

30.September 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FOI request for information relating to PIP

Can you please provide the following?

1. Statistics for the last three years whether calendar years, financial years or every twelve months up to when the statistics are available e.g. August 2020 — July 2021 , for the following:
  - a) number of applications for PIP;
  - b) number rejected on first application;
  - c) number who put in an appeal; and
  - d) number who were successful with their appeal.
2. Do Capita suggest whether an application is rejected or approved? Do they get paid extra for rejected applications?
3. I am aware of protocols, official or unofficial, when I lived in England some years ago, where for example, when people applied for DI-A, they were automatically turned down and only those cases where people appealed were looked at. Is there such an official or tacit protocol in place in Northern Ireland to reject as many initial applications for PIP as possible?
4. Is there an official policy that states the method of dealing with PIP applications in a fair and just manner that would not lead to the Ombudsman considering it as maladministration e.g. no avoidable delays, failure to follow correct procedures, unfairness, bias or prejudice, misleading or inadequate advice, refusing to answer reasonable questions, discourtesy and mistakes in handling complaints? If so, can you send me a copy or a link to this?
5. What administrative grades deal with initial PIP applications? What medical training are they given to make these types of decisions?

I look forward to your replies to the above questions within the timescale set for FOI queries.

Yours sincerely

Received.  
06 OCT 2021  
Mail Opening Unit



**Our reference:** DfC/2021-0199

Dear

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Thank you for your request for information regarding Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Applications, which was received on 6 October 2021.

You specifically requested:

**1. Statistics for the last three years whether calendar years, financial years or every twelve months up to when the statistics are available e.g. August 2020 — July 2021, for the following:**

- a) number of applications for PIP;**
- b) number rejected on first application;**

The information requested for a) and b) is available in the PIP published statistics for Northern Ireland. The most recently published PIP statistics covers the period up to the end of May 2021. Tables 1 and 8 of the PIP Supplementary tables show the figures requested. These statistics are published quarterly and can be found at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/personal-independence-payment-statistics>

- c) number who put in an appeal; and**
- d) number who were successful with their appeal.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of PIP Appeals</b>	<b>Number of Successful</b>
<b>PIP Appeals</b>		
2019/2020	5,473	3,780
2020/2021	2,679	760
21 April 2021 to end Sept 2021	905	1,138

NB: Success is determined by a more advantageous outcome for the appellant. The appellant therefore may have already had an award of PIP but appealed the decision.

There is a time lag between an appeal being lodged by the appellant and the final determination by the tribunal, which means there is no direct correlation between the number, and associated percentages, of appeals lodged and decisions made within the same year.

**2. Do Capita suggest whether an application is rejected or approved? Do they get paid extra for rejected applications?**

I can confirm that Capita do not suggest whether an application is rejected or approved. Capita received the same payment for each assessment report provided to the Department. The assessment report is considered by a Case Manager in the Department when determining entitlement to the benefit.

**3. I am aware of protocols, official or unofficial, when I lived in England some years ago, where for example, when people applied for DLA, they were automatically turned down and only those cases where people appealed were looked at. Is there such an official or tacit protocol in place in Northern Ireland to reject as many initial applications for PIP as possible?**

I can confirm that there is no such protocol in place in Northern Ireland.

**4. Is there an official policy that states the method of dealing with PIP applications in a fair and just manner that would not lead to the Ombudsman considering it as maladministration e.g. no avoidable delays, failure to follow correct procedures, unfairness, bias or prejudice, misleading or inadequate advice, refusing to answer reasonable questions, discourtesy and mistakes in handling complaints? If so, can you send me a copy or a link to this?**

No official policy document regarding this exists. The link below is a link to the Department's complaints procedure:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-complaints-procedure>

**5. What administrative grades deal with initial PIP applications? What medical training are they given to make these types of decisions?**

I should explain that it is PIP Case Managers (CMs) who makes decisions on entitlement to PIP. PIP CMs are of Executive Officer 2 grade and are trained staff who are familiar with the legislation governing PIP but do not have a healthcare background.

All CMs are fully trained on the legislation governing the eligibility criteria for PIP. All new CMs must also undergo a 100% check on all decisions made by them until they can demonstrate that they are fully competent and qualified to fulfil their role and can give high quality and consistent decisions. Thereafter they are subject to random checks on any decisions they make, which are carried out by Quality Assurance Managers within the PIP Centre and also Standard Assurance Unit to ensure continuous high levels of accuracy.

If you are dissatisfied with this response and wish to request a review of our decision or make a complaint about how your request has been handled, you may ask for an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. You should write to the Information Access Manager, Department for Communities, Level 5, Nine Lanyon Place, BELFAST, BT1 3LP, or send an email to [foi@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:foi@communities-ni.gov.uk)

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a review of our original decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely