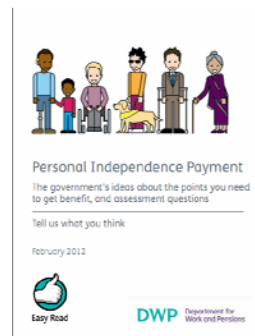


# Response to the Consultation on 'The Government ideas about the points you need to get benefit and assessment questions'



**Who is this response from?**



The Bradford Strategic Disability Partnership, disabled people and carers in Bradford  
The consultation was done with help from the Bradford Advice Network and Training Partnership.

**Who do I contact if I want more information?**



Sue Haddock  
Partnership Officer  
Tel 01274 435001  
Email [sue.haddock@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:sue.haddock@bradford.gov.uk)  
Text 07582105029



**What did we do?**

Over 100 people with different disabilities and carers took part in 3 separate consultation sessions.

We tried to answer the questions using the case studies you gave us so we could better understand things.

Then we answered your questions

	<h2>1. What we thought about the descriptors in general.</h2>
---	---

- The name Personal Independence Payment
  - Suggests that this is a one off payment not a continual payment
  - Makes no reference to disability – who is it for?

These issues may act as barriers to people applying for the benefit in the first place.
- Lots of us felt that we cannot see how these changes are going to save money. There will be medicals and reviews for everyone (not in place with DLA) and we suspect increasing numbers of appeals. All these cost significant amounts of money.

	<h3>1a. How we thought you could make it easier for people</h3>
--	---

- Boxes for people to add comments need to be large enough for people to explain their own circumstances.
- The comment boxes should **encourage** people to 'put some meat' on their answers – it is not additional information.
- The support information needs to be clear and understandable and preferably next to the question it refers to.
- Use easy to understand words to begin with rather than having to do a separate list to explain what you mean. Separate pieces of information acts as a barrier to people who often don't read them.
- When you use difficult words people may not always give you an accurate response because they misunderstand.
- To make it easier for people to understand we suggest where two questions are almost the same you highlight the different words. For example

- 'Needs communication support to express or understand **complex** verbal information'
- 'Needs communication support to express or understand **basic** verbal information'
- We think you should use the word 'encouraging by another person' rather than 'prompting'? There was a lot of confusion about what prompting meant.
- Activity descriptors need simplifying with more descriptors per activity

	<b>1b. What we felt the descriptors didn't do well</b>
---	--

- We are concerned that the descriptors do not pick up the difficulties very well or easily for people with Learning Disabilities, people who use Mental Health services and people with Autism.
- We felt there were very few descriptors that cover mental health issues except possibly the Social and Communication ones. People find it very difficult to take part in family life but their opportunity to 'score' points is severely limited. The descriptors seem more orientated to people with a physical disability.
- Some conditions and issues such as concentration / memory loss cannot be fitted into the descriptors and are therefore not picked up and not fairly assessed
- We felt that the descriptors were not flexible enough to assess unusual disabilities and disabilities that mean that what you can do changes all the time.
- We assume the care component is about ability to do these things in your own home and the mobility element is about outside your home. If this is the case the form needs to state this clearly. For example we talked a lot about being able to use the toilet in your own home but not in a public place.


- The descriptors force you to pick one - it might not always best describe your situation. This is when it is important that the form encourages people to explain more.
- If you loose PIP you will loose other pass ported benefits for example Bus Pass, Blue Badge, Housing Benefit, Prescription Charges, Council Tax benefit, tax credit top ups and motability.

Together these means that people become more isolated don't have the chance to exercise or have social interaction. This leads to further health issues and larger costs to other services. You need to think carefully about how loosing all these benefits will affect some people.

- Some peoples 'answers' could fit into more than one area - this is confusing.


	<p><b>1c. What we think the descriptors don't cover and should</b></p>
--	--

- Night time care e.g. wandering, turning, physical help to get into bed, calming, soothing, is not covered in the descriptors.
- The descriptors do not cover more general household duties – shopping, housework, basic home maintenance e.g. changing light bulbs, changing beds etc.
- The descriptors don't seem to recognise or understand technology
- The Daily Living section does not recognise enough peoples communication problems and the effect of this on all daily living activities for Deaf BSL users E.g. travel, gas meter readings etc.


	<p><b>1d. What we thought about the process of changing people onto PIP and reviewing PIP.</b></p>
---	--

- Reviewing every 2 years seems too frequent and costly for some people where their situation is unlikely to change significantly.


- Changing people to PIP should apply only to people **after they are 25 years** if they have received DLA previously. Peoples needs often become more complex and change frequently whilst going through late teens and early adulthood due to physical and psychological changes.

	<h3>1e. What we thought about the Rules and the definitions</h3>
---	--

- **% of time being able to do something** – We felt this should be lower and think it should be 25% of the time rather than 50 %
- The definition for **Reliability and Timely** is a bit vague and it is therefore not clear what you mean.
- If you gave some examples under **Safely** it would help people understand better.
- **Repeatedly** We hope this covers Deaf people who get tired because of the need to focus.
- For people with fluctuating conditions include something about the strength and motivation factors as these often vary as the day goes by.
- The definition for assistance says ‘ someone physically helping in some way’ Why not write ‘Needs Physical help from someone ... to use the toilet etc? in the question rather than having a definition for assistance?

	<h3>1f. What did we think about the thresholds?</h3>
---	--

- We found this difficult to decide. It depends on the points being right and that people understand the questions so they are able to correctly tick the box that really applies to them.
- Deaf people felt the scores did not reflect their difficulties.

	<h2>2. What we thought about the Daily Living Descriptors</h2>
---	--

	<h3>2a. Communicating</h3>
---	----------------------------

- The statements under this section need to clearly cover **all** Deaf peoples communication needs (BSL Users) so that people can easily see and understand which category they fall into.
- The descriptors do not appear to cover Deaf peoples access to written communication. Research has shown that the average reading age for Deaf school leavers in 1979 was 8.6 years and this situation has not improved. The descriptors need to recognise that English is a BSL users **second** language and access to written information is a real issue.
- The words **complex** verbal information means something different to Deaf BSL users and refers to high level information like that used in a court.
- There is no explanation about what you mean by complex and basic.
- The questions group verbal and written information together. This is confusing. We think it would be better to separate them.
- Is access to information an additional category to communication ?
- Under communication understanding and expressing are different - it does say OR but may be better as 2 separate descriptors or put 'and / or'
- Deaf people can't choose when or where because of need to get an interpreter
- There is no descriptor for communicating with unfamiliar people



## **2b. Preparing food and drink**

- We felt this section does not cover people being able to carry plates drinks etc once the food has been made to somewhere they are able to eat it.
- Under aids and appliances it does not seem to cover fire alarms, etc. These are very important to some people to be able to cook safely.
- No where in the descriptors does it cover the issue of the food getting into the house in the first place to cook.



## **2c. Social Engagement**

- Deaf people may have a great social life with other Deaf people but there are still barriers to them being a part of the general community. They have to always rely on skills of a BSL interpreter and you also need confidence in the interpreters skills.
- Your definition for 'Social Support' suggests this is a paid person but this is not always the case – a parent or sibling with lots of experience may be the person who enables someone to engage socially.
- Under 'Engaging Socially' the words overwhelming and uncontrollable are strong words
- Some people will fall between the 'needs social support to engage socially' and 'cannot engage socially'. Maybe there should be extra category in here for example
  - Needs encouraging to engage socially
  - Needs support from another person to engage socially
  - Cannot engage socially



## **2d. Managing Therapy or Monitoring a Health Condition**

- The words used under 'Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition' are very difficult to understand. What does therapy cover?
- The descriptors do not cover the need sometimes for medication for everyday illnesses. In this case one mistake can be fatal or someone suffers because they cannot take without help from someone else. E.g. paracetamol This applies to many people but particularly to those who are blind, people with dementia, learning disabilities, people with Autism



## **2e. Taking Nutrition**

- There is no reference to the type of food e.g. food has to be puréed someone to make it suitable to be eaten.
- Some of the language is hard to understand e.g. nutrition is not a regularly used word and is not a familiar word in BSL
- Some people cannot understand the instructions on some food and are therefore unable to cook it correctly. Words mean different thing is BSL, Braille etc.
- The word Therapeutic does not mean anything to people.
- People need things explaining more clearly so they can understand what they are being asked
- The descriptor does not consider if people can 'take nutrition' safely. What If the food is too hot, they would need supervision so they do not burn themselves.
- Some blind people will need help to identify what is on the plate and where about it is.




- The general feeling was that this section needs to be much easier to understand with maybe more descriptors.

	<h2>2f. Bathing and Grooming</h2>
---	-----------------------------------

- The descriptors put grooming and bathing together. We found this very confusing.
- Groom very old fashioned word - not one used today

	<h2>2g. Dressing and Undressing</h2>
---	--------------------------------------

- The descriptors give different points for dressing and undressing upper and lower body. Why? People should get same amount of points for the top and bottom half of body. Both are equally important to be dressed appropriately.
- We got confused answering this descriptor. It goes from 'assistance to dress lower body', 'assistance to dress upper body' to 'cannot dress or undress at all'. Some people need assistance to dress and undress both upper and lower body and didn't know which to tick as 'cannot dress or undress at all' is not true of their situation.

	<h2>2h. Financial Decisions</h2> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 48px;">?</div>
---	---


- Words in questions need to be clear and simple to understand.
- What Simple and Complex financial decisions are needs to be clear on the form itself. You should not have to look it up People think they know what is meant and answer accordingly. We found when doing case studies that people didn't understand the same thing as you and

they were so sure they knew what you meant they didn't think to look it up.

- Problems about managing finances are not just about making decisions e.g. People with no sight are given wrong value notes, people with arthritis in their hands cannot handle money, some people with autism, learning difficulties, people who use mental health services etc forget they have money on them.
- We think the word prompting should be changed to help.

	<h3>3. What we thought about Mobility descriptors</h3>
---	--

- We think there could be a third set of descriptors under Mobility that covers danger and road safety issues. This could cover falls, seizures etc. as they are not covered elsewhere.
- The descriptors throughout this section were not easily identified by people who are Deaf/ blind as being applicable to them.

	<h3>3a. Planning and following a Journey</h3>
---	---

- Generally the most familiar journey can become unfamiliar very easily and quickly making people vulnerable, less safe and frightened. We don't think the descriptors take this into account. If people lose confidence they are much less likely to go out. This affects independence, health and well being.  
Some examples are given below
  - No recognition of unforeseen circumstances on planned journeys e.g. changes of platforms, being dropped off by a bus in the wrong place, movement of street furniture etc. These apply particularly but not exclusively to people with sight loss but they undermine confidence and stop people going out alone.

- For Deaf People asking for directions or help is very stressful and it is very easy to lose confidence e.g. someone who was Deaf was left in a building whilst everyone left due to bomb scare announced on a tannoy. She had no idea what was happening.
- Finding out right times of public transport and any sudden changes e.g. changes of platform, bus timetables
- Some of the descriptors are very similarly worded. This is confusing and could cause you to tick the wrong box
- There should be a point for needing supervision on ALL journeys. The question is unfair and makes assumptions.
- Although someone may be able to plan a journey they may still need some form of support to carry out the journey.
- There needs to be more of a breakdown of descriptors with more descriptors for people with complex difficulties.



### **3b. Moving around**

- The moving around section is all about physical disability
- Why use the word move?
- The time taken and pain is of real importance in this descriptor yet it is not covered - only by the repeatedly, timely fashion. It needs clearly stating in this part of the application.
- We think it is difficult for people to recognise what 200m and 50 m looks like.
- The descriptors do not recognise the access needs of the person e.g. travel training , promoting new journeys and unfamiliar places
- The descriptors do not clearly say that the claimant may need supervision or help.
- Generally we felt the wording was not very good and did not make things clear.