



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Ministerial
Correspondence
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28th July 2023

Dear Sir Stephen,

A core priority within my ministerial portfolio is the Health Transformation Programme (HTP). HTP is modernising Health and Disability benefit services to create a more efficient service and a vastly improved claimant experience, reducing journey times and improving trust in our services and decisions.

As the committee knows, HTP is developing a single new Health Assessment Service (HAS) for all benefits that use a functional health assessment. This new claimant-focussed service will re-use information to reduce the time it takes to make a claim. It will also allow people to monitor and track their application and decisions.

As I set out in the Government's response to the committee's recent report into 'Health assessments for benefits', HTP is also transforming the full Personal Independence Payment service, from finding out about benefits through to decisions, eligibility, and payments. As part of this, we will provide a new option to apply for PIP online. Once fully developed, the new online service will include the ability to save, resume and upload medical evidence, providing a clear joined-up claimant experience to help reduce the ask made of claimants.

We are developing the new PIP service carefully and incrementally, designing the service around the needs of claimants. We have started by focussing on the initial application part of the process and have been operating a small-scale test of the new online apply service since last

year. To date, over 9000 people have voluntarily used the service to make their claim for PIP.

I am pleased to inform you that we have now moved into the next phase of testing the service, where we have made the service available directly via GOV.UK. From Thursday 27 July, a limited number of claimants each week will be able to begin their claim for PIP entirely online, without needing to phone to begin their claim.

This is an important next step in our plans that will allow us to test and improve the functionality and stability of the new service, before we gradually and carefully increase the number of people using the service, ultimately making it available nationally in 2024. We have already introduced a digital version of the PIP2 health questionnaire, which is now offered to the majority of those making a claim. This will continue to be offered to those who call us to begin their claim.

In this next phase, people living in selected postcode districts in England can choose to claim online. They will be able to do this if they are claiming for themselves and are not already claiming PIP or Disability Living Allowance (DLA). At this moment, it is not possible to claim on someone's behalf using the online service. Built into the service is an eligibility checker where people can check if they are able to use it.

We know that an online option does not work for everyone and using the new online option is voluntary. For those who prefer to apply through our existing routes or are outside of this next testing phase, claims can still be made by calling the PIP new claims phoneline or applying by post. For more information about the online apply service (from 27 July) and our existing routes, please visit our 'PIP - How to Claim' page on GOV.UK.

The steps we are taking now show that this Government remains focused on improving the claimant experience to deliver a more efficient, user-friendly and accessible service that claimants rightly expect and deserve, now and in the future.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,



Tom Pursglove MP

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work