



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair Work and Pensions Select Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

29 March 2023

Dear Sir Stephen,

Thank you for your recent letter in which you raised several queries in relation to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and reassessments, I have addressed each of your queries below.

1. During the original assessment process, what procedures are in place to ensure that decision-makers are considering the full evidence available to them?

We are committed to ensuring that those people who are entitled to PIP get the full support that they need and the right decision on their claim is made as early as possible.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) case managers (decision makers) are trained to review all available evidence, which includes the PIP forms, assessment provider's reports and any further evidence/documentation available. They view the evidence and if there are any gaps, inconsistencies in evidence, or contradictory evidence case managers must investigate further.

Learning from decisions overturned at tribunal, the department have made improvements to decision-making processes, including giving case managers additional time to contact the claimant or anyone named on the PIP form, to gather additional evidence where they think it may support the claim. They can also clarify an assessment provider report with a healthcare professional by requesting assessment provider advice or a rework of the report if they feel this is needed. Internal checks are undertaken by service assurance managers within disability services to ensure decisions meet the required quality standard. Service assurance managers will examine if all evidence has been taken into consideration and, where appropriate, that contact was made with the claimant if additional information was required.

In addition, a second tier of independent checking is in place, again to maintain quality standards, but also to make sure that guidance is applied correctly and

consistently across all PIP sites. As part of our continuous improvement strategy, we provide additional training or strengthen our instructions where necessary.

2. Under the current reassessment regime, what procedures are in place to ensure that decision-makers are properly considering the full evidence available to them?

When undertaking an award review (reassessment) a case manager (decision maker) will always firstly consider whether there is sufficient information to make a new award without the need for a claimant to go through the assessment process unnecessarily. This would include consideration of the award review form, supporting evidence, and the previous decision, including the assessment report, as well as trying to make contact with the claimant where there are any gaps and/or to clarify any answers. However, where there has been a substantial change in condition, or where a case manager feels that the information provided is not sufficient or clear enough for them to safely determine a new PIP award, the case will be referred for an assessment with a provider's healthcare professional.

3. In PQ UIN 148744, you noted the data being referred to was unpublished: will you commit to publishing this data?

There are currently no plans to publish data about recommended and awarded point scores. The data is not of sufficient quality to publish and could potentially mislead. The quality of point score data is being investigated internally. Developments to Official Statistics are planned and prioritised through the [DWP Statistical Work Programme](#).

Given the quality issues it is difficult to make comparisons to the overall number of reassessments. The 9 in 10 figure which you quoted only relates to cases that have the same points awarded as were recommended. The remaining 1 in 10 will be a mixture of cases where points recommended and awarded are different and those where the points are the same. We do not have sufficient data quality to count those cases.

4. When will the Government publish the Health and Disability White Paper?

Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper was published on 15th March 2023 and can be found on GOV.UK.
I hope you will find this reply helpful.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,



Tom Pursglove MP
Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work



Work and Pensions Committee

13 March 2023

Tom Pursglove MP
Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work
Department for Work and Pensions

(By e-mail only)

Dear Tom,

Personal Independent Payments (PIP) and reassessments

I am writing in relation to PIP and the reassessments process, including the procedures used when determining the number of points awarded to claimants.

In response to a [written question](#) (UIN 148744) tabled by Vicky Foxcroft MP, you said that during the year 2021–22, there were 478,000 occasions in England and Wales where the points awarded for PIP new claims and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP reassessments were the same as those recommended in the assessor's report.

According to the Department's [PIP statistics to October 2022](#), this equates to nearly 9 in 10 of all reassessments. Although a high proportion of reassessments with this outcome could suggest the initial assessment process is effective, it could also raise questions as to the thoroughness of reassessments.

Our predecessor Committee's 2018 Report, [PIP and ESA assessments](#), found that although most claimants proceeded through their PIP and ESA assessments without significant problems, "a sizeable minority do not". Further, the Committee concluded that although only a minority of original decisions for PIP were challenged as far as tribunal, those which did reach this stage had high overturn rates.

Since 2014/15, the overturn rates have consistently been [over 50%](#). Had these cases not been brought to Tribunal, it seems likely given the most recent data, that the original points might not have changed in some cases where they ought to have.

I would therefore be grateful if you could provide the Committee with the following information:

1. During the original assessment process, what procedures are in place to ensure that decision-makers are considering the full evidence available to them;
2. Under the current reassessment regime, what procedures are in place to ensure that decision-makers are properly considering the full evidence available to them;

3. In PQ UIN 148744, you noted the data being referred to was unpublished: will you commit to publishing this data; and
4. When will the Government publish the Health and Disability White Paper?

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by Wednesday 29 March. As is usual practice with the Committee's correspondence I will be publishing this letter and your response on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Timms". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line above the name.

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee