

Freedom of Information request 1971/2013

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Information request

Given that the new PIP is being introduced how does the Government/DWP plan to deal with people who cannot read or understand the paperwork that is essential for them to fill in if they need to claim the benefit.

DWP response

It may be helpful if I set out the process for claiming Personal Independence Payment which has been developed by involving claimants and people who support disabled people.

The initial claim will be taken over the telephone and claimants (or those supporting them) will be asked for general information – for example, their name, address, whether they are in hospital, and whether they are claiming under the special rules for those who are terminally ill. It is at this stage that claimants will be asked if they have a mental, cognitive, intellectual or developmental impairment. If they do, their PIP Computer system record will be noted that they need additional support, so that we can ensure we provide any further support as necessary throughout the claiming process.

Once a claimant has submitted their basic details by phone, we will send them a *How your disability affects you* questionnaire, to provide additional details in support of their claim. This questionnaire was tested with claimants who have a range of health conditions and impairments, and is easier to complete than the DLA claim form. It contains a combination of free text and tick boxes – there are direct questions within it, but it also allows a claimant to explain in their own words how their disability affects them.

If the claimant is having difficulty completing the 'How your disability affects you' questionnaire, in the first instance, they can ask a friend, relative, care provider or external organisation to assist them with completion.

Where a claimant is vulnerable and does not have any support, the Department will provide assistance with full form completion via DWP Visiting, who will assist the claimant through a home visit.

If a claimant who has been identified as having additional support needs fails to return their questionnaire for any reason, they will be referred directly to the assessment provider, so that their claim can be progressed.

I should add that we are committed to enabling communication with claimants who are deaf or hard of hearing. We have standard processes in place to support deaf people, and a range of guidance to help staff to understand the help required and support available through alternative formats.

Finally, DWP provides advice and training to support organisations to ensure that they understand how PIP works so that they can help claimants. The Department has also provided a PIP toolkit to enable claimant support organisations to give clear information and advice.