

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRE



Semington, near Trowbridge

01380 871007

www.ilc.org.uk



Latest Benefits Information – 9/6/2020

PIP and Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is in two parts - one part is based on National Insurance contributions and the other is based on your household means (income and savings). People can be entitled to one or the other or both parts. If you have recently been awarded the Daily Living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and are in receipt of ESA, you may be entitled to an increase in your ESA (called the Severe Disability Premium). It is worth checking with the Dept. for Work and Pensions that you are receiving the correct amount of ESA. If unsure, it may be best to seek advice.

PIP and Disability Living Allowance claims during Coronavirus Pandemic

New claims continue to be processed as well as changes in circumstances during an ongoing claim. If you think you or a dependent child might be entitled you can ring the relevant helpline. For PIP it's 0800 917 2222. For DLA it's 0800 121 4600.

Note: If you ring and ask for a DLA form to be posted to you, if the claim is successful, it will be paid from the date you rang for the form.

Face to face assessments for PIP continue to be suspended although the Government is now reviewing this. Where possible, paper based assessments will be undertaken and if needed a telephone based assessment will be conducted. If you have letters from your GP or other medical specialists, it is advisable to send a copy of them with your initial claim. A friend or relative could also provide letters giving details of any help or assistance they provide.

For anyone who is currently in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (children and young people aged under 16) and who have been invited to claim PIP, no action is currently needed, though this may also be under review. DLA payments will continue until the DWP get in touch.

Note: National DWP have been saying it is now possible to receive and return the PIP paper claim form electronically, but on the gov.uk website it is still saying that a paper claim form will be sent out following the initial telephone call to the PIP helpline. It may become possible in the future to make the claim online.

Appealing a benefit decision – ESA and PIP

If you want to challenge an ESA or PIP decision the Tribunals Service have issued a new form called SSCS1PE. You can challenge the decision online through the gov.uk website or you can download the form to complete and post to the address on the form. You cannot appeal a decision until you have completed the Mandatory Reconsideration process - this means that if you receive an unfavourable decision you have to request a Mandatory Reconsideration (review) from the office that made the decision. This can be done by phone or letter and the phone number and address will be on the letter that was sent. All other benefit decisions can be appealed using the online or paper form SSCS1.

Appeal Hearing

When you have appealed against a decision, the Tribunal Service will send you a bundle of paperwork which includes a copy of your original form, a copy of the assessment report and any other paperwork which you have sent them. You can ask the Tribunal Service to make a decision just based on the paperwork or you can ask to attend the hearing. Currently due to the Coronavirus pandemic, if you have asked to attend the hearing, it will take place on the phone. If you have a representative (which could be a named friend, relative or advisor) they can also join the hearing on a separate phone. There could also be a presenting officer from the DWP included in the phone hearing.

Pension Credit

Before 15/5/19 if you were a couple and one of you reached pension age, you could both claim Pension Credit. Since that date both have to be of pension age before you can claim. Otherwise it has to be a claim for Universal Credit even if one of the couple are of pension age (if qualifying conditions are met).

Contact Us

Please email us on welcome.ilc.semington@googlemail.com if you would like advice about any of the above issues or if you have any benefit enquiries. If you would prefer to phone, please call us on **01380 871007** and leave a message. We will get back to you as soon as possible, although it will take a little longer than email as answer machine messages are not being checked daily.

To see previous editions of this newsletter, please visit the news section on our website at ilc.org.uk

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Benefits Advisor

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Registered charity number 10000659