

# Personal Independence Payment – frequently asked questions

16 January 2012

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Through our engagement with disabled people and their representatives we have been asked questions about Personal Independence Payment and have been made aware of some areas where there is misunderstanding. We have responded by providing answers below to the most common questions and concerns. The Welfare Reform Bill, which sets out the statutory framework for Personal Independence Payment, has not yet completed its passage through Parliament. This means that any relevant changes to the Bill could require changes to these frequently asked questions.

## **1. What is Personal Independence Payment?**

- It is a new benefit to help disabled people live full, active and independent lives.
- It will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) from April 2013 for eligible people of working age (by this we mean people aged 16-64).
- DLA has been in place for almost 20 years largely unchanged, the new benefit will better reflect today's understanding of disability which has changed a lot in two decades.
- If you are already getting DLA you will have to be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment (see questions 5 and 6).
- It will help towards some of the extra costs arising from having a long term condition - this means ill-health or disability (expected to last 12 months or longer).
- Recipients of the benefit can choose to spend it in a way that suits them best.

## **2. How is entitlement to Personal Independence Payment assessed and decided upon?**

- The assessment for the new benefit to decide a person's needs and entitlement will be carried out by an independent health professional.
- The assessor will consider the evidence provided by the person claiming and professionals that support them on a regular basis.
- Most people will also be asked to a face-to-face consultation with this assessor as part of the claim process.
- The assessor will provide advice to a benefit decision maker at the Department for Work and Pensions.

- As is now the case with DLA the benefit decision maker will then use all of this to decide entitlement.

### **3. What are the parts to Personal Independence Payment?**

- Personal Independence Payment will have a Daily Living component and a Mobility component.
- Awards will be made up of one or both of these components.
- Each component will have two rates – standard and enhanced. The amount for each rate is still to be decided.
- Awards of Personal Independence Payment will be based upon the individual, the impact of the disability or health condition and the extent to which they are able to live independently.

### **4. I receive DLA – will I be entitled to Personal Independence Payment?**

- Everyone will be individually assessed against the new entitlement criteria (some people understand these as rules).
- This means we will look at your personal circumstances and the impact that your condition, or disability has on your ability to live an independent life.
- Entitlement will depend on how your ability to carry out daily living and / or mobility activities is affected by your condition or disability. It won't depend on what type of health condition or disability you have.
- Nor will it be determined by what award of DLA you currently get. The new benefit will have different entitlement criteria to those for DLA to better reflect today's understanding of disability.
- DLA in the past focussed on physical disability.
- Personal Independence Payment will strike a better balance to take into account the needs of those with mental health, intellectual, cognitive and developmental impairments.

### **5. When could I see a change to my DLA award because of the introduction of Personal Independence Payment?**

- There will be no changes to your DLA benefit award resulting from the introduction of Personal Independence Payment, before April 2013.
- Your DLA benefit award could change if you have a change in your condition, or new evidence comes to light which means that we may need to look at your entitlement again.
- Between 2013 and 2016 we will reassess people who get DLA for Personal Independence Payment.
- We will contact people who get DLA before they are reassessed for Personal Independence Payment to explain how this will happen.

- We are involving disabled people and their organisations in designing how we communicate information about reassessing them to make sure we get it right.
- A note that sets out our early thinking on the ways in which people of working age could become entitled to Personal Independence Payment when it is introduced can be found at [www.dwp.gov.uk/pip](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pip)

## **6. Will people on DLA be told before they are reassessed for Personal Independence Payment?**

- Yes. All those of working age who get DLA and will need to be reassessed against the new entitlement criteria will be told in advance.
- We will contact them individually, providing plenty of notice and explaining what will happen and what they will need to do.
- The work to reassess people who get DLA for Personal Independence Payment is expected to take around three years and will start in 2013.
- Where individuals satisfy the entitlement criteria for the new benefit, they will be transferred from DLA to Personal Independence Payment.
- Those individuals who are not entitled to Personal Independence Payment, or who choose not to claim it, will not be able to retain their DLA as an alternative.

## **7. Will there be a break in my benefit payments as I transfer from DLA to Personal Independence Payment?**

- Where DLA recipients are entitled to the new benefit, we want to ensure that there are no gaps between benefit payments.
- We want to make the transfer from DLA to Personal Independence Payment as smooth as possible.
- We will contact people, providing plenty of notice, explaining what will happen and what you will need to do.

## **8. Will there be automatic entitlement to Personal Independence Payment for people with certain conditions?**

- No. We want to treat everyone as an individual. The benefit will go to those individuals whose impairments impact most on their ability to participate in society.
- The only way to accurately decide who should get the new benefit is to assess everyone individually, looking at their personal circumstances and the barriers they face.
- This is because people's health conditions or disabilities can affect them in very different ways and some individuals have more than one health condition or disability.

- The assessment for Personal Independence Payment will make greater use of evidence and help us to accurately and consistently assess individuals and decide their entitlement.
- The only exception is for people who are Terminally Ill (this is defined as under DLA as those who are not expected to live for more than six months).
- The Department for Work and Pensions will deal with these claims quickly and the person will not need a face-to-face consultation, or to fulfil the six month qualifying period.

**9. I currently have a life or indefinite award of DLA – will I have to have an assessment even though my condition has not changed / is never going to change?**

- Everyone of working age who gets DLA will need to be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment.
- This is because the new benefit will have different entitlement criteria to those for DLA.
- We expect that people will be reassessed over three years, starting from April 2013.
- We will contact people with more information, giving them as much notice as possible and explaining what they will need to do and when this will affect them.
- Most people will be asked to have a face-to-face consultation with a trained independent health professional, as part of their claim.
- Individuals with the most severe health conditions or disabilities, or those who are terminally ill, are unlikely to need to attend a face-to-face consultation. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

**10. How will you provide support to those that need it when applying for Personal Independence Payment?**

- We recognise that we will need to adapt our approach to delivering Personal Independence Payment to address the specific needs of certain groups.
- Detailed profiles have been developed to understand both preferences and health issues of disabled people and these are being used to inform a programme of research facilitated by a specialist external company.
- The intention is that learning from these exercises and other work with disabled people and their representatives will be used to inform all aspects of how we deliver Personal Independence Payment - including simplifying the claim process.

**11. Are these changes driven purely to achieve a reduction in costs?**

- No, DLA has been in place for almost 20 years largely unchanged and no longer properly takes into account the needs of all disabled people.

- It does not have some of the checks that are a key part of other state benefits and it needs to be brought up to date.
- We also have to make sure support is affordable for the long term.
- The cost of DLA has risen by almost 30% over the last eight years. Only around a third<sup>1</sup> of that increase can be accounted for by demographic change.
- The changes we are making will ensure that this new benefit will remain affordable in the future
- The amount we expect to spend in 2015/16 on working age individuals, is around the same level we spent in 2009/10.
- It was clear from the responses received to the public consultation on DLA Reform in December 2010 that some reform of DLA was welcomed.
- We continue to receive representations from disability organisations welcoming some reform.
- Through greater use of evidence and reassessment the intention is that the new benefit will enable a more accurate assessment of an individual's entitlement to make sure support is reaching those who need it most.

## **12. If I am awarded Personal Independence Payment will I need to undergo further assessments?**

- Possibly. Awards of Personal Independence Payment will be based upon the individual person, the impact of the disability or health condition and the extent to which they are able to live independently.
- Over time peoples' conditions can change and we want to make sure that their award of benefit reflects their current needs.
- At the moment there are no regular checks under DLA leaving disabled people at risk of claiming incorrect levels of support.
- The length of awards individuals get will depend on their individual circumstances and the likelihood of this changing.
- This will be determined by the benefit decision maker, following advice from an independent healthcare professional'.
- Some people will get short awards (up to two years) and others will get longer ones (such as five or ten years).
- If you are awarded Personal Independence Payment you will be sent a letter telling you how long your award is for, the changes in circumstances you will need to tell us about and how to do this.
- We will contact individuals with longer awards occasionally, to see if their needs have changed over time, to ensure that individuals continue to receive the correct level of benefit.
- At the end of the award if you still have needs arising from your health condition or disability you can decide to make a further claim for Personal Independence Payment.

### **13. How long do I have to wait to qualify for Personal Independence Payment?**

- There will be a 6 month qualifying period and the health condition or disability must be expected to last for a further 6 months as well.
- Individuals will not necessarily have to wait 6 months, as the qualifying period starts from when the individual's eligible needs arise and not from when they make a claim.
- For example someone might have had difficulty walking for six months, or more when they apply for Personal Independence Payment and the condition is expected to last a further six months.
- People of working age who get DLA who are invited to apply will have met the 6 month qualifying period because of the time they have already spent claiming DLA.
- Individuals with a terminal illness will be fast tracked on to a guaranteed payment of the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment and will also be able to apply for the mobility component.

### **14. Will Personal Independence Payment provide a “gateway or passport” to the additional help and support that DLA attracts?**

- We recognise people value the additional help that passported benefits, such as the Blue Badge, Carer's Allowance and Motability schemes, as well as public transport concessions provide.
- It is our intention that the existing passporting arrangements will be maintained wherever possible.
- We are working with other Government Departments and Devolved Administrations that currently use DLA as a passport to schemes they provide to ensure that any future passporting arrangements remain appropriate for their own schemes.
- We will publish further information once it has been decided how this will work.

### **15. My child is under 16 years old and receives DLA. Will they be affected by the introduction of the new Personal Independence Payment?**

- No. At the moment Personal Independence Payment will not replace DLA for those under the age of 16 with Personal Independence Payment.
- We would want to see how the assessment works for people of working age before deciding if children (under 16) getting DLA should undertake a new assessment.
- Children in receipt of DLA may remain on this benefit until they reach 16 provided that they continue to satisfy the eligibility criteria. They will then need to be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment.
- We will develop specific plans to transfer young people from age 16 to Personal Independence Payment as smooth and straightforward as possible.

- No firm decisions have yet been made about how this will be done because it is one of the things where we are continuing to talk to young disabled people, their families and organisations representing them.
- Our current thinking about how we support young people during the introduction of Personal Independence Payment can be found in a briefing note at [www.dwp.gov.uk/pip](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pip)

### **16. Will pensioners receiving DLA be affected by these changes?**

- No. At the moment Personal Independence Payment will not replace DLA for those aged over 65.
- They can continue to receive DLA so long as they continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions.
- We want to see how the assessment for the new benefit works for people of working age before deciding if people over 65 and getting DLA should undertake a new assessment.

### **17. Will people who get Attendance Allowance (AA) be affected by these changes?**

- No. People who get AA will not be affected by the introduction of Personal Independence Payment.

### **18. How do I have my say about what is happening with Personal Independence Payment?**

- On 16 January we published more information about Personal Independence Payment
- This included more details on:
  - The proposed entitlement thresholds for the assessment
  - Projected caseload figures for PIP
  - New 'case studies' which show how the assessment will work
- We are seeking further views from disabled people and their organisations, to ensure that we get the assessment criteria right.
- We have launched a consultation that will run for 15 weeks, from 16 January 2012 to 30 April 2012.
- Consultation questions can be found in the [Personal Independence Payment: assessment thresholds and consultation](#)
- Final draft regulations will be laid before Parliament later this year.

### **19. Where can I find more information about Personal Independence Payment?**

We have published various documents to keep people informed of our plans:



- [Personal Independence Payment: assessment thresholds and consultation](#)
- DLA reform consultation (6 December 2010) and the Government response to this consultation (4 April 2011) can be found at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/dla-reform.shtml>
- Briefings documents and the second draft assessment criteria (14 November 2011) to support the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill through Parliament can be found at [www.dwp.gov.uk/pip](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pip)
- The initial draft of the assessment criteria (9 May 2011) can also be found there.

We will continue to update these and publish further documents to ensure people have the latest information.

# Myth buster

Myth		Fact
<b>Assessment</b>	All assessments will be conducted annually and review checks could be as frequently as weekly / monthly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. Following the assessment we will decide on the length of the benefit award. This will be based on individual circumstances and the likelihood of changes occurring.</li> <li>• Some people will get shorter awards (up to two years) and others will get longer ones (such as five or ten years).</li> <li>• To ensure that people continue to receive the right level of benefit we may reassess a claimants needs within an award to ensure that it is still correct. This will also be based on individual circumstances and the likelihood of changes occurring.</li> </ul>
	Disabled people will have to attend face-to-face consultations by themselves.	No. Individuals attending face-to-face consultations will be able to take a family member, carer or someone else with them.
	Awards will be decided by the trained independent health professional and no other evidence considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. The benefit decision maker will make the decision as is the case with DLA.</li> <li>• We want them to use the widest range of evidence to ensure awards are made correctly.</li> <li>• We will be asking disabled people to tell us who would be best placed to provide this evidence.</li> <li>• That might include information given by the individual, or a relevant professional who supports the individual on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Information gathered during face-</li> </ul>

<b>Myth</b>	<b>Fact</b>
	to-face consultations will form part of the evidence considered.
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Trained independent assessors and decision makers will not understand the range of barriers disabled people face.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessors and decision makers will be given all the necessary specialist training and guidance to carry out their roles and will be able to draw on specialised support where needed.</li> <li>• We will work with disability organisations to help develop this.</li> </ul>