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End the privatisation and minefield of PIP applications, TUC Congress told

The TUC has backed a call for the Social Model of disability to be placed squarely at the heart of the assessment of the Personal Independence Payment.

The social model of disability states that people are disabled not by their health or conditions, but by the barriers that society places in front of them. Motion 34 at the annual Trades Union Congress, being held in Brighton, calls for a range of measures to address the current dire situation faced by those trying to claim PIP.

These measures include the introduction of quality assessments to replace the tick-box exercises, a conversation with a qualified medical professional, a re-thinking of work and the individual's needs, the provision of genuine support for neurodiverse people and others with invisible disabilities and an end to privatisation.

Speaking in support of the motion, PCS delegate Rachel Heemskirk said "PIP is a safety net that people with disabilities need because of the additional needs that come with their disabilities, but the application process is a minefield."

She added "The system is flawed and failing. It's failing because the Tory government hasn't invested properly in training for the assessors or the staff at the DWP—the very people we speak to. These are our members. We need to get rid of the private sector, it needs to be DWP workers in PCS that administer PIP."

Other speakers, all in support of the motion, highlighted the dehumanising aspect of the assessment process. Mark Gwyther, moving the motion on behalf of TUC Disabled Members said "It is time to end the humiliating and dehumanising process of getting help. It is time to support people into work, not to make the lives of disabled people even harder. Our motion calls on the government to prove it is on the side of disabled workers."

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