

# **Proposed changes to the assessment criteria for the daily living component of PIP**

Personal Independence Payment is a new benefit which will replace DLA for people aged from 16-65.

## **What will change?**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 the Government published its response to the consultation on changing the entitlement for daily living component of PIP for people who score their points for using aids and appliances. The DWP have decided to cut the points from 2 to 1 for 2 activities: dressing and undressing and managing toilet needs.

This change will apply to new claims, claimants who report a change of circumstances and DLA claimants who are reassessed for PIP from 1 January 2017. The change will affect existing PIP claimants who do not report a change of circumstances from the later of 1 January 2017 or the date the Department reviews their current award.

You can read the full text of the Government's response here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/personal-independence-payment-aids-and-appliances-descriptors>

## **Entitlement to the daily living component**

The entitlement to the daily living component is assessed by looking at 10 activities. Different levels of a person's ability to carry out an activity are described by several statements, ranging from being able to do an activity to being unable to do it at all. Those are called descriptors. Each descriptor is given a number of points. A person's entitlement is calculated by adding points across all 10 activities. To qualify for the standard rate a person should score 8 points, and for the enhanced rate – 12 points.

Currently aids and appliances descriptors, except for managing medication activity, carry 2 points. Managing medication descriptor carries 1 point.

### **The impact on deafblind people**

Deafblind people are not likely to be significantly affected by these changes. Because of our campaigning and the support from many activists the DWP has done specific work to ensure people with sensory impairments are not affected by these changes.

Unless they have additional needs, deafblind people do not usually score points on “managing toilet needs” activity. And although some score point for using aids and appliances for dressing and undressing, this activity has a descriptor, which is much more suitable for deafblind people. The descriptor is: “needs prompting or assistance to select appropriate clothing”; this includes help people may need to see if their clothes are colour coordinated or clean.

The points have not been reduced for the main activities where deafblind people usually score points for using aids, those include: preparing food, taking nutrition, washing and bathing, managing therapy or monitoring health condition, communicating verbally and reading.

In very rare cases the reduction of points from 2 to 1 may mean that a person will be entitled to a standard rate of the daily living component, rather than an enhanced rate. Therefore it is essential that deafblind people who go through the assessment clearly explain the limits of aids and appliances. The law says that a certain descriptor should only apply if a person can do the activity repeatedly, safely, to an acceptable standard and in a reasonable amount of time.

It is important to remember, that all options for change initially proposed by the DWP, including the option to reduce points for all activities, would

have had a huge impact on many deafblind people and people with sensory impairments. Therefore we consider the outcome of the consultation a success.

We are mindful however, that on numerous occasions deafblind people have not been assessed correctly and their needs were not considered fully. We will continue working with the DWP and the assessment providers to ensure that the correct descriptors are applied.

We are also concerned that the proposed changes will have a negative impact on many disabled people and will mean that some people will be left without the essential financial support they need. Therefore we will continue to oppose the proposed changes.

If you have any questions about the proposed changes to PIP, please contact Svetlana Kotova at [Svetlana.kotova@sense.org.uk](mailto:Svetlana.kotova@sense.org.uk)