

Newsletter issue 40-April 2013

www.forwardmid.org.uk

FORWARD

MIDLOTHIAN

DISABLED PEOPLE



Equality - Diversity - Inclusion

This is the first Welfare Reform newsletter from Forward Mid.

Welfare Reform is happening.

PIP, ESA, Bedroom Tax... what do they mean, what are they and importantly how do they impact on me and my life?

Our aim here is to give good, clear up to date information to disabled People across Midlothian.

We believe that people are concerned and anxious about the impact of Welfare Reform and that clear information and support is not always readily available.

Forward Mid, with this newsletter, begin a commitment with regards Welfare Reform

to Disabled People in Midlothian to, as far as possible provide clear information and develop local support for people. Hopefully we will do this through some peer group meetings where we can update on developments and provide opportunities to share experience and negotiate the maze of Welfare Reform. Helping to minimise less stress and confusion and support better understanding.

If you are interested in being part of a local support group for Welfare Reform, get in touch with us (contacts on back page).

We hope this is a useful first publication.. we will provide four other newsletters this year, updating when things change and providing good information on local support opportunities.

It's important that where possible we support each other and work together to combat the negative impact on people's lives of Welfare Reform in Midlothian. If you want to be part of this, get in touch.



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Employment & Support Allowance

An overview of Employment & Support Allowance

Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) gives you financial support if your ability to work is limited by ill health or disability. It replaced Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support (where paid on the grounds of incapacity/disability) in October 2008. At this time it only affected new claimants to these benefits.

From October 2010 existing claimants of Incapacity Benefit began to be reassessed and, if eligible, were transferred (migrated) to ESA.

All existing claimants of Incapacity Benefit should be reassessed by spring 2014.

ESA is different from Incapacity Benefit in that it places in the emphasis on a claimant's functional capabilities. The rationale is that most claimants can and should move towards employment if they are given the appropriate support and encouragement. Therefore, the assessment process focuses on what a person can do, as well as what they can't do.

Who can claim Employment & Support Allowance?

If your illness or disability affects your ability to work you may get ESA.

You must be:

- ▶ At least 16 years old
- ▶ Under state pension age
- ▶ Not getting Statutory Sick Pay or Statutory Maternity Pay and you haven't gone back to work
- ▶ Not getting Jobseeker's Allowance.

How can I claim Employment & Support Allowance?

- ▶ Phone: 0800 055 6688
- ▶ If you have speech or hearing difficulties textphone: 0800 023 488
- ▶ Contact your local Jobcentreplus office.
- ▶ Submit a ESA1 form to your local JobCentreplus. Online at: www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/esa1-print.pdf Claim online at: www.direct.gov.uk/benefitsadviser

The Two Types of Employment & Support Allowance

Contribution-based ESA

To get contribution-based ESA you have to have paid enough national insurance contributions or be a young person (18-20).

Income-related ESA

To get income-related ESA you don't need to have paid any contributions but eligibility is means-tested.

The Two Groups of Employment & Support Allowance

Work-Related Activity (WRA) Group

If you are placed in the work-related activity group you will have to adhere to strict work-related conditions. This may involve attending work-focused interviews where a personal adviser will try to help you back into work. The adviser will draw up an action plan which will outline activities that you could undertake to help you move into work.

If you are in this group you cannot be made to; apply for a job, undertake paid work or voluntary work or undergo medical treatment.

The Support Group

If you are placed in the support group you will not have to undertake work-related activities (though you can volunteer to do so if you want).

What You Will Be Paid

Work-Related Activity Group

You will be paid a basic allowance of £71.00 plus a WRA component of £28.15.
A total payment of £99.15 per week.

The Support Group

You will be paid a basic allowance of £71.00 plus a Support component of £34.05.
A total payment of £105.05 per week.

Is there a time limit in the receipt of ESA?

From April 2012, if you are receipt of contribution based ESA, you will be limited to receive this benefit for a maximum of 365 days. After this period you can apply for Income Based ESA, which is means tested. This change in legislation is retrospective, which means that your year of eligibility will be measured from when you first started to receive it. The only exception to this is claimants in receipt of the support component who will not be time limited.

The ESA50 Form

The ESA50 asks about the effects that any physical disabilities or health problems have on common activities, and also about the effects of any mental health and intellectual difficulties on those activities.

Under each of these activities is a list of problems of varying degrees of severity. These are called descriptors. The questionnaire asked you to select the descriptor in each activity that most closely matches how difficult you find it to perform the activity in question.

A points system is used by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to determine whether you have passed this test. Each descriptor is given a fixed number of points, ranging from 0 to 15. To pass this test you need to score 15 points in total in the questionnaire. The points can come from any combination of activities. For example:

Activity 3 - Reaching

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| a. Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat or jacket. | 15 points |
| b. Cannot raise either arm to top of head as if to put on a hat. | 9 points |
| c. Cannot raise either arm above head height as if to reach for something. | 6 points |
| d. None of the above apply. | 0 points |

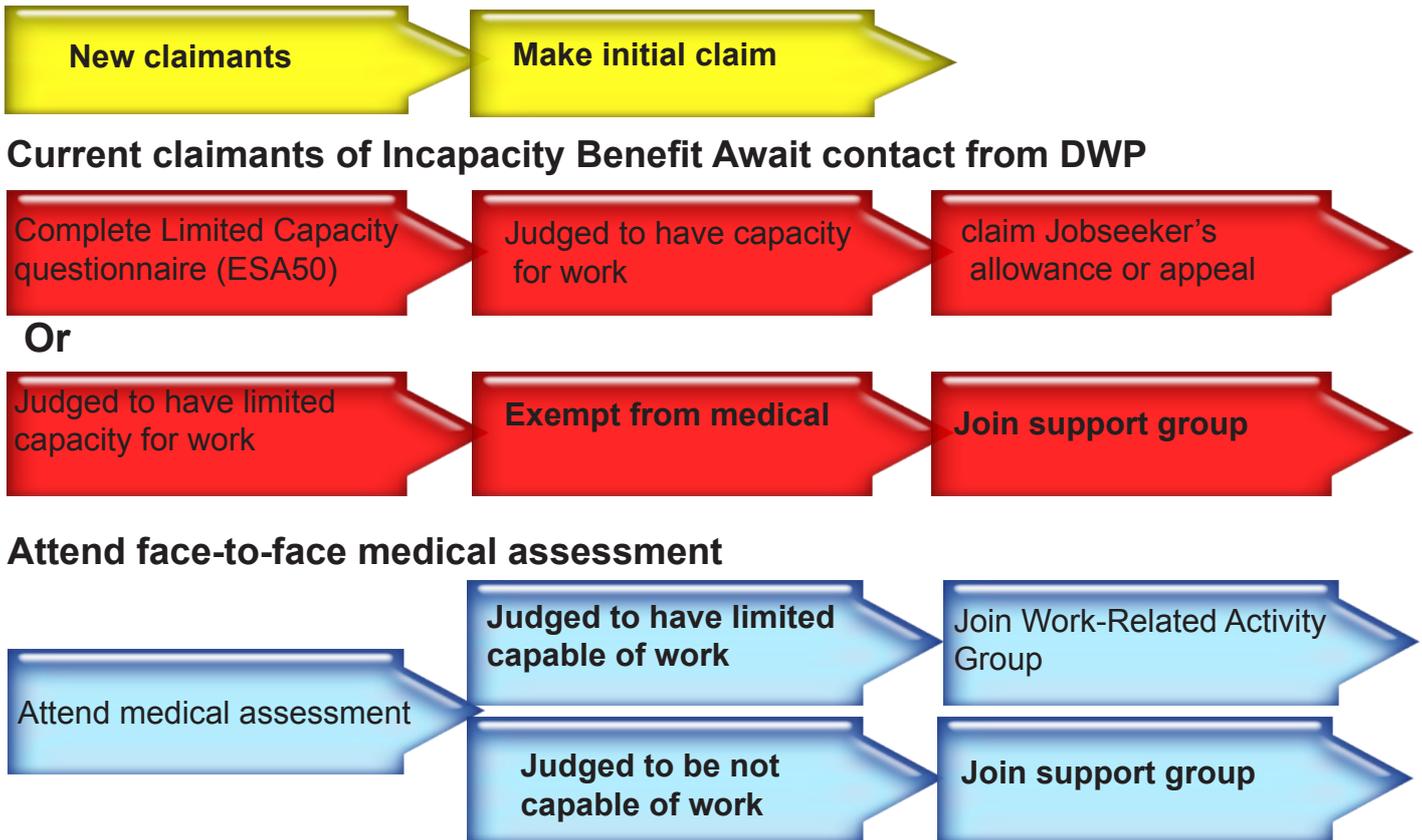
ESA50 Activities - Physical

1. Mobilising
2. Standing and sitting
3. Reaching
4. Picking up and moving
5. Manual dexterity
6. Making self understood
7. Understanding communication
8. Navigation
9. Absence or loss of control whilst conscious leading to extensive evacuation of the bowl and/or bladder
10. Consciousness during waking moments

ESA50 Activities - Mental, Cognitive And Intellectual.

11. Learning tasks
12. Awareness of everyday hazards
13. Initiating and completing personal action
14. Coping with change
15. Getting about
16. Coping with social engagement
17. Appropriateness of behaviour with other people.

The Employment & Support Allowance Journey



Tips on Completing the ESA 50 Questionnaire

The form asks you about your illnesses or disabilities. This is your chance to give the clearest picture of how your condition affects you, not in terms of the activities and descriptors in the rest of the form, but in terms of what your life is like. Anything that makes the decision maker understand just how much your life is affected by your illness or disability.

Always give full details of any problems you may have with any of the activities; breathlessness, pain, fatigue, severe discomfort or if you could do it once but not repeatedly or if you're ability to do the activity varies.

If your condition is variable you should be assessed on how you are for the majority of the time. Explain on your form the ways in which your condition varies and give your best estimate of how many days a week you are unable to manage the descriptor in question.

Make sure you give the details of everyone you think could give valuable information about your condition best. It could be a health professional, such as an occupational therapist, specialist nurse or consultant, or it could be someone like a social worker, housing support worker or similar. You could also provide non-medical evidence from friends and relatives amongst others.

Providing 'Other information'. Use this space for any additional information you haven't had room for. If you need still more room then use additional sheets but make sure you write your name and national insurance number on each one and staple them firmly to the questionnaire.

Remember, the questionnaire is evidence, the more evidence you can submit to support your claim the better the chances of your success.

Important: Keep a copy of your completed form.

Exemptions

You will be treated as having limited capacity for work if any of the following circumstances apply:

- You are terminally ill.
- You are receiving chemotherapy.
- You have, or have been in contact with, a notifiable disease.
- You are pregnant and there is a serious risk of damage to your health or to the health of your unborn child if you do not refrain from work.
- You are pregnant and are within the maternity allowance period and entitled to maternity allowance.
- You are pregnant and within either six weeks of giving birth or have given birth in the last two weeks and you are not entitled to maternity allowance or statutory maternity pay.

Appealing your Decision

If you disagree with the decision made by the DWP you must get in touch with Jobcentre Plus within one month of the date of your decision letter.

You can:

- ☞ ask them to explain their decision
- ☞ ask them to write to you with the reasons for their decision
- ☞ ask them to look at your decision again as they may have overlooked some facts or you may have more information to give them which affects the decision
- ☞ appeal against a decision to an independent tribunal

The Medical Examination

If you have a serious condition and you clearly meet the criteria for limited capacity for work and/or limited capacity for work-related activity and there is medical evidence to support this you may not have to have a medical.

The medical is not always carried out by a doctor. It could be carried out by any registered health professional, for example, a nurse or an occupational therapist.

If you have to have one, is likely to last no more than half an hour to an hour and consists mostly of the doctor asking you questions about your everyday life.

Before you attend of the assessment process, read through what you wrote on your questionnaire and look at any other evidence you have submitted. This may help to remind you of things you want to tell the examiner.

You can have someone to sit in with you during the medical. This can be anyone:

friend, relative, carer, social worker, etc. This may be particularly helpful if you are worried that you may be too tired or anxious to tell the examiner everything you think they should know. If someone is accompanying you they should be given the opportunity to provide information about you if that is what you want.

If the examiner asked you to do something that you know will cause you pain or severe discomfort say that you can't do it and explain why. If you do something and it hurts, don't suffer in silence. Let the examiner know that you are in pain or they are likely to assume that you have no problems with that activity.

ESA - Journey in Detail

- 1)** When making your claim for ESA you will be asked to provide personal information about yourself and your partner. Ensure you have your national insurance numbers to hand and other personal detail. Once you have applied for ESA you will be invited by letter to complete an Employment Support Allowance questionnaire (ESA50 Form). If you need help completing the form you should seek advice from a support worker or an advice service in your area.
- 2)** If you receive a letter from the DWP advising you that you are being transferred to the new benefit called **Employment & Support Allowance** from Incapacity Benefit or Income Support due to being unable to work, you will be asked to complete an Employment Support Allowance questionnaire (ESA 50 Form). If you are unsure what the letter is explaining or need help to complete the questionnaire you should seek advice from a support worker or an advice service.
- 3)** The ESA50 form must be completed and it asks questions about the effects that any physical disabilities or health problems have on common activities, and also about the effect of any mental health problems, intellectual difficulties you have carrying out these activities. It is important that you explain whether you can perform the activity on a regular basis in a day, if the activity gives you pain and discomfort and if your condition varies. Supporting evidence from your G.P. may have a fee attached.
- 4)** After returning the questionnaire you will usually be invited to attend a **work capability assessment** (WCA) which are held at York Place in Edinburgh where a healthcare professional (take the name of the person, you may need it if you have to appeal) will carry out the WCA. If you have difficulty getting to places on your own due to physical or other reasons or feel you need someone to go in with you to the assessment then you should make sure someone who you know goes with you to ensure the assessor understands your problems. Take your current medication with you and any details of any hospital appointments you are due to attend.
- 5)** Once you have been at the WCA you should receive a letter from the DWP confirming whether you have limited capability for work and whether you are entitled to ESA or not. If you are entitled to ESA it should confirm if you have been placed in the **Worked Related Activity Component** (WRAC) or the Support Group. If you are unsure why you have been placed in the WRAC or the Support Group or your claim has been assessed as not entitled you should seek advice to clarify your benefit entitlement or seek details about appealing.
- 6)** If you have been refused ESA and have transferred from Incapacity Benefit or Income Support your benefit will stop until you submit an appeal or claim Job Seekers Allowance. Your benefit entitlement will reduce to the Employment Support Allowance assessment phase or the Job Seekers Allowance rate. You only have 1 month to appeal against the decision so you should appeal as soon as possible.



Thanks to Nicole Bethune for this Information

Grapevine is a Lothian disability information service.

We provide free and confidential advice and information to disabled people, people with long term conditions, older people and their supporters. Our service covers people living in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian.

Grapevine's service specialises in disability topics including disability benefits. We have a helpline which is open from Mon-Thu, 10am-4pm available on ☎ 0131 475 2370 and email enquiries can be sent to: grapevine@lothaincil.org.uk



If you are a disabled person living in Edinburgh, Midlothian or East Lothian Grapevine can provide face to face appointments at our office - Norton Park in Edinburgh to assist with the completion of DLA forms. Once PIP is introduced Grapevine will still be able to provide assistance to new and existing claimants in relation to their PIP application forms.

Grapevine can offer talks to groups of disabled people, people with long term conditions and older people in the areas our service covers about the introduction of PIP so please get in touch with us on the details above if this is something you could benefit from.

If you have your own individual enquiry about any disability issue then please contact us.

**Caring with Confidence -
Learning and support for carers**



**Do you care for someone with
Mobility problems?**

Join us for a tour of the Disabled Living Centre

(Within the SMART Centre at Astley Ainslie Hospital)



Learn about the work of the centre and see a wide range of equipment to make life easier for someone with disabilities. There are large items such as chairs and beds through to smaller items such as kettle tippers and cutlery.



**Wednesday 17th April 2013
10.30am to 12pm**

**For more information or to book a place on any of the courses
you can register online at: www.edinburghcarers.co.uk**

**Or call: Jane or Debbie @ VOCAL
Carers Centre on ☎ 0131 622 6666
or email: dgreenough@vocal.org.uk**



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers

CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE



VOCAL is:

Recognised Scottish charity – SC020755
Private limited company (Scotland) – SC183050

Welfare Reform and Housing Benefit



Changes that will affect Midlothian Council and Housing Association tenants

Why is this change happening?

The UK Government is introducing major changes as part of Welfare Reform that could affect Housing Benefit for working age claimants. These changes do not apply to pensioners. If you are living in a Midlothian Council or Housing Association property that has more bedrooms than your household is assessed as needing, your benefit entitlement will reduce from 1 April 2013.

How many bedrooms am I allowed to have for Housing Benefit purposes?

-  One bedroom for every adult or couple
-  One bedroom for any 2 children aged under 16 who are the same gender
-  One bedroom for any 2 children aged under 10 regardless of gender
-  One bedroom for any other child
-  One bedroom for any other person over the age of 16
-  One bedroom for a carer (who does not normally live with you) if you or your partner need overnight care.

How much benefit will I lose?

The UK Government has decided that households with more bedrooms than they are assessed as needing will have their eligible rent used in their benefit calculation reduced by:

- 14% if you have one extra bedroom
- 25% if you have two or more extra bedrooms

If your Housing Benefit is cut you will have to pay the difference between your Housing Benefit and your rent to your landlord.

Stewart, who lives alone, rents his 2 bedroom flat from Midlothian Council. He currently gets his full rent of £70.00 per week paid by Housing Benefit. From 1 April 2013 he will have one bedroom more than he needs and the first 14% of his rent will not be eligible for Housing Benefit. He will need to start paying £9.80 per week. If he had two bedrooms more than he needs this would increase to 25% or £17.50 per week.

I share care of my children with my ex-partner, are we both entitled to a room for them?

Where parents who don't live together have shared care of their children, the children will be treated as living with the parent who is treated as responsible for them and provides their main home.

For someone to be treated as responsible for a child, the child must normally be living with them. If a child spends equal amount of time in different households, or there is a question as to whom they normally live with, they will be treated as living with the person who is receiving Child Benefit for them.

When will this affect me?

The house size limit rules are due to take effect from 1 April 2013. Midlothian Council will write to you to confirm any reduction in Housing Benefit and how much the reduction will be, before any such reduction takes effect. It is important that you start to consider what your options might be now and

where necessary talk to your landlord.

What can I do if I don't think I can afford to pay this?

£ Talk to your landlord about moving to a smaller home. You might be interested in a mutual exchange as a way to accessing a new home. You can now view homes to swap online via www.homeswapper.co.uk. Midlothian Council tenants can register for free.

£ Ask other occupants, for example grown up children, to contribute more.

£ Consider taking in a lodger to help with the cost of the rent. You would need your landlord's permission, and this could also affect the benefits you receive.

Discretionary Housing Payment

£ If there is a reason that you need an extra bedroom there is a limited fund available called a Discretionary Housing Payment. If you would like an application form, our contact details are overleaf. Priority will be given to households where someone has a disability, or your home has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person or you are a foster carer.

For more information about the Welfare Reform changes.

Visit our office at Buccleuch House,

1 White Hart Street, Dalkeith

(Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9am to 5pm,

Wednesday 10am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 3.30pm).

www.midlothian.gov.uk



A quick guide to Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will be replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for people aged 16 to 64 from 8 April 2013. This will initially be for new claims only. Before October 2015 this change will only affect new claims –people on fixed term DLA awards, or people reporting a change in their condition.

The introduction of PIP is part of a wider reform of the welfare system. The new benefit will better reflect today's understanding of disability which has changed significantly in the two decades since DLA was introduced.

PIP will include an assessment of individual needs and aims to ensure that financial support is targeted at those who face the greatest challenges to living independently.

A range of information is available online at www.gov.uk/pip

What is PIP?

PIP is to help towards some of the extra costs arising from health condition or disability. It is based on how a person's condition affects them, not the condition they have.

PIP is for people aged 16 to 64

➤ DLA will remain for children up to the age of 16. Once PIP has been introduced, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will contact them as they approach 16 to explain what will happen

➤ DLA will remain available to those 65 or over on 8 April 2013 (the day that PIP is introduced)

In the same way as DLA, claimants can receive PIP whether they are in or out of work. The benefit is not means tested or taxed.

Enhanced	Enhanced	There are two components to PIP— for daily living and mobility needs. Each component can be paid at standard rate, or enhanced rate for those with the greatest needs.
Standard	Standard	
Daily Living	Mobility	

PIP will include an assessment of the individual's needs by a health professional. Most people will have a face to face consultation as part of their claim. You can find out more about the claim process over the page.

Awards will be reviewed to ensure that the claimant is receiving the right support. Reviews will be at appropriate intervals depending on how likely it is for the claimant's condition or impairment to change.

When is PIP being introduced?

February
2013

DWP will send general information about PIP to all existing DLA claimants in their DLA updating letters. DLA claimants don't need to take any action as a result of this letter.

April
2013

New claims to PIP start for people living in areas including Cheshire, Cumbria, Merseyside, North East England and North West England. When a DLA claim is received from this area, it will be treated as a claim to PIP instead.

DLA new claims continue in all other parts of the country and for existing DLA claimants.

October
2013

New claims to PIP will start for the remaining parts of Great Britain. There will be no new claims to DLA for people aged 16 to 64.

October
2013

Reassessment to PIP starts for fixed period DLA awards coming up for renewal, young people turning 16 or where DLA claimants report a change in their condition.

October
2015

DWP will begin selecting existing DLA claimants and tell them what they need to do to claim PIP. DWP will prioritise DLA claimants who have turned 65 after 8 April 2013, when PIP was first introduced.

How does the claim process work?

1 Thinking about claiming

Information about PIP will be available from a range of sources, including online, via leaflets and through support organisations. This will explain the eligibility criteria and help the claimant decide if they want to claim PIP.

Existing DLA claimants will be contacted individually to ask if they want to claim PIP.

2 Making a claim

Claimants (or those supporting them) phone DWP to make a claim to PIP. This involves an identity check and some basic questions. Paper claims won't normally be used, and online claims should be available from Spring 2014. Additional support, such as provision of alternative formats will be available.

DWP will send claimants a form where they can explain how their disability affects them.

3 Telling your story

Claimant completes the 'How your disability affects you' form to explain how their condition affects their daily life, both on good and bad days and over a range of activities.

Supporting evidence can be sent with this form, which they return to DWP by post.

4 Assessment

Claim details, form and supporting evidence are passed to the health professional. Most people will be asked to attend a face to face consultation unless a decision can be reached on the basis of written evidence. Home visits will be available when necessary and claimants can take someone along for support. The consultation will provide the opportunity to explain their support needs in their own words. The health professional reviews the claim against a set of clear descriptors to assess the challenges faced by the individual.

5 Decision

A DWP Case Manager will use all the information in the claim form, from the health professional and anything else that has been provided. They will make a reasoned decision on entitlement, including the level and length of award.

There are no automatic entitlements to PIP, even where an indefinite or lifetime DLA award has been made.

Existing DLA recipients who are aged between 16 and 64 years old on or after 8 April 2013 (the day that PIP is introduced) will need to decide if they want to make a claim to PIP.

DWP will write to individuals from October 2015 to let them know when their DLA is due to end, and explain how they can make a claim to PIP.

Existing claimants do not need to take any action now.

From October 2013, anyone with a DLA award coming up for renewal, young people turning 16 or DLA claimants reporting a change in their condition, will be reassessed for PIP.

From October 2015 all remaining DLA claimants will be invited to make a claim to PIP.

If an existing DLA recipient makes a claim to PIP then their DLA would normally continue until a decision on their PIP claim is made. If PIP is not awarded or not claimed then DLA will stop.

How are other benefits and services affected?

PIP does not affect benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance. People receiving Attendance Allowance will not be affected by the introduction of PIP.

Like DLA, receiving PIP may provide access to other help. This can include Blue Badges, concessionary travel passes or Motability. These arrangements are being finalised and DWP will update this guide once confirmed.

Carers may also receive Carers Allowance because the person they are caring for is receiving DLA or PIP.

If claimants are subsequently not eligible to PIP then these benefits and services may also be affected.

There is a range of information about PIP online, including regularly updated frequently asked questions, and the latest version of this quick guide. You can find detailed information for advisers including policy briefings at www.dwp.gov.uk/pip.

There is more tailored information for claimants at www.gov.uk/pip. You may want to link to this page from your own sites.

Personal Independence Payment

What is Personal Independence Payment (PIP)?

PIP is designed to help disabled people live more independently and support those with the greatest need. The new benefit is to help people meet the extra costs that come from having a long-term health condition or disability. Long-term condition mean ill-health or disability that is expected to last 12 months or longer. PIP will be made up of two parts, a Daily Living component and a Mobility component. Each component will have two rates - standard and enhanced. PIP isn't affected by income or savings, it's not taxable and people can get it if they're in or out of work. The new benefit will target help on those that need it the most.

How will DWP decide if you can get Personal Independence Payment(PIP)?

Entitlement to PIP will be based on the effect a long-term health condition or disability has on your daily life. To make sure DWP have a clear understanding of this, you'll be asked to complete a form where you can describe how your health condition or disability affects you. You'll also be asked to include any supporting evidence you have and to tell us who might be able to advise us on your situation. Most people will be asked to attend a face-to-face consultation with a health professional as part of their claim. DWP will use all this information to decide if PIP can be awarded. Many people claiming Disability Living Allowance will continue to be entitled to PIP, and you may get more, the same or less benefit than you currently get. If you're awarded PIP your award will be reviewed over time to make sure it remains correct and continues to help meet your needs.

How might I be affected?

If you're aged 16 to 64 on 8 April 2013 then you'll be affected by the introduction of PIP, even if you get an indefinite or lifetime award of Disability Living Allowance. PIP is being introduced in stages over a number of years. That means most people who receive Disability Living Allowance now will not be affected in the near future. But it is important that you know how and when you might be affected.

- » If there are changes in how your health condition or disability affects you on or after 7 October 2013 then you'll be asked to make a claim for PIP. When you report the change of needs DWP will explain what will happen next.
- » If your existing Disability Living Allowance award is due to end, or be reviewed, on or after 7 October 2013, and you've not already received a renewal letter about your Disability Living Allowance, then you'll be asked to make a claim for PIP. DWP will write to you in plenty of time if you need to take any action. You don't need to contact us now.
- » Everyone else in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will not be contacted until 2015 or later, unless you report a change in how your health condition or disability affects you, or if your award is due to end as above. DWP will write to you in plenty of time to explain. You don't need to contact us now. If, after DWP contact you about claiming PIP, you decide to apply, your Disability Living Allowance will continue to be paid until DWP make a decision about your claim. If you decide not to apply for PIP, your Disability Living Allowance will end.

Young people

These changes do not affect children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. They'll continue to receive it until they reach 16 when they become eligible for PIP.

- » If the young person turns 16 before 7 October 2013 then they'll continue to be able to claim Disability Living Allowance. But in the same way as other people receiving Disability Living Allowance, they'll be asked to claim PIP at some point over the next few years. You can find more information about this above.
- » If the young person is due to turn 16 on or after 7 October 2013 then they'll need to decide if they want to claim PIP. DWP will write to them and their parent / guardian in plenty of time to explain

how to apply for PIP, when they need to claim by and what will happen to their Disability Living Allowance.

If you are 65 years and over

» People aged 65 or over on, or before, 8 April 2013 don't need to claim PIP. You'll continue to get Disability Living Allowance, as long as your circumstances don't change.

» If you reach 65 after 8 April 2013 then you'll not be contacted until 2015 or later.

However, if there are changes in how your health condition or disability affects you, or you reach the end of your Disability Living Allowance award before then, you'll be asked to claim PIP at that point. You can find out more about this above. People receiving Attendance Allowance will not be affected by the introduction of PIP. They'll continue to receive Attendance Allowance.

If you have completed a questionnaire you will receive a letter like this.

Dear Mr Other

The purpose of this letter is to give you:

- Proof of entitlement to your benefit
- Information about Disability Living Allowance rates
- Information about changes you must tell us about
- Important information about how Disability Living

Allowance is being replaced by a new disability benefit called Personal Independence Payment. There is more information at the end of this letter – please read it carefully. Please read all this information carefully.

Keep this letter safe because it is proof of your entitlement to benefit. Disability Living Allowance Entitlement

You are entitled to:

Middle rate care component for help with personal care until 28/5/13

Higher rate mobility component for help with getting around until 28/5/13

Disability Living Allowance Rates Benefit rates are reviewed every year.

How much money DWP can pay you The current weekly rate is

Care Component: middle £60.00

Mobility Component: higher £40.00

Total each week £100.00

The weekly rate from 08/04/2013 will be

Care Component: middle £63.25

Mobility Component: higher £41.75

Total each week £105.00

Note the amounts you receive are before any deductions towards the Motability Scheme on your behalf, or for any other reason related to where you are living, for which DWP have previously notified you.

How you will get your money

DWP will continue to make payment via your normal method of payment. If you do not receive your payment by the expected date, please contact us see back page for details. Please note – DWP may look at your award again from time to time to make sure you are getting the right amount of Disability Living Allowance. This means that if the amount of help you need has changed, your award may increase, decrease or stop altogether. If there has been no change in the amount of help you need then your award will stay the same.

If you are a resident of a care home and eligible for the DLA mobility component but not receiving it because you are funded by the NHS, you may now be entitled to the payment following a court judgement.

The Changes you must tell us about

These are just some of the changes that may happen to you. You must write straight away if any of these changes happen to you. They may make a difference to how much money you get or how long you get it for. DWP must know if anything you told us changes about how your illness or disability affects you. You must tell us if things get easier or more difficult for you. And you must tell us if you need less help or more help. If your doctor tells you your illness or disability will last for a longer time or a shorter time, you must tell us that as well.

Dialysis: You must tell us if the amount of time you spend having dialysis changes. If the type of dialysis changes, you must tell us that as well.

Transplant: You must tell us when you have had a transplant.

Change of address

You must tell us straight away if you change your address. Hospital, care home or similar establishment By hospital DWP mean a hospital or hospice. By care home or similar establishment DWP mean "A care home service or independent health care service in Scotland"

If you are getting Disability Living Allowance and you go into hospital, a care home or similar establishment, you must tell us the date you go in. If you are already in hospital, a care home or similar establishment, you must tell us the date you come out. You must tell us if the local council start paying for you to live in a care home or independent hospital in England or Wales or a care home service or independent health care service in Scotland. Even if you pay the council back, or they do not pay all the cost, you must still tell us. You must tell us if the local council stop paying for you to live in a care home or independent hospital in England or Wales or a care home service or independent health care service in Scotland. Special school or college. You must tell us if you go to stay in a special school or college or somewhere like this and tell us the date you go in. Foster care or local authority care If you are the parent or guardian of a child who is getting Disability Living Allowance, you must tell us if they go into foster care or local authority care. If payments are by cheque you must send their cheque to us straight away. Leaving the country You must tell us if you are going to leave Great Britain for more than 4 weeks. Great Britain is England, Scotland and Wales. Please tell us which country you are going to and how long you will be staying there.

If someone dies

You must tell us if someone getting Disability Living Allowance dies. If paid by cheque you must send any cheque to us straight away. These are not all the changes DWP must know about. There may be other changes that you want to tell us about. If you are not sure what to tell us, just ask our advice. When you write to us, tell us:

- Your name and address
- Your National Insurance (NI) number. If you are writing to us for someone else, tell us their name and their National Insurance (NI) number
- What the change is the date the change happened or the date the change is due to happen.

Help and advice Please get in touch with us if you:

- Want to ask us about anything in this letter, or
- Want to know more about Disability Living Allowance.

The new Helpline opening hours are 08.00 – 18.00. Number on the last page

To make sure you receive a good standard of service from the Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance Helpline, our Managers may monitor or record telephone calls without warning.

If you need to get in touch with us please tell us:

- The reference number at the top of the front page of this letter. And add **UPRATING/PIP**
- You can get more information on PIP at Job Centre Plus/Pensions Centre/ Social Security Office, Forward MID or go to www.gov.uk/pip

PIP and the Motability Scheme

Prior to your Disability Living Allowance running out, the Department for Work and Pensions will send you a renewal pack to re-assess your claim. If your allowance is extended, your Motability lease agreement will continue as normal. If for any reason your allowance is not renewed or extended, you should contact our Customer Services team to discuss the options. You would not be expected to pay the remaining amount of the agreement but you may need to return the car.

You will be able to lease a Motability car by using the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP, which will be set at the same level as the Higher Rate Mobility Component of DLA. Like DLA, PIP will not be means-tested or taxable, and can be paid whether the claimant is working or not.

The Motability Scheme will work with PIP in the same way as it does with DLA. Motability will continue to lease cars, powered wheelchairs and scooters to disabled people who receive either:

- The Higher Rate Mobility Component of DLA
- The Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP (from April 2013) which will have the same value as the Higher Rate Mobility Component of DLA.
- The War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- If you are an existing DLA recipient who is awarded the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP, then your Motability lease will continue as you move from DLA to PIP.

If you are an existing DLA recipient who has not received the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP, you will not be eligible to use the Motability Scheme. If this happens:

- The leasing agreement will end
- Motability will arrange with you for the vehicle to be returned
- Motability refunds any Advance Payment on a pro-rata basis e.g. if the agreement ended after one year of a three year lease, two-thirds of the Advance Payment would be refunded
- Subject to terms and conditions, Motability may in some cases be able to offer the vehicle for sale to you.

Appealing the decision

Customers will be able to appeal to the DWP if they disagree with the decision. However, DWP will not continue to make DLA payments while an appeal is being processed and so Motability will not be able to leave the vehicle with you. If the appeal is successful, you will of course be eligible to re-join the Scheme.

A friend was travelling in Scotland and saw this sign near Coiltyside, He thought of me and sent me this picture. I have no idea what it means, if you know what it is please get in contact as I would love to know.

Coiltyside is Highland IV63 6UW, or maybe the Highlands of Scotland know how much the Government is going to squeeze out of disabled drivers.



Useful Contacts Welfare Reform

Department For Work and Pensions	www.gov.uk/pip
Disability Living Allowance Unit 3 Warbreck House Warbreck Hill Blackpool FY2 0YE TEXTPHONE for the deaf/hard of hearing ONLY Helpline Opening Hours 07:30 – 18:30 Monday - Friday	 08457 123456  08457 224433
Housing Customer Services at Midlothian Council www.midlothian.gov.uk/welfare-reform	 0131 271 3201
Midlothian Council: Housing Allocations Rent Arrears Helpline	 0131 271 3394  0131 271 3499
Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association	 0131 657 0600
Melville Housing Association	 0131 654 2733 option 4
Welfare Reform Helpline	 0800 597 3777
Public sector Executive Welfare Reform News and Updates	www.publicsectorexecutive.com/
Grapevine Disability Information Service	 0131 475 2370  18002 0131 475 2383
Dalkeith Citizen Advice	 0131 660 1636
Penicuik Citizen Advice	 01968 675259

Citizens Advice Scotland Outreach

Appointments only

Bonnyrigg Orchard Centre Outreach.....  0131 663 1616

Gorebridge Newbyers Surgery Outreach.....  01875 820405

Drop-in

Danderhall Library Outreach First Tuesday every month 10 to 12

Gorebridge Library Outreach Monday 10 to 12

Loanhead Library Outreach Mondays 10 to 1pm

Loanhead Miners Outreach Wednesdays 10 to 1pm

Penicuik Loganlea Outreach Tuesdays 1pm to 3pm

Disclaimer

Every care has been taken to ensure that the content of this work is accurate at the time of writing. However, no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of any statement in this work can be accepted by the authors

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