

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRE



Semington, near Trowbridge

01380 871007

www.ilc.org.uk



Latest Benefits Information – 14/7/2020

Benefit Assessments

It was announced on 6/7/2020 that from July the Dept. for Work and Pensions (DWP) will gradually resume assessments for Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance. This means that review forms will start to be sent to claimants with a current claim. If the claimant has any recent medical reports, a copy of them can be sent with the review form, particularly if they confirm that any medical condition still affects daily living and mobility needs. If the DWP need further information you may be asked to have an assessment. These are still being carried out by phone.

Online Personal Independence Payment Claims

Currently, if someone applies for Personal Independence Payment, the claim is started by a phone call to the PIP helpline (0800 917 2222) and then a paper claim form is sent which needs to be completed and returned, along with available medical documents. The DWP is currently running a trial to complete Part 2 (the paper claim) online. At the moment you can only complete it online if you have been sent an email inviting you to do so. Claimants are randomly selected and you are not able to request it. So if you haven't been sent an email, you will still be expected to complete the paper claim form that is sent to you.

Tax Credit Renewal Notices

Tax Credit renewal forms should be carefully checked because HMRC have issued around a million notices without correct income figures. HMRC are due to write to all affected claimants setting out the correct information. It is particularly important for self-employed claimants who usually provide an estimated income.

PIP, ESA and Other Benefit Appeals

If a claim for benefit is unsuccessful, or a lower amount than expected has been awarded, the decision can be challenged. Initially a request for a Mandatory Reconsideration has to be made, and if the decision is not changed, then an appeal to the Tribunals Service can be made. Both of these processes have to be done within one month of receiving the decision. The appeal can be made online or by a paper form.

The success rate for Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance appeals that have been heard by the Tribunals Service has now reached 75% according to new Ministry of Justice statistics. This would point to the standard of initial PIP and ESA decision-making being poor.

Telephone Hearings

During the Covid 19 pandemic benefit Tribunals are being heard via telephone (remote) hearings. If you do not have a representative, you are still allowed to have someone to provide support. They cannot actually take part in the hearing but they could, for example, provide emotional and moral support before and after the hearing, take notes, ask for a break if you are upset, speak to you afterwards to make sure you understand what was said. You will need to check with the Tribunal beforehand that the person can join the remote hearing.

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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