



**DfC**

Department  
for Communities

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

# Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessments in Northern Ireland



**easy  
read**

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# Introduction



The Department for Communities wanted to look into how **Personal Independence Payments (PIP)** are working in Northern Ireland.



A **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** is money for people who need extra help because of a disability or long term health condition.



We asked Marie Cavanagh to do an Independent Review.



Marie has worked for many years with community groups in Northern Ireland.



This information explains Marie's Review and **Recommendations**.



A **Recommendation** is a suggestion about the best way to do something to make it better.

# The Review



Marie Cavanagh spoke to many people and organisations about what they thought.



Over 250 people told her what they thought online.



She held over 50 meetings with:

- advocacy organisations - they help people to speak up, or speak up for people



- health services



- Government organisations

## CAPITA

- Capita - they are a company that runs the PIP **assessments** for the Government.



An **assessment** is a way to find out what support someone needs.



People said:

- things have improved a bit since the last time we looked at this



- but people still do not trust the way the Government is working out who should get this money



- more work needs to be done.

# Recommendations



There are 12 Recommendations that will help to improve the way PIP works in Northern Ireland.

These are the things that should happen:



## 1. Accessible information

There should be Easy Read information about PIP and any changes to PIP.



There should be information in Sign Language.



You should be able to get the forms on paper as well as being able to complete them online.



Some people can't complete forms online.



All information should tell you how to contact the **Make the Call Outreach Team**.



The **Make the Call Outreach Team** help people to fill in forms for PIP.



You can contact Make the Call Outreach Team by:

Phone: **0800 232 1271**



Text: **CHECK** to **67300**



Email: **makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk**



PIP staff should listen to social workers and family members.

## 2. Applying for PIP



The Government should set up a group to look at the questions that staff ask people who are applying to get PIP.



The questions should be written in a way that people can understand.



There should be better information for people who are applying for PIP.



The Government should tell people they can ask for an extra 2 weeks to complete the forms if they need it.





### 3. People who are very ill at the end of their lives

There are separate rules for people who are very ill at the end of their lives.



But the rules only apply to people who are expected to live for up to 6 months.



We think this limit of 6 months should be removed.



Staff should treat each case in a reasonable, fair way.

## 4. Types of assessment



The Government should look at using new ways to communicate when they have assessment meetings.



This could be a:

- phone call



- online video call.



All assessment meetings should be recorded unless the person doesn't want this.

## 5. How assessments work



### Information about health conditions

The Government should provide clear information about different health conditions.



This information should be available to staff and people who are applying for PIP.



This information would help staff decide how to treat people who have certain health conditions.



### The assessment meeting

The Government and Capita should look at asking better questions at the assessment.



Questions should help people to give all the information that is needed.



Information from carers or parents should be taken into account at the assessment.



All the information should be taken into account when staff decide if someone can have PIP.

# CAPITA

## 6. Who does the assessment

Capita run the assessments for the Northern Ireland Government.



The Government should look at whether it would be better if the assessments were run by its own staff, instead of Capita.

## 7. Further evidence

The Government should look into why many doctors are not sending in reports on people who are applying for PIP.



The Government should make sure that all information is kept in a proper way.





## 8. Training the staff who are doing the assessments

The staff who are doing the assessments should get more training.



They need to know about more health conditions.



They need to know more about Government rules.



They need to be better at communicating with people with long term health conditions and disabilities.



The training should be reviewed every year.



## 9. Checking the assessments

At the moment, an outside organisation has been checking that the assessments are being done properly.



Government staff should do this instead.



People would trust that it is being done properly if Government staff were doing it.



The Government should have an independent group of people to regularly look at how assessments are being done.



## 10. Making a decision about someone's PIP

The decision about whether you can have PIP is made by a Government worker called a Case Manager.



They use information from Capita, who run the assessments.



They should be able to make their own decision.



All people who are applying to renew their PIP should be treated the same.



People who have a condition that will last the rest of their lives should only have a short review every 10 years.



When a decision is made about your PIP, you should get information about the decision.





## 11. Complaints

The Government should give more information about what happens if you make a complaint.



The Government should set up a separate group to look at how complaints are dealt with.



## 12. Information about how well PIP assessments are going

The Government should provide information about how well PIP assessments are going.