

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Briefing for GP's and Health & Social Care Professionals in Scotland



What is PIP?

- PIP¹ is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64.
- PIP is paid to people with a disability, impairment or mental health condition who require extra help (including aids or verbal prompting) with – *social engagement, preparing food & cooking, eating & drinking, managing medication or therapy, washing & bathing, toilet needs, dressing, speech & understanding verbal communication, reading, budgeting, walking or planning and following journeys*. The condition or impairment must be expected to last at least a year, unless the patient is terminally ill.

Important - Over the next two years, working age people² who receive DLA, even those who have awards for life, will receive a letter from the DWP inviting them to apply for PIP. It is vital that people reply to this invitation within 4 weeks, or they risk losing their benefit.

Role of GPs and Health & Social Care Professionals

- Be proactive in asking patients or clients if they get DLA, and if they have been invited to apply for PIP. If they don't know they should seek expert advice – see below.
- People not getting DLA who have a disability or impairment should be encouraged to claim PIP by calling 0800 917 2222 to start a claim.
- Be aware that the PIP application process is in a number of stages - telephone claim to ensure that the basic criteria are satisfied; self-assessment questionnaire that the patient must complete and return within 4 weeks of being sent it; and face to face assessment by DWP appointed health professional.
- Identify with your patient which health & social care professional can best provide a Factual Report, to support their claim, on the effects and impact of their condition(s) on day to day life e.g. support worker, AHP, nurse or social worker rather than GP. Their contact details should be included in the questionnaire and the patient should explain in the 'additional information' section that this is the best person to contact first.
- Refer the patient to Citizens Advice Direct (number below) or a local advice centre for expert support in completing the PIP application process.

Providing a Factual Report for a PIP Application

- In some cases, Atos request a Factual Report from the GP or health & social care professional to assist in assessing a PIP application.
- This does not have to be a GP, it should be the health & social care professional named in the questionnaire – see above underlined.
- The professional has 7 days to return their report.
- For fluctuating conditions, the patient or client has to experience a disabling effect on day to day living, more than 50% of the days in the year.
- It is important to stress in the report the 'effects of the disabling condition(s) on day to day life', and whether the patient can undertake specific tasks safely, to an acceptable standard, as often as is needed and within a reasonable time period.
- A recent report or letter such as an OT functional assessment can be attached.

Expert advice about the benefits system and PIP

Professionals can contact the CPAG Scotland advice line - 0141 552 0552, Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm and Friday 10am-12 noon, or email advice@cpagscotland.org.uk.

Patients and Clients can contact Citizens Advice Direct on 0808 800 9060 or a local advice centre.

¹ Introduced in April 2013

² People aged 16 to and who were under 65 on 8 April 2013