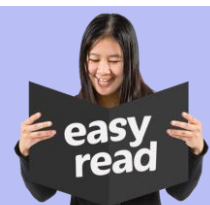


# A report about Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessments in Northern Ireland



# About this report



Personal Independence Payment is money that some people can get from the government if they:

- Are between 16 and 64 years old
- Have a health problem or disability which makes it hard to do things or get around

Personal Independence Payment is called **PIP** for short.



**DfC**

Department  
for Communities

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

PIP is run by the Department for Communities.

They are part of the government in Northern Ireland.



This report looks at PIP **assessments** in Northern Ireland.

An assessment is when the government works out if someone can get PIP and how much they need.



For the assessment people usually have to:

- Fill in a form
- Give some information about their health or disability
- Have a meeting with someone



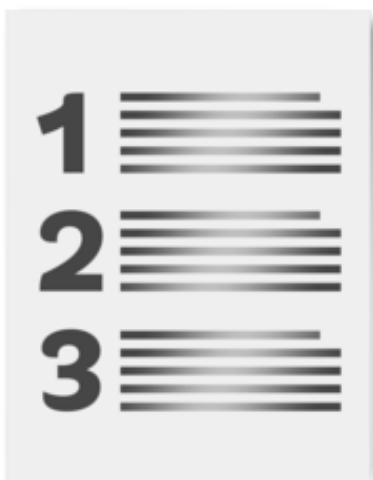
There are some problems with the assessments.

The government wanted to find out how the assessments are working in Northern Ireland.



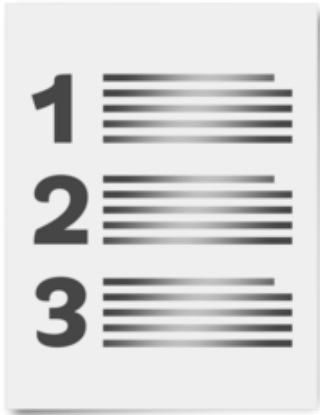
The government asked someone who does not work for the government to look into this.

The person asked lots of people what they thought.



This report tells you what the person thinks the government in Northern Ireland should do next.

# What needs to change



The person who looked at the assessments found **14 things** he thinks the government should change.

They start below:

1

## Tell people more about the assessment

There should be some events in Northern Ireland.

The events will help people know more about the assessment for PIP.



2

## Use different words

The government should use some easier words to talk about the assessments.

The words should say in a clear way what people do and what will happen.



### 3

## Stop using information about DLA

Some people got a benefit called DLA (Disability Living Allowance).

DLA is stopping. But people can ask for PIP instead.

Information about DLA should not be used to decide if people can get PIP.



### 4

## Make information easy to understand

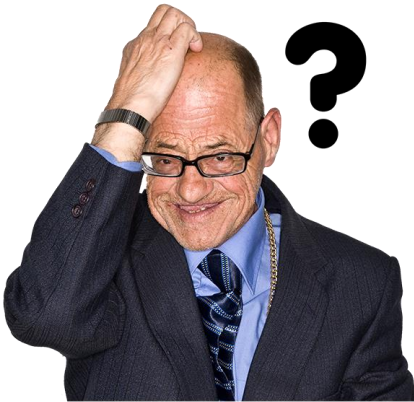
The government should:

- Make sure that letters about the assessment are easy to understand
- Make some new easy information about the assessment and how it works



## 5

### Other ways to ask for PIP



Some people may find it hard to ask for PIP by phone or writing in a form.

The government should make sure:

- People can ask for PIP in other ways if they need to
- Staff have training about the other ways people can ask for PIP



## 6

### Special rules for people who are very ill



Some people can get PIP more quickly.

These are people who have an illness they will die from.

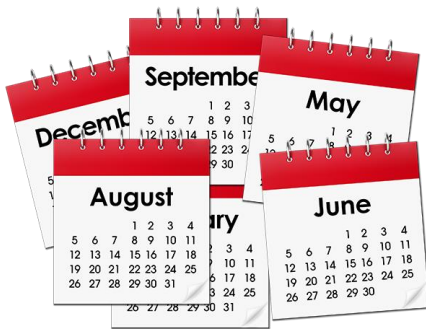
There are special rules about this.



The special rules should change so that:

- People can get the special rules if a doctor says they have an illness they will die from.

No more information is needed



- The rules should not say that people must have 6 months left to live

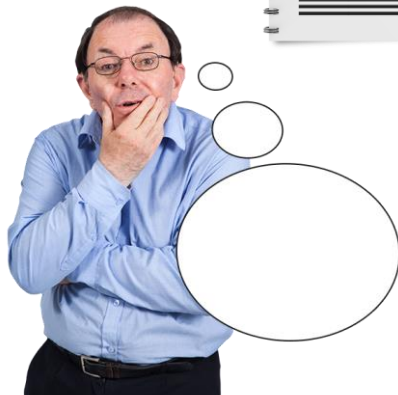
## 7

### Health information



The people who decide if someone can get PIP need some health information about the person first.

They need a short report from the person's doctor as soon as possible.



The government should find the best way to get this information.

## 8

### Make sure Capita know about extra information



Capita is a company.

They do the assessments for PIP.

People may send extra information when they ask for PIP.



Capita should:

- Be told about this information as soon as possible
- Have enough time to wait for it



## 9

### Decide who needs to have a meeting



Most people who ask for PIP have a meeting with someone to find out what support they need.



Not everyone has a meeting like this.



The government should set up a new group.

The group should decide who does not have to go to a meeting.

For example, this could be people who:

- Have an illness that will not get better
- Have an illness they will die from
- Find it very hard to have meetings to talk about what they need



People like this could fill in forms or give information in other ways instead.

This is called a **Paper-Based Review**.



There should be clear rules about this.



# 10

## Solving other problems



The government should solve other problems that people have with the assessment.

They should do this as soon as possible.

For example, the government should look at:



- How easy assessment meetings are for people. For example, when and where the meetings happen
- What support people may need for the assessment



- Making sure meetings are not changed or cancelled where possible
- Making sure people know if meetings are changed or cancelled

11

## Training for staff who do assessments



Staff who do assessments should get extra training about some health problems or disabilities.



People with these health problems or disabilities can then ask for an assessment with someone who has training about their health problem or disability.

12

## The government should make sure there is video and sound recording of the assessment



# 13

## Other changes to the assessment

### Changing what the person who does the assessment looks at during an assessment meeting



Sometimes the person who does the assessment will look at things a person does during the assessment.

For example, they may see how a person behaves or looks.

Sometimes this is used to check if a person should get PIP.



This should stop.

Or there should be changes to the way this is done.



If the people doing the assessments still do these checks they should explain any decisions they make.



## Questions

People should not be asked questions about hurting themselves or ending their lives (suicide).



14

## A copy of the report from the assessment

People should get a copy of the report from the person who does the assessment.

## What next



The government will look at the changes and decide what to do.

Pictures by Photosymbols