

# Personal Independence Payment – Frequently asked questions

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## Introduction

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 proposals for Personal Independence Payment were included in the Welfare Reform Bill 2011, which secured Royal Assent on 8 March to become the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

We have consulted with disabled people and their organisations about the regulations, detailed design and assessment thresholds for Personal Independent Payment. The FAQ's are listed below:

### 1. What is Personal Independence Payment?

- It is a new benefit to help disabled people live full, active and independent lives.
- Personal Independence Payment will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people of working age (by this we mean people over the age of 16 and under the age of 65 on 8 April 2013 when it will be introduced.)
- 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.
- 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).
- Personal Independence Payment is a non-means-tested and non-taxable cash benefit which people can spend in a way that best suits them.

### 2. What is Personal Independence Payment made up of?

- 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 circumstances of the individual and will look at the impact of the disability or health condition and the extent to which they are able to live independently and participate in society.

### **3. How long will I have to wait to qualify for Personal Independence Payment?**

- If you claim Personal Independence Payment for the first time there is a three month qualifying period (this is the period during which you have had a health condition or disability) and the needs arising from your condition or disability must be expected to last for a further nine months as well (we call this the “prospective test”) to qualify for the new benefit.
- You will not necessarily have to wait three months, as the qualifying period starts from when your eligible needs arise and not from when you make a claim.
- For example, you might have had difficulty walking for three months or more when you apply for Personal Independence Payment and the condition is expected to last a further nine months.
- If you are aged 16-64 and get DLA and apply for Personal Independence Payment you will not have to meet the three month qualifying period but will have to meet the prospective test (the need is expected to last for a further nine months).
- A person 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 without having to satisfy the qualifying period or the prospective test. They will also be able to apply for the Mobility component and receive that immediately if they qualify.

### **4. When can I make a new claim for Personal Independence Payment?**

- The new benefit is being introduced in stages so that we learn from each stage and get the whole process right. We will initially take new claims from claimants in areas including Merseyside, North West England, Cumbria, Cheshire and North East England.
- We will begin by taking a few thousand new claims to Personal Independence Payment from 8 April 2013 for people living in those areas. During this period new claimants in all other parts of the country will continue to claim Disability Living Allowance as now.
- We plan to take new claims from all claimants in all parts of the country from June 2013.

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

- No. Entitlement for the new benefit will not be based on what conditions or disabilities you have but on how these affect you.

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- In Personal Independence Payment 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 you individually, looking at your personal circumstances and the barriers you 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 from the people who support you (such as a GP, consultant or specialist nurse) and help us to accurately and consistently assess you and decide your entitlement.
- Exceptions will be made for claimants who are terminally ill and who are not expected to live for more than six months. We will deal with these claims quickly and the person will not need a face to face consultation, or to fulfil the three month qualifying period.

### **6. I get DLA, Will I be entitled to Personal Independence Payment?**

- There is no automatic transfer from DLA to Personal Independence Payment. If you are already getting DLA you will need to make a claim for the new benefit when invited.
- We will write to you to let you know when you can make a claim to Personal Independence Payment and how to do that. This stage will begin in October 2013 and all current DLA claimants of working age will have been contacted about reassessment by Spring 2016.
- Everyone will be individually assessed against the new entitlement criteria (some people understand these as rules).
- This means we will look at your individual 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. Entitlement will not depend on what health condition or disability you have.
- The new benefit will have different entitlement criteria to those for DLA to better reflect today's understanding of disability.
- In the past DLA focussed too much on physical disability. Personal Independence Payment will have a better balance to take into account the needs of those with mental health, intellectual, cognitive and developmental impairments.
- We expect that some people will receive more support, some broadly the same, others less and some will leave the benefit altogether.

- Our consultation on the entitlement criteria and detailed design just finished in June 2012 and we are currently analysing the response. The Government will publish this response in October 2012. This consultation and the consultation on the assessment criteria can be found at [www.dwp.gov.uk/pip](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pip).

## **7. I get DLA. Will I be told before I am reassessed for Personal Independence Payment?**

- Yes. All those of working age who get DLA will be asked whether they wish to claim Personal Independence Payment. We will write to you at some point before Spring 2016 to let you know how and when you can make a claim for Personal Independence Payment.
- We will write to you to explain what will happen throughout the assessment process, how and where it will take place, what you need to do and what help is available to support you through the process.
- We will begin assessing everyone who gets DLA for Personal Independence Payment from October 2013 and all current DLA claimants of working age will have been contacted about assessment to Personal Independence Payment by Spring 2016
- If you satisfy the entitlement criteria for the new benefit, you will be awarded Personal Independence Payment and your payment of DLA will stop.
- If you are assessed as not entitled to Personal Independence Payment, or choose not to claim it, you will not be able to retain your DLA as an alternative.

## **8. I get DLA. When will I be asked to claim Personal Independence Payment?**

- Personal Independence Payment is being introduced from 8 April 2013, so there will be no changes to your DLA benefit award before then.
- If you report a change in your condition from October 2013, or will reach the end of a fixed term award, you will be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment.
- If your condition changes before October 2013 you should continue to report any change to DLA as normal.
- We will reassess other existing DLA claimants between October 2013 and late 2016. We expect to begin by reassessing about 30,000 cases between October and December 2013 to allow us to check processes.
- Full national reassessment is likely to begin in January 2014.
- We are involving disabled people and their organisations in designing how we communicate information about assessment to Personal

Independence Payment to make sure we provide information that they will find helpful.

- A note that sets out our 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)

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

- Yes, but not all these assessments will involve a face to face consultation.
- If you are of working age (16 - 64 on 8 April 2013) and get DLA we will ask you if you want to claim Personal Independence Payment even if you have an indefinite award period. This is because the new benefit will have different entitlement criteria to those for DLA.
- All current DLA claimants of working age will have been contacted about claiming Personal Independence Payment before Spring 2016.
- We will write to you to explain what will happen through the assessment process, how and where it will take place, what you need to do and what help is available to support you through the process.
- Most people will be asked to have a face to face consultation with a health professional, as part of their assessment.
- People 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 my entitlement to Personal Independence Payment be assessed and decided?**

- The assessment for the new benefit is designed to help us decide a person's needs and benefit entitlement.
- It will involve health professionals considering your personal circumstances to understand how your condition or disabilities affect you.
- The health professional will consider the evidence provided by you and any professional that may support you on a regular basis.
- Most people will also be asked to a face to face consultation with this health professional as part of the claim process.
- The health professional will provide advice to a benefit decision maker at the Department for Work and Pensions.
- The benefit decision maker will then use all of this information to decide your entitlement to Personal Independence Payment.

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

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

## **12. My child is under 16 years old and gets DLA, will they be affected by the introduction of Personal Independence Payment?**

- No. At the moment there are no plans to replace DLA for those under the age of 16.
- We want to see how the new benefit works for people of working age (aged 16 - 64 on the day Personal Independence Payment is introduced) before making any decisions about children.
- If your child is under 16 you can continue to make a claim to Disability Living Allowance as usual.
- Children getting DLA may remain on this benefit until they reach 16 provided that they continue to satisfy the eligibility criteria. They will then need to claim for Personal Independence Payment.
- All children entitled to DLA approaching 16 will be asked if they want to claim Personal Independence Payment.



- We are developing specific plans to take claims to Personal Independence Payment from young people from age 16 as smooth and straightforward as possible.
- We are continuing to talk to young disabled people, their families and organisations representing them about the best ways of doing this.
- Our current thinking about how we support young people during the introduction of Personal Independence Payment can be found in a briefing note at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pip-briefing-young-people.pdf>

**13. I am a pensioner and get DLA, will these changes affect me?**

- Only working age DLA claimants who are over the age of 16 and under the age of 65 on the 8 April 2013 will be asked if they would like to claim the new benefit.
- Because we will not begin to ask DLA claimants whether they want to claim Personal Independence Payment until after Personal Independence Payment is introduced for new claims in April 2013, a small number will be over 65 when we contact them.
- If you get DLA and are aged 65 or over on the day Personal Independence Payment is introduced you will not need to claim Personal Independence Payment and will be able to keep your benefit beyond the age of 65 so long as you 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 Personal Independence Payment should be extended to people over 65.

**14. I get Attendance Allowance (AA), will I be affected by these changes?**

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

**15. Will there be a break in my benefit payments if I move from DLA to Personal Independence Payment?**

- You will need to decide if you want to claim Personal Independence Payment. This is because the new benefit has different entitlement rules to DLA.
- We will write to you to explain what will happen through the assessment process, how and where it will take place, what you need to do and what help is available to support you through the process.
- If you are awarded Personal Independence Payment we will ensure there are no gaps between benefit payments so long as you send us

the information we need when we ask for it. We will contact you, providing plenty of notice, explaining what will happen and what you will need to do.

**16. I currently have a Blue Badge because of my DLA, will Personal Independence Payment provide the same “gateway” or “passport” to the additional help and support that DLA attracts?**

- We recognise you value the additional help that passported benefits, such as the Blue Badge, Carer’s Allowance, Motability schemes and 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 the 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.
- Our intention is that individuals will receive an award letter, as now, which would continue to act as confirmation that they were in receipt of particular component(s) of Personal Independence Payment at a particular rate. We will continue to work with colleagues across government to identify further opportunities for streamlining this process
- The Department for Transport is currently consulting on the Government’s changes to welfare reform and the effect they will have on eligibility for a Disabled Person’s Parking Permit, or Blue Badge. This was published on 9 July 2012 and will close on 2 October 2012. To access the consultation and give your feedback, follow the link below:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-30/>
- The Scottish Government are consulting on using PIP as passports to other benefits and schemes, including Blue Badge and concessionary travel. The consultation will end on 28 September 2012. To view this consultation, click on the link below:  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/07/12102032/0>
- The Welsh Government are also consulting on the planned changes to eligibility of the Blue Badge in Wales. The consultation commenced on 7 August 2012 and is due to end on 30 October 2012. To view this consultation, click on the link below:  
<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/transport/bbadgecriteria/?lang=en>
- We will publish further information passporting once it has been decided how this will work.

**17. 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 people.
- We have carried out consultation sessions with DLA claimants and partner organisations to understand the preferences and health issues of disabled people.
- The information from these sessions and other work with disabled people and their representatives is being used to inform all aspects of how we deliver Personal Independence Payment, including how we identify those people who need support through the claim process and how to provide that.
- We remain committed to providing support for people in the most vulnerable situations and will continue to involve disabled people and their organisations in the detailed design and delivery of Personal Independence Payment.

**18. 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.
- The cost of DLA has risen by a third over the last nine 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 real terms in 2015/16 on working age individuals is around the same level we will spend this year 2011/12.
- It was clear from the responses received to the public consultation on DLA Reform in December 2010 that some reform of DLA was welcomed.
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Disability Living Allowance: Growth in the number of claimants 2002/03 to 2010/11 (08/08/2011): [http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc\\_analysis/2011/dla\\_growth\\_in\\_caseload.pdf](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2011/dla_growth_in_caseload.pdf)

**19. Has the DWP asked the PIP assessment providers to meet any targets in relation to the PIP assessment or the number of people who receive the benefit?**

- Neither the DWP nor the PIP assessment providers will have any targets in relation to the PIP assessment or the number of people who receive the benefit.
- To have any such targets in place would undermine the principle at the heart of the benefit.
- We are clear that every individual case will be considered on its own merit and priority in the benefit awarded based on individual circumstances. DWP will be closely monitoring and auditing assessments to ensure their quality and consistency.

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

- We have published various documents to keep people informed of our plans including the following:
- DLA reform consultation (6 December 2010)  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/dla-reform-consultation.pdf>
- Government response to this consultation (4 April 2011)  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/dla-reform-response.pdf>
- The Personal Independence Payment briefing notes  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/disability/personal-independence-payment/briefing-notes/>
- The second draft assessment criteria (14 November 2011)  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pip-second-draft-assessment-criteria-note.pdf>
- The Personal Independence Payment assessment thresholds consultation which was open from 16 January 2012 to 30 April 2012.  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pip-assessment-thresholds-and-consultation.pdf>
- The Personal Independence Payment detailed design consultation which was open from 26 March 2012 to 30 June 2012  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pip-detailed-design-consultation.pdf>
- We will use the responses we have received to the consultations, and with continued input from disabled people and their organisations, we will design a benefit that is easier to understand, has a simpler claim process, and is more straightforward to administer.
- We will continue to update these and publish further documents to ensure people have the latest information.

## 21. Myth buster

- Read the Personal Independence Payment myth buster  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/personal-independence-payment-myth-buster.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/personal-independence-payment-myth-buster.pdf)