

Personal Independence Payment – Policy briefing note

Young people

Our core objectives

1. The Government is committed to continuing to support disabled children, their families and young people with long term health conditions or impairments. In the context of reforming DLA and introducing Personal Independence Payment for people aged 16-64 from April 2013 our objectives are to:
 - a) ensure that the way in which Personal Independence Payment is delivered for young people is built around their needs, informed through user-centred design, utilising other channels within and outside government, wherever possible;
 - b) ensure effective transition of individuals from DLA to Personal Independence Payment at age 16 through work with local partners; and
 - c) learn from the experience of implementing Personal Independence Payment for people aged 16-64 to inform future arrangements for young people under 16

Policy decisions, implementation and the impact on children and young people

Children below age 16

2. Personal Independence Payment will not apply to children when it is introduced in 2013. The Government recognises that the needs of children can be different from those of adults and is committed to learning from the experience of implementing the new benefit for individuals of working age before extending it to children. This means children below age 16 will continue to be able to claim DLA, and we will consult before making any significant changes to these arrangements.
3. We are taking account of the Department for Education's proposals to improve support for disabled young people from birth to adulthood. The March 2011 Green Paper *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs (SEN) and disability* sets out the Government's aspiration to move towards a single assessment process and Education Health and Care plan covering ages 0-25 which will bring greater consistency and support to disabled children and young people and those with SEN. The Department for Education plans to test the approach, starting this year. We will look at the findings of the pathfinders to explore whether information and evidence provided for the single assessment process might also be used to inform disability benefit claims for children.

4. An extensive programme of work will be implemented in the way that DWP services are delivered for disabled children. This follows work with parents/carers and their representatives which identified a series of improvements that could be made. These include a redesigned claim form which improved the layout, ordering and supporting guidance and moved towards a tick box approach with less reliance on free text boxes. These improvements were particularly well received by parents and carers.
5. A specialist team of Decision Makers has been set up to deal specifically with new child claims and the ongoing maintenance of those claims. These teams have been supported with additional training and web-based impairment specific guidance relating to children. This has allowed them to provide more meaningful explanations to parents and carers about decisions and the evidence that has been taken into account. We will build this learning into the design and development of Personal Independence Payment.

Young adults

6. As we have already confirmed Personal Independence Payment will be introduced for young people from age 16 as we believe this is the age at which young people should make a claim in their own right and be assessed against adult criteria.
7. Currently across government there is no single age for transitioning from child to adult support and services. For example:
 - DLA is reassessed at 16 – this is the age at which specific rules requiring a young person to demonstrate needs in excess of someone of the same age fall away. This means that some individuals may see an increase in support at age 16.
 - the school leaving age is currently 16, though from summer 2013 young people in England will be required to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17, and from summer 2015 until they turn age 18
 - Special Educational Needs currently goes up to the age of 19 (for individuals still in full-time education) or 25 for those individuals with learning disabilities
 - 18 is the normal qualification age for income-replacement benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance, although there are exceptions, for example lone parents can receive income-replacement benefits from age 16.
 - between the ages of 16 and 18 for health purposes child to adult provision is based on the needs of the child.
8. The assessment criteria for Personal Independence Payment are being developed to meet the needs of people aged 16 and over. Our intention is that

assessors will be instructed and equipped on how to meet the needs of young adults.

9. Our aim will be to make the process as effective as possible and to ensure that young people have the support they need. Where a claim is made we will also ensure mechanisms are in place so that there is continuity of payment whilst an individual is being assessed for entitlement to Personal Independence payment.
10. Young people aged 16 and over who are disabled or have SEN may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment when it is introduced in April 2013. The Department for Education's intention is that as part of the proposed changes set out in its March 2011 Green Paper, the Education, Health and Care Plan will be a living document that will be reviewed and updated regularly. We will explore how evidence gathered as part of a single assessment for the Education, Health and Care Plan might be used to support a Personal Independence Payment claim, where possible avoiding the need for the individual to provide the same evidence multiple times. We are working closely with officials in the Department for Education so that the design and evaluation of the pathfinder programme can inform future decisions on this.
11. While the lower age-limit of 16 for eligibility for Personal Independence Payment is different to provisions to raise the participation age (under the Education and Skills Act 2008), it does not create a new point of transition and taken together the two arrangements are broadly compatible. Beyond the age of 16 young people will have a choice about whether to remain in full-time education at school or college, take up an apprenticeship or work-based learning, or a full-time job with part-time education or training alongside. In this context it is appropriate that a claim to Personal Independence Payment should be also be made from age 16 as this will help to meet the aspirations of young people as they start to move to adulthood and consider and make decisions about other aspects of their lives.

Considerations and emerging principles

12. We have engaged and will continue to engage extensively with some of the main organisations representing disabled children and young people as we develop our proposals for delivery of Personal Independence Payment for individuals aged 16–25. Central to all of our design and development activity for both delivery and the transition process will be the principles of affordability and sustainability. Through our work we have developed a set of principles, as a starting point, to help inform the design including:
 - Involving young people aged 16-25, families and support workers, including seeking their input on the design and testing of the claim process and other areas.
 - Ensuring access to support and advocacy is important, in particular for –
 - Clarity, consistency and transparency about eligibility

- Raising awareness that it is not work related
 - Training for staff and advisors
- Working across Government to join up with other support for young people – seeking to minimise multiple assessments and the risk that an assessment which attempts to do too many things can become too general and less appropriate at identifying an individual's needs.
- Early information about transition and predictability of future entitlement, including other benefits – it can be difficult for young people and their families to access information about transition or about how to challenge the assessment.

What we have done

13. In line with these principles we are taking forward a programme of work which includes:

- **Subject-specific workshops** – events took place on 20 and 21 October which looked specifically at what additional support people aged 16–25 need, including how DWP communicates the changes and what we can do to support transition. Attendees included disability organisation that represent young disabled people, many of whom are members of the Personal Independence Payment Implementation Development Group¹.

Some of the main views included that:

- young people moving from DLA to Personal Independence Payment at age 16 have specific needs and so should be a separate group – comparisons were made to the introduction of specialist child DLA teams which have been welcomed by childrens organisations
 - the Department should use learning from the reassessment process for those aged over 25 to inform arrangements from children moving from DLA to Personal Independence Payment at age 16
 - people aged 16-25 should be the 'last' group to be migrated from DLA to Personal Independence Payment so that processes have been well-tested beforehand
 - young people should be encouraged to seek advice from a support organisation by signposting in claimant facing letters
 - face-to-face assessment should be conducted by someone with experience in working with young people
- **Direct research with end users** – We have started to undertake research focus groups and interviews directly with disabled people, appointees and representatives to identify what the key priorities during

¹ Personal Independence Payment Implementation Development Group, our primary mechanism to consult with national and local organisations that represent a broad range of disabled people on the operational design, development and implementation of Personal Independence Payment.

transition are and what will constitute an effective transition for a child aged 16.

Many of the issues and views raised reflect the current situation under DLA:

- the key role parents/guardians/carers have to play in the process. Claimants acknowledge that their parent/guardian/carers are likely to be heavily involved even when not an appointee
- information should be easily accessible and provided well in advance of an individual's 16th birthday (preferably 2-6 months beforehand) to give sufficient time to plan
- the move to 'adult disability benefit' should be seen as part of a range of changes associated with becoming independent, and information about the change should be provided alongside communications about other relevant products, services and support

Further work we are doing

14. We will continue to involve and consult the Personal Independence Payment Implementation Development Group who have been invited to provide further insight in early December. This will ensure that our operational design and development considers the requirements of disabled people and their representatives. We will use this to feedback our progress on the service design for young people and transition. We are also taking forward learning from our relationship with the Family Carers Group². This approach will ensure that we retain good practices from the current arrangements, where it is practicable to do so.
15. As the processes for transitioning claimants are designed, they will be fully tested with claimants, their representatives, staff and intermediary organisations. This testing is likely to start in January 2012 and continue as design is developed throughout 2012.
16. We have appointed around 100 partnership managers to cover every region with the specific task of strengthening and expanding our partnership arrangements with local disabled customer representative organisations including children and young adults. We will learn through feedback and ensure organisations have information about Personal Independence Payment to serve these groups both before Personal Independence Payment is implemented, from its introduction and beyond.

² The Family Carers Group was a forum set up specifically to discuss DLA issues in relation to children.