

## **PIP a.k.a. particularly intimidating process**

By Ros, current DLA 'indefinite', would-be PIP claimant.

I decided to write this following a chat with other folk currently on DLA and facing the PIP changes. I am not qualified to give individuals any advice about how to complete the form BUT strongly urge you to seek assistance from those who can advise such as:

- The MS Society
- Communicare
- Citizens Advise Bureau

I read the info on the links below, looked at a few blogs and stuff online, made notes about what I thought I needed to put on the form.... and then went to Communicare to check I had understood the form and the questions before filling the form in. My session lasted an hour during which I learnt a heck of a lot. I then spent several hours completing the form at home. The Communicare rep I met with commented they allow 3-4 hours usually per person making a new PIP claim.

### **Remember:**

Make it clear MS is a fluctuating condition and some days you can walk a bit, possibly further than their max but many days you can't. It can be better or worse for no apparent reason.

**Can you carry out the activities reliably?** When the assessor decides which descriptor applies to you, they must consider whether you can carry out the activity reliably. This means:

- safely in a way that is unlikely to cause harm either to you or anyone else, either during the activity or afterwards
- to an acceptable standard
- repeatedly as often as is reasonably required
- in a reasonable time period - should take you no more than twice as long someone without your condition

### **How it affects you in doing daily task AND the result of doing them e.g.**

- having a shower tires me out and I need to sit down for half an hour or more.
- my walking is unreliable, unsteady due to balance problems and I am prone to trips.
- It causes the MS pain in my hip to flare up and so I have to stop and rest as soon as possible or just go home to rest.
- cognition – some days I can't concentrate to read or follow the TV

In summary, I learned:

- Don't assume you can recycle your last DLA claim to complete the form as the questions, and scoring, is different
- Don't underestimate how long it will take. You will get a deadline to submit the form by (which is 35 pages long with supporting documents to read too so a lot to absorb before you even start filling it in)
- Do consider getting input from those in the know, per above
- Do remember to complete the form for how you are on your 'worst day'

- Do start your preparation now! Read the info on these links as it may just take some of the stress out of the whole process!

Background reading

[How to claim PIP - Citizens Advice](#)

[Help filling in your PIP claim form - Citizens Advice](#)

### **Post-assessment notes**

If I recall, my home assessment lasted around 1.5 hours. I didn't attempt some of the physical movements on the assessor's list stating I didn't feel safe doing them. I started virtually all my replies with 'it varies' or 'sometimes'. My MS fluctuates; there is no pattern; I cannot predict tomorrow, or later today come to that so don't feel pressured to quantify the undefinable.

AND you can't record the session on a phone/video camera. If you really want to you have to use a double recorder (like in a police interview- and we all have one of those don't we!)

– no, they don't loan them out and yes, you must tell them IN ADVANCE if you will record so they can (and I quote) 'tell the assessor so they can prepare'.

You have to call DWP to ask for a copy of the report, not the assessor. Mine took about three weeks to arrive and did have some inaccuracies.

I have been awarded indefinite top-level mobility...which means 10 years in reality.

***N.B. written 2016/7 so some things may have changed but hope it provides some useful info.***