

## Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

11/06/2014

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Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

I thought I would share my experience so far of [Personal Independence Payment \(PIP\)](#).

I have been receiving [Disabled Living Allowance \(DLA\)](#) for the past two years and renewal was due in May 2014. So in January I received a letter from the DWP asking if I wanted to claim and switch to PIP the replacement for DLA as my current DLA was due to expire.

So I telephoned the DWP and confirmed I wished to apply for PIP and they subsequently sent me a claim form for completion. The lady on the phone indicated that I would be asked to do a medical assessment within about 4 to 5 weeks after they received the submitted claim form.

I would acknowledge that the claim form was much more geared towards Mental Health illness, but was as I had been warned a comprehensive 40 odd page form. Completing it didn't help my illness as I want to focus on the positives and don't find much benefit in dwelling on what I can not do, which is what the form is looking for. Anyway I completed the form and then went through it with a support worker from my local [Mind in Rushden](#). The form was then returned to the DWP for the 6th February 2014 deadline.

The 5 weeks passed without hearing anything, so I plucked up the courage to phone DWP and check progress, also mindful of the fact that my existing claim for DLA expired in mid May. The helpful man from DWP advised me that it could take anything up to 15 to 20 WEEKS before I would hear about an assessment and that I should phone again close to the end date of my DLA claim and it would probably be extended.

So we got to May, 3 months after I submitted the claim and I called DWP again, they confirmed that my DLA claim had been extended to November, to allow time for the PIP claim to be processed.

Now, let's pause for a moment and I will try and explain how this has affected me. Firstly completing the form and identifying and recording what I can NOT do, such as go out on my own, remember to take medication, wash and change clothes and cope with people generally, had a negative impact on my thinking and well being. Secondly

I feel guilt and doubt about claiming for PIP because of the demonising of benefit claimants by the Government and media. Thirdly and perhaps most significantly the waiting for contact from DWP is constantly on my mind and fueling my anxiety. No matter how much I tell myself that all is fine and things will happen whether I worry about it or not, I can not get it of my mind.

Then mid May I got a telephone call from Capita the agency carry out the medical assessments on behalf of DWP and they arranged an appointment for the next day, as they had a cancellation. The appointment was for 9.30 and would happen at my home. I thought that it was good that it was such short notice and early in the day so I could try and minimise my anxiety over the appointment. Following a night of little sleep, I was up early in anticipation of the appointment and slowly my anxiety built. Unfortunately an hour and half after the appointment no one had arrived and my anxiety was out of control. My wife phoned to see what was happening and after they checked Capita said the person was of sick and would not be coming. Then I suffered a panic/anxiety attack and broke down, two days in bed were needed before I could face things again.

A second appointment was made for the end of the following week, so I had to go through the anxiety building and constant overwhelming thoughts and worry, (“needlessly” I would tell myself to no avail), until the next appointment.

The man was an hour late, but did keep us advised. The assessment itself was fine, just an hour of questions about my typical day and what help I needed and why I couldn't do things.

So now it is done - I have mixed emotions: I am relieved it is over, cross with myself and even shocked at the reaction I had to the events and now trying to focus again on the positives and move forward.

I do think the process has stalled my recovery for 6 months, the constant worry and anxiety of the process, coupled with the need to focus on the negatives held me back and I noticed that I was trying less to do things, to push myself, avoiding everything, as though I needed to emphasise my illness.

I have noticed I am not even thinking about the awaited decision that much, which is good because it is all out of my control for now.

What an unhelpful and protracted experience for mental health sufferers!

[www.myanxiety.co.uk](http://www.myanxiety.co.uk)