Neil Duncan-Jordan MP
Member of Parliament for Poole
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

12th November 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing ahead of the publication of the Milburn Review to urge the Government to uphold the living standards of young disabled people.

I have welcomed the Prime Minister's refreshed approach to our health and welfare framework, including his championing of a fairer social care system and the much-improved language on safeguarding social security. The Prime Minister is right to oppose "crude cuts" and has rightly set out a Labour approach to bringing down the welfare bill by tackling its underlying causes. This includes ill health, low wages, the lack of affordable housing and the high cost of living.

We must learn the lessons of the austerity years, that benefit cuts and sanctions do not create jobs, but increase poverty and place greater pressure on the NHS, local councils and other public services – ultimately costing us more in the long run. Our welfare state should be a springboard, not a trapdoor into poverty which enables those who can, to get into work, and ensures nobody in our country goes without the essentials they need to live.

The previous leadership lost the trust of disabled people and their organisations through its attempted cuts and provoked a major backbench rebellion. I was concerned then, as I am now, that disabled people are already more likely to live in destitution, and the interim report of the Timms Review has highlighted that existing support is insufficient to provide a decent standard of living. This is the context in which your Department's response to the Milburn Review, which was commissioned under the previous Government, will be received.

There is understandable concern about proposals reported in the media today suggesting that the Milburn Review will recommend withdrawing the health element of Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Young disabled people will not cease to be disabled if the support they rely on is cut; they will simply be poorer. Some 75% of people receiving the health element of Universal Credit already experience deprivation and withdrawing this support from young people risks making an already desperate situation even worse.

Tel: 01202 160740
Email: neil.duncanjordan.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.neilforpoole.co.uk

Neil Duncan-Jordan MP
Member of Parliament for Poole
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

It is also vital to recognise that PIP is not an out-of-work benefit. It helps meet the additional costs of living with a disability, providing support that allows people to work and live independently. Removing support that helps people overcome barriers to employment would therefore directly contradict the Government's stated objective of supporting more people into work.

There is also scepticism of the claim that *"Those with the most profound disabilities who are not capable of working would be given a new benefit, paid at a higher rate."* There are already different rates within UC and PIP to recognise levels of severity in how disability impacts recipients. The wording in the media echoes similar claims made by the previous Government last year, but their proposed cuts to PIP were later revealed to be targeting people with severe disabilities, such as those who were unable to go to the toilet unassisted. We cannot repeat this approach

I have set out four initial tests for the Milburn Review ahead of the Government's response:

1. Will the proposals make disabled people poorer?

2. What employment support will be available, how much will be invested, how long will it last, and will opportunities be tailored to an individual's skills and circumstances?

3. How will the proposals define severe disabilities, and what impact will they have on people with severe or fluctuating conditions?

4. Will any conditions cease to qualify for support altogether and how will this assessment be made?

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you ahead of the Government deciding its formal position to both the Milburn and Timms Reviews, alongside Disabled People's Organisations, to discuss how we can work constructively towards a path forward rooted in Labour values, to create good jobs, provide security and support people to live independent lives with dignity.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Duncan-Jordan MP

Tel: 01202 160740
Email: neil.duncanjordan.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.neilforpoole.co.uk