

Whether or not you are already receiving the Disability Allowance (DLA), if you wish to be paid a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) you will need to claim. This guide is to help you with the process, but please remember:

- **Don't panic**, you can get support from Ruils, Richmond AID, Taking Control, Richmond and Kingston ME Group and other support groups.
- **Don't ignore** any letters from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) who manage the process. Doing so will mean that your DLA payments will stop. DLA payments will continue whilst you go through the PIP application process.
- **If you are already getting DLA**, you will eventually be invited to claim PIP instead.
- **To make a new claim** contact the DWP on 0800 917 2222, someone else can call on your behalf, but you'll need to be with them when they call. You'll be asked for contact details, date of birth, National Insurance number, bank / building society details, doctor / health worker details and any time spent in a care home or hospital.
- If you can't start the claim by phone you can **request a paper copy form** at:
Personal Independence Payment New Claims,
Post Handling Site B
Wolverhampton
WV99 1AH

You'll need to be aged 16 – 64, have a health condition/disability and have difficulties relating to daily living and/or mobility. People aged 65 or over will not be re-assessed for PIP and will remain on DLA as long as they continue to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

- **All claimants** will then be sent out a "How your disability affects you" questionnaire, with notes to help you fill it in, to be returned to DWP within one calendar month. It is possible to ask for an extension if you are going to have difficulty meeting the deadline for returning the form but you will need to discuss with DWP.
- Due to the tight timescales some people like to **download a sample PIP 2** "How your disability affects you" questionnaire in advance. Whilst you do need to submit the form sent by the DWP, if you have a copy of the form in advance you can start to draft your answers ready to copy over. You can download the questionnaire at:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/259311/pip2-how-your-disability-affects-you-form.pdf

HOW TO COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT FORM

- Your claim will cover a range of daily living activities and your mobility. You may get the daily living component of PIP if you need help with things like:
 - preparing or eating food
 - washing, bathing and using the toilet
 - dressing and undressing
 - reading and communicating
 - managing your medicines or treatments
 - making decisions about money
 - engaging with other people
- You will need to **reliably** complete these activities **safely, to an acceptable standard, repeatedly, and within a reasonable time period**. If not, tick the No box on the form and explain why not including evidence on the form. Pain, fatigue, breathlessness, nausea and motivation will be key factors for the DWP to examine when considering whether people can complete their activities reliably.

- You may get the mobility component of PIP if you need help going out or moving around.
- When filling out the forms or talking to people about your claim **always describe worst case scenarios**. For example, how far you can walk on a bad day. If an activity causes you pain or discomfort then you should be explicit in saying that you can't do the activity. You should also state worst case scenarios if you have fluctuating conditions such as fibro-myalgia, and mental health issues, or you have bad days as a result of the medication you are taking.
- The form is lengthy and you may need to do a little at a time. **If completing the form makes your condition worse then write this on the form, say if you had to have help and say how long it took you.**
- When you receive the letter it may be helpful to start **keeping a diary of your daily activities**, the help that you receive, and your health and pain levels. Be detailed as this will help provide evidence to support your application. A template diary is available at:
[https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Documents/Advice%20\(public\)/pip-diary.pdf](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Documents/Advice%20(public)/pip-diary.pdf)
- You should **contact your health professionals**, tell them that you're making a claim for PIP and ask them to provide a letter explaining how your condition affects you. It's important to do this because PIP is based on how your condition affects you and not the condition itself or the medication you take. If you want, you can ask the health professional to concentrate their comments on the tasks you need help with because of your condition and that you think are more important to your claim. You should check the health professional's evidence to make sure it will help your claim, if you feel it may not, you should seek advice from Ruils or other support groups.
- The easiest way to gain authoritative medical evidence from your GP is to request a copy of your medical records.

ASSESSMENT

- You are likely to be **called for an interview** with a health professional to enable your claim to be assessed. You may want to take someone with you for support. **Check the suitability of the assessment centre location** for you in advance. If unsuitable eg you need wheelchair access and there isn't any, phone the assessment centre using the telephone number on the appointment letter – don't just fail to turn up as your claim will be rejected and you'll have to start again. At the interview talk about how your condition affects you from day to day and especially what bad days are like for you. You should take a copy of your claim so you can refer to it.
- **If you have checked the assessment centre facilities and you consider them not to be suitable for you then you may ask for a home visit for the assessment interview, but it will be up to the DWP to decide whether you can have one.**

OTHER POINTS AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- You should expect a decision in about 3 months. There is a **right of appeal**.
- **Keep all appointment letters and treatments attended and notes of interviews / calls.**
- **Don't delay returning your PIP claim form or attending an assessment** because you're waiting on supporting evidence. You can always say that you'll send the evidence later.

CONTACTS

Ruils - Disability Action & Advice Centre (DAAC) 4 Waldegrave Road, Teddington TW11 8HT Telephone 020 8831 6083

Citizens Advice – help to make a claim - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/sick-or-disabled-people-and-carers/pip/help-with-your-pip-claim/how-to-claim/>

Richmond AID – Disability Action and Advice Centre (as above) Telephone 020 8831 6070