

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)

Background information for British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters (13/03/2017)

What is PIP?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people of working age (16 to 64). PIP is a non-means-tested benefit intended to help people with disabilities or health conditions with the extra costs they face in leading independent lives.

Everyone, including DLA recipients, must apply for PIP. The application includes an assessment. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has awarded Capita a five-year contract to deliver PIP assessments across Wales and central England. The decision to award PIP is made by a DWP Decision Maker.

PIP Assessments

The assessment for PIP is a functional assessment. It is different from a medical consultation and does not seek to reach a diagnosis, determine needs, or produce a treatment plan. The assessment is carried out in accordance with guidelines established by the DWP.

The aim of the assessment is to gather factual information about a claimant and the impact of their impairment or health condition on their mobility and daily living. The assessment can be completed as a paper-based review, but most claimants undergo a face-to-face assessment.

After the assessment, a Disability Assessor (DA) uses the information they gathered to write a clear, accurate, and reasoned report setting out how the claimant's daily living and mobility are affected by their impairment or condition. This report is sent to the DWP to be considered in their decision making.

Disability Assessors

All PIP assessments are carried out by DAs. DAs are qualified health professionals, such as an occupational therapist or a nurse, with at least two years post-registration experience in their field. All DAs complete a DWP-approved training course and go through the formal DWP approval process, which ensures that the DA has met the department's experience, skills and competence requirements.

Face-to-Face Consultations

Overview

During a face-to-face consultation, the DA will gather facts about the claimant and their health condition or impairment. The claimants that you will support will be Deaf or hearing impaired, but they may also have other health conditions or impairments that impact their mobility and daily living.

Appointments

Face-to-face consultations take place in one of our assessment centres or at the claimant's home. The appointment usually lasts for around an hour, but it can take longer depending on the circumstances. All claimants have the right to bring a companion (e.g., support worker, friend, family member, or advocate) to support them. A companion may help the claimant by reassuring them or helping them during the consultation.

What to Expect

Before the assessment starts, the DA will explain the process to the claimant, ask their permission to continue, and give them the chance to ask any questions.

During the assessment, the DA will speak to the claimant and, if needed, with help from their companion. The DA will ask questions about the claimant's mobility and how their condition or impairment affects this. The DA will also ask questions to determine how the claimant completes day-to-day tasks safely, repeatedly, and in a timely manner to an acceptable standard.

The assessment itself is a two-way process. The DA will take notes on a laptop throughout the whole assessment and tell the claimant what has been noted down. It's important that the claimant feels listened to.

The DA may ask the claimant to undergo a physical examination. It's important for the claimant to know that they won't be asked to do anything that hurts or is uncomfortable, to take off their clothes, or examined in an intimate way. The examination relates to movements carried out in everyday activities.

Daily Living and Mobility Activities

The DA will ask the claimant questions about the following daily living activities:

Preparing food	Dressing and undressing
Taking nutrition	Communicating verbally
Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition	Reading and understanding signs, symbols, and words
Washing and bathing	Engaging with other people face-to-face
Managing toilet needs or incontinence	Making budgeting decisions

The DA will also ask about the following mobility activities:

Planning and following journeys	Moving around
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