to require employers to do better with improving opportunities for disabilities and difficulties. This includes removing barriers for when it is related to expectations and requirements. The expectations need to be balanced with a person's especially skills their strengths and positive attributes. If an employer requires academic qualifications they should be more accommodating for those who may not have GCSE on specific academic qualifications but they may possess alternative qualifications related to English and maths linked with city & guilds or RSA

Although employers and staff may have some aspects of training based on general understanding, this may not be enough to prevent negative working experiences. For example they may have some understanding of specific neurological difficulties however the staff and management could then disregard their difficulties and could still experience discrimination, bullying and abuse. Because of this, the working environment of employers of disabilities have to impose a cultural and behaviour change. This includes stamping out and discouraging bullying and ableism. This includes staff not to use their tastes of entertainment and news articles they digest and cultural trends to wrongly discriminate.

To enable a sustainable experience for an employee with disabilities and difficulties the support structure has to be improved. This involves having key people at different levels (and in some cases different departments including management) who have not just a full level of understanding of a person's difficulties but also understanding the lived experience and challenges of specific difficulties at the work environment. This could prevent interpersonal issues & any misunderstandings.

Because conflicting circumstances can occur outside the working environment that can affect a person to cope and manage at work, I do insist they needs to be a system in place with support mechanisms in their personal life to prevent these aspects disrupting that person's ability to cope and manage at work.

# Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

## Response to Question 1

This involves an improvement of services. For example on mental health charities and organisations like mind and an improved mental health support through the NHS. This is important as a hate crime, discrimination and any type of mistreatment when visible at public places, open spaces and abuse relationship situations (with family or friendship) could disrupt or harm that person with disabilities and difficulties to maintain their place at work. I do feel it is essential that support needs to be enhanced for ambitious and talented people with disabilities and difficulties who would like to develop an enterprise startup.

**Additional examples of featured on my personal version of this document which includes some of my personal experiences.**

### Analysis

In addition to the direct actions and plans for employment there are other indirect factors that have to be changed. If we want disabilities and difficulties to contribute and integrate into society to access the same opportunities as anybody else they have to be a cultural change and behaviour towards disabilities and difficulties.

This is important because any types of mistreatment of a person with difficulties and disabilities they face can disrupt or harm that person to access or maintain work opportunities.

**Additional examples of featured on my personal version of this document which includes some of my personal experiences.**

## **Response to Question 2**

### **The plans to make changes with some more people not getting PIP payments**

Despite the plans to remove access to payments for some people with difficulties and disabilities. I do feel in contrast that there should also be a reward for people who have attempted to access opportunities, even if they have faced obstacles & support people to help bridge the gap related to how their difficulties affect them or prejudice through intolerance and lack of acceptance.

This applies to job centre staff and providers of training and employment programmes. For details on examples of the support, please refer to the solutions document.

## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

# Response to Question 3

## Ways of improving healthcare and social care for people who stop receiving PIP payments

**Before answering these questions, it is important to note that, through my experiences currently, neither the healthcare, social care and mental health services we all have do not match the support needed if any personal independence payments are stopped. Also, through my personal experience, there are no adequate services to match the support against the neurological difficulties I live with, along with other people.**

One essential matter that needs to be resolved is that there are too many barriers to accessing help and support based on different aspects that affect a person's disabilities and difficulties. From my research, if you live on the autistic spectrum and you live in Birmingham, you are not eligible to access Mental Health Support & Advice from the NHS.

Also, through my experiences when I used to receive support in my home from providers who run on behalf of social services, they have imposed support at times of the day that has interfered with my work ethic.

For example, they have scheduled support at inappropriate times during the daytime rather than in the evenings.

Any type of home Care support needs to be flexible, and that means changes need to be more flexible on the hours of the day and what days of the week. For example, to maintain a work ethic, home care support needs to be modified to evenings and weekends when necessary.

Also, through my experiences, providers of home care support on behalf of social services have created barriers by not helping or assisting service users to help them feel included in application forms, especially if a person's difficulties affect how they cope and manage. This also applies when it comes to interviews, where we've been in recent years, support providers do not permit assistance or support. In summary homecare support providers need to do better in supporting people to apply for opportunities and not interfere with their work ethic to make efforts to find opportunities and to maintain work. This also applies to education courses, training and employment programmes.

Health Centre and GP services need to be user-friendly for those with disabilities and difficulties, including neurodiverse individuals.

This means being patient being more accommodating and modifying the interpersonal approach that does not punish a person for the difficulties they live with (especially if the example of difficulties is invisible and hidden)

Through my personal experience, I had a mixed experience. When you access a GP surgery or appointment, you only have a limitation of five minutes to explain your points within the boundaries, and they will cut off the conversation and make you leave if you take too long to express your point. This means my experience at the G.P. & surgeries related to neurological difficulties can be destructive and counterproductive.

**There should be extra flexibility on the type of support a person should receive.**

Depending on where you live, you cannot access services that help your mental health (which can be used to build your interpersonal skills and improve how you manage difficulties) at the same time of using home care support to help you cope and manage at home.

Through my personal experiences

The organisation Birmingham Mind does not allow anyone to access their services if you receive "floating support" (the term used for home care support on behalf of social care)

In summary, organisations like Mind, NHS mental health services, and social care need to be more flexible and adaptable to not interfere with people's working ethics and the help & support they need.

On occasions, there are services where you need to pay for accessing services such as mentoring and life coaches. By removing the pip from certain people, there needs to be focused funding to access services (which are not free), which can bridge the gap of their difficulties and interpersonal abilities, which improves employment opportunities.



## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

# Response to Question 4

**The government plans a number of changes including an employment insurance**

**How long should these people get unemployment insurance and what support will they need?**

I cannot answer the question based on time length.

However the measurement should also include any risk factors.

For example if a person is in danger of anxiety mental health and emotional outbursts which could impair their mental health and well-being this should be considered

# Response to Question 5

**The importance of keeping people safe against abuse being neglected**

Develop stricter standards guideline systems for social care, mental health services and providers general NHS services including GP's and doctors and providers of mental health services. This includes guidance of respecting the individual dignity and human rights not using their difficulties to mistreat them inappropriately including physical or controlling abuse or exploitation including gaslighting

**(PERSONAL EXPERIENCES)**

**Additional examples of featured on my personal version of this document which includes some of my personal experiences.**

The DWP must have an improved joined up thinking between themselves and other government departments including the Home Office, Department of Health, the department responsible for social care.

This may involve some changes to the laws and legal guidelines.

The fundamental change which is essential to maintain disabilities and difficulties to access and maintain work as well as integrating with Society is doing more to reduce disability hate crime and any type of abuse and ableist behaviour. Also the national government, local authorities and community organisations must do more to encourage change of social behaviour and attitude which discourage discrimination, abuse, ableist behaviour and hate crime. This would be approach in the same way as other diverse members of society including misogyny sexual abuse racism and hatred against LGBT.

These examples are important factors which can remove the barriers for a person with disabilities and difficulties to access & maintain employment as well as integrating with Society.

## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

# Response to Question 6

## Helping people to work: Support Conversations

As mentioned in the support document emphasises the importance of supporting and embracing those who have made efforts to build their sense of purpose who have faced obstacles and barriers where they need to be supported and encouraged further.

However, for those who do not have a sense of purpose and have made no efforts they need to educate first their responsibilities and obligations before any sanctions occur.

Overall in these support conversations greater support must be made and to embrace talented and ambitious people who are trying to make an effort against those who don't. In summary, we must not treat everybody with the same broad brush in support conversations.

For details on the approach in "support conversations" please refer to the solution document.

It is also important to emphasise that on occasions a person needs to access training or education in their occupational field to gain a sufficient amount of skills to improve their prospects to access opportunities better. It is important that this needs to be encouraged as an additional option.

An additional approach should be encouraged including industry mentoring schemes which also support disabilities linked with specific industry sectors

Please note that additional support if a person's difficulty held them back when attempting to access opportunities which were denied. For example if communication, reading and writing affects the job application successfully they're additional support if you provide. It is essential to make the support bridge the gap against the person's difficulties and not use their difficulties to punish them.

# Response to Question 7

## How some people may not have done enough towards employment.

It is very important to distinguish different types of people who may be seen as not doing enough. Some people may feel demotivated and discouraged after years of facing barriers and obstacles which can make them feel like a failure.

Because of this we must not lecture people in these support conversations on having a sense of purpose and contribute to Society. This is especially to those who have made efforts in the past but may feel it's currently because of their previous experience which may of course cause trauma and distress.

## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

# Response to Question 8

### Support Conversations continued

On the report it explains about how some people won't do any efforts at all over then attend these "social conversations"

When this occurs there's a plan of instructing people to look for work or type in other activities otherwise they will lose their benefits.

The document asked how the DWP decides on who needs to look for work and who's taking part in other activities and those who do not.

Before making decisions there must take some time to explore if there are some conflicting issues which a person may not be uncomfortable to share. For example a person could be a victim of ongoing abuse, hate crime, discrimination. This is an addition to if their person has received trauma which has disrupted their efforts or intentions.

It is very important if this occurs to modify the tone and be very compassionate if these examples occur with modified steps forward.

Another factor to consider is if there are obstacles for opportunities for example if a person's difficulties affect their ability to have the required academic qualifications and other barriers it is important that additional support needs to be added to make sure they are not held back.

Because of these and other factors we must not pressurise people but certain jobs that could affect how a person copes against their difficulties. For example it may not be appropriate for a person to work at a retailer if the employer expects high speed abilities with that becoming a burden. It will also be inappropriate to suggest jobs that could risk mental health and emotional outbursts if they don't cope with the general public. These and other factors must be considered in related to job search and accessing opportunities.

Any type of sanctions and losing the person's benefit should always be the last resort, in relation to a person who chose not to do any effort at all and cannot provide exceptional excuses.

# Response to Question 9

### Some people might not accept attending a social conversation

The question is if a person says no should it affect what benefits they get.

**This answer is limited to my personal version of this document**

## **Pathways to Work: My response from consultation**

# **Response to Question 10**

### **Some people will not have to attend a social conversation**

It asked how DWP should decide on who does not need support conversation meetings and to find jobs.

Is it based on a person's circumstances and any issues that could affect or impair their difficulties and well-being?

As mentioned elsewhere, it will be inappropriate to pressurise someone to find work who's been a victim of abuse and suffering with trauma when they receive counselling and service and other mental health services.

The overall decisions must be made not just based on their effort but also circumstances in their personal life.

There are factors which affect their mental health well-being and side effects against how they're treated including crime abuse and assault. When this occurs, a timeline is needed on support and recovery and then decide whether they need longer time to recover or there'd be ready to start support conversations.

# **Response to Question 11**

### **Eligibility of 18 years old and older**

That are proposals to change the guidelines on the restrictions of a person receiving disability living allowance for children. This includes limiting the eligibility of 18 years old and older.

This depends on the individual's circumstances and their families.

The changes make natural sense as many children have to now stay in school until 18 years old. I feel they need to be some exceptions in place for example if the child is a victim of abuse in their families or do not live in a stable family environment.

## **Pathways to Work: My response from consultation**

# **Response to Question 12**

### **Universal credit for young people**

The proposal of changes is to the universal credit for young people and become part of the youth guarantee scheme until they are 21.

However the health component will not be allowed until the person reaches 22.

This has to be planned extremely carefully, there could be a potential situation where somebody who suffers with their disability and difficulties could live with financial hardship if they're not able to access the health component of universal credit. Because of this an exception is needed to prevent young people with disabilities from suffering.

With the youth guarantee scheme it must not be used to block older adults people with disabilities and difficulties to access opportunities.

# **Response to Question 13/14A/14B**

### **Access to work**

The scheme that can help people find work. This includes travel expenses and specialised accessibility equipment. Also finances to help have a support worker at work.

I do feel that access to work needs to be redesigned and should support people through their differing skills, abilities, strengths, attributes and talent.

I feel that the access to work scheme should expand to support or signpost people to enterprise startup programs that are catered to support them and to make sure that their disabilities and difficulties are not a barrier.

# **Response to Question 15**

### **How to make access to work better than is now**

As mentioned elsewhere the programme needs to do better in supporting talented and ambitious people. However it does need to change its attitude and behaviour. This includes not making inappropriate suggestions where a person is highlighted to struggle or will be a downgrade to the aspirations.

There have been news stories I hear about pathways to work with people who are recipients who would have their support taken away unannounced and be made to suffer. Because of this many people may be put off by avoiding the programme.

They need to be improved transparency on the period of time when a person have support when they have reached employment and assess the situation towards the expiry date. This is important so a person receiving the scheme needs to be aware of what changes and adjustments need to be made.

## Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

# Response to Question 16

## Human rights

Feedback on make sure organisations are supporting employers along with disabilities to get into work and to stay in work

### **For employers**

Even though employers and organisations have certain training on disabilities and difficulties. However there may be gaps which could lead to conflict in situations when employing a person with disabilities and difficulties.

The employer needs to be aware of scenarios and factors and make them be prepared when changing circumstances occur. This includes a change of working practices and procedures, This is very important to be aware that the employer may need to modify their work in the environment including interpersonal judgments & behaviour

### **For disabilities into work**

Explore the person's difficulties, strengths and attributes. This includes being aware of how their difficulty cannot ever do certain skills and abilities. This is not just about the required skills for the occupation but any additional skills and tasks which they may be required to do beyond their occupational duties.

### **For disabilities to stay in work**

Any type of personal development routines and procedures must be supported with enabling the person to be organised, efficient and beneficial to the working environment.

However they must respect their adjustments to prevent their difficulties causing any problems or a liability.

# Response to Question 17

## How should people get help from access to work in the future

Please refer to the solutions and factor document

# Pathways to Work: My response from consultation

## About myself

This document was written by Keith Mckenzie project director of Plus Value Awareness.

Over the past two decades, Keith has developed a variety of awareness projects, campaigns and activities. His projects have been involved with many awareness and support organisations across the UK and have participated in several presentation talks at different events around two decades.

Outside awareness, Keith has been involved in the behind-the-scenes of a unique music project, which includes filming and other behind-the-scenes assistance with developing video documentaries and music events that involve music artists DJs and producers.

Also, Keith is a participant in salsa dancing classes in the community as an assistant along with volunteering and a participant in a salsa dancing conventions Motion city & Latinmotion's NYE Fest based at Birmingham's NEC.

Keith has a background in art & design and has been involved in and many projects related to Graphic design, selected photography and visual art.

In 2022, Keith become a featured community participant and was part of video campaign for Birmingham City Council to showcase the city legacy since hosted the Commonwealth Games

In 2023, Keith participated in an awareness campaign by visiting for supporting the annual events Autism Dance Day (by Anna Kennedy OBE) and International Dance Day (by The Dance Committee of ITI ). To coincide supporting both events an awareness information project was launched to encourage inclusivity at dancing related environments for dancers with Neurodiversity, Invisible Disabilities and those who have experienced anxiety.

Also Keith took part in a transport Health & Safety meeting organised by Transport for West Midlands to provide lived experiences and suggestion in front of public transport safety teams on Buses, Trains & Trams

In the same year Keith has participated in the public consultation in Birmingham by the Department for Work and Pensions and published two insight & analysis documents as part of the consultation

In 2024 Keith have attended a meeting with West Midlands Trains on his lived experiences on West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services and has developed and insight document with suggestions

**Find out more on developments and achievement by visiting his website**  
**[Keithmckenzie.dudaone.com](http://Keithmckenzie.dudaone.com)**

# Useful Links online

## ▼ Plus Value Awareness

from the awareness website developed by me

### Awareness home page

Titled “Plus Value Awareness”. the website projects a variety of projects and information based the experiences on changing public perceptions for over 20 years.

<https://plusvalue.dudaone.com>

### Advantage

The information project how certain neurological difficulties can be beneficial to work, education, communities and rest of society.

<https://plusvalue.dudaone.com/advantage>

### Zero Toxic

The information project against prejudice, ableism, discrimination, bullying at hatred.

<https://plusvalue.dudaone.com/zerotoxic>

Written and developed by Keith Mckenzie

<https://keithmckenzie.dudaone.com>

<https://plusvalue.dudaone.com>

