

Personal Independence Payment

At Citizens Advice North Somerset, our generalist and specialist benefits team can advise and assist with benefits issues from claim to appeal at tribunal. However, due to demands on our services, we advise you read the information and advice below to see if this helps before contacting us.

If you still feel you need assistance from us, please call or use our webform, but please be aware that waiting times for first contact is currently 10 days, if you have a deadline you must adhere to.

When contacting us, please ensure you are clear about what stage you are at (please read the below information for help on this) and if possible, provide any relevant documentation from the DWP/HMCTS and any relevant medical evidence.

What is PIP: PIP is a disability benefit for people between 16 and pension age, designed to help costs due to an illness, disability or mental health condition.

It does not matter if you have not worked/paid any national Insurance Contributions to qualify or the amount of income or savings you currently have either.

There are 2 parts: Daily Living and Mobility:

You can be awarded either of these components separately or together at either the 'Standard Rate' or 'Enhanced Rate'. Click [here](#) for the current rates of PIP.

Each component is made up of 'activities' where you need to accumulate points. Click [here](#) for more information about this.

Click [here](#) for a BSL overview video of PIP and [here](#) for a BSL video about how PIP is awarded.

When to know whether you can make a claim for PIP:

- Your condition has to have been causing difficulty for at least 3 months and be expected to last for another 9 months.
- If you believe this applies to you, you can request a form by calling **0800 121 4433**. The date you call is now your 'date of claim'. You can also request to have an online form sent to your email address. This date is important as if you are awarded, your award will be backdated to this date, even if you are only awarded after having to challenge the decision.

Click [here](#) for a BSL video about how to claim PIP.

- You also have to fulfil certain residence conditions, click [here](#) for more information about this.

Click [here](#) for some tips on what to consider when filling out your form and guidance on the different 'activities'.

It is really helpful to send evidence to help support your claim. You can send this after you have sent your PIP form but it is best not to leave it too long. Click [here](#) for good examples of evidence to include with your claim form.

Once you have sent off the form, you will be invited to partake in a health assessment with a Health Care Professional. You will be asked questions about how you manage the different 'activities'. Click [here](#) for more advice and information about the health assessment.

Click [here](#) for a BSL video about the PIP assessment.

Receiving your Decision:

If you have received a decision on your PIP claim and are unhappy about it, the next step is to request a 'Mandatory Reconsideration', where another Decision Maker will look at your claim again. You can request this by phone, in writing or using [this form](#).

Click [here](#) for advice about making a 'Mandatory Reconsideration.'

It is important that you take action within **1 month** of the date on your letter. If you are submitting this off past this date, you will need to include a good reason for why it is late.

Please note: If you have been awarded PIP but feel it should be increased, by asking to challenge the DWP decision, there is a risk they can reduce your award as they are obligated to look at your whole entitlement, even if you are only asking them to reconsider one part.

Receiving your 'Mandatory Reconsideration Notice':

You will then receive a 'Mandatory Reconsideration Notice' (MRN).

If you are still unhappy with the decision on the MRN, your next step is to lodge an appeal request with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). You are asking for an independent tribunal panel to look at your case and make a decision on whether you should be entitled to your benefit. You will be able to choose whether you want this to be face to face, telephone or via video call. You can opt to not attend in any capacity, but this will reduce the chances of your appeal being successful. You can apply for this online or via a written form. Click [here](#) for those options. You will again be asked to outline why you disagree with the decision.

Click [here](#) for advice about making an appeal.

Again, it is important that you take action within **one month** of the date on your MRN and if you are doing this later than that date, you will need to give good reason as to why it is late.

After you have lodged your appeal:

The tribunals service will send you a letter confirming your appeal has been lodged and will also include a 'document cover sheet'. It is really important you keep this, as this will have your tribunal reference number and will be needed if you are sending in any extra evidence to the tribunals service.

The DWP will be notified that you have lodged this and can change their minds. If they do not, they will prepare and send to you and HMCTS a 'bundle'. This will be everything the DWP holds on your case, including your original claim form, Assessment report, any evidence submitted as well as any information about previous PIP claims or claims for benefits related to your ill health/disability.

Once your appeal has been lodged, you must now send any extra evidence to the HMCTS, details on how to do this will be on the correspondence you receive for them.

Before your Tribunal Hearing:

It is then advisable to prepare a written submission to the tribunal outlining why you should be awarded PIP. Click [here](#) for self-help guidance on preparing a submission. To guarantee that the tribunal panel will definitely see any evidence, you must send it in within 2 weeks of your hearing date.

You are normally given around 3 weeks notice of your hearing date. Please note that waiting times for a tribunal hearing may be very long, due to backlogs.

The Tribunal Hearing:

Click [here](#) for advice about attending a tribunal hearing in person, or via telephone.

If you are awarded at tribunal, you will not need to notify the DWP, this will be done for you.

PIP award length dates:

The vast majority of PIP awards have an 'end date'. This will be made clear on your award letter from the DWP. Around 1 year before this date, you should expect to receive a review form from PIP. It is really important that you fill in this form by the date given, otherwise your award will end.

You must describe if your ability to complete the activities has improved, worsened or stayed the same. A new decision will then be made. Click [here](#) for advice on filling in a review form.

Please note if you are awarded at tribunal. You will have to fill in another normal PIP claim instead of a PIP form

If you feel your condition has worsened before your award is reviewed:

You are required to let the DWP know if your condition or disability has worsened or improved whilst your PIP award is ongoing. Please consider whether this worsening affects your ability to complete certain activities.

You must then call the DWP, and they will send you a review form. Please note, the DWP are obligated to look at the whole PIP award even if you are only telling them you have worsened in one area. If they believe you have improved, they are able to reduce your points, potentially reducing or ending your award.