
Report To:	Health and Social Care Committee	Date:	19th October 2017
Report By:	Louise Long Corporate Director, (Chief Officer) Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Report No:	SW/39/2017/AH
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Subject:	Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessments		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the information received from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in relation to Inverclyde Council's request for local Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Previous reports to the Committee have highlighted a range of issues clients are reporting related to the introduction of, and migration from, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). One of the main issues is the need to travel to Glasgow for assessment.
- 2.2 HSCP Officers requested a formal response from DWP in relation to the use of Duff Street Greenock, the home visiting service and also the proposal that Inverclyde conducts its own Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments on behalf of DWP.
- 2.3 The DWP have now responded to this request explaining that Duff Street cannot be used for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments and also advising that Inverclyde Council/HSCP cannot undertake assessments.
- 2.4 Funding from the Anti-Poverty Fund is being utilised to support clients who have difficulty with their journey to Glasgow for assessment.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of the report.

**Louise Long
Corporate Director (Chief Officer)
Inverclyde HSCP**

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Personal Independence Payment (PIP) replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age claimants in 2013. All new claims for disability support are made for Personal Independence Payment, whilst all existing working age DLA claimants in Inverclyde have been invited to apply, and be reassessed for PIP. The majority of these to be reassessed are now concluded.
- 4.2 Previous reports to Committee have highlighted a range of issues clients are reporting related to the introduction of and migration from, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- 4.3 One of the main issues highlighted is the requirement for travel to Glasgow for Personal Independence Payment assessments and the difficulties this creates for clients. Previous correspondence with DWP has taken place to request that local assessments are held at DWP offices in Duff Street Greenock, however officers have been advised this is not possible
- 4.4 Duff Street offices have recently started to be utilised again for Work Capability Assessments for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) therefore DWP was contacted to ascertain, if it was suitable for these assessments, why it could therefore not be used for PIP assessments.
- 4.5 The Committee also requested that an approach was made to DWP to consider whether Inverclyde Council/HSCP could undertake PIP assessments on behalf of DWP.

5.0 CORRESPONDENCE FROM DWP

- 5.1 HSCP Officers requested a formal response from DWP in relation to the use of Duff Street; the home visiting service and also the proposal that Inverclyde conducts its own PIP assessments on behalf of DWP.

5.2 Response regarding the use of Duff Street Premises

DWP do not undertake PIP assessments themselves; they have a contract with Independent Assessment Services which utilises a network of subcontracting locally based organisations, including network providers of health professionals and NHS organisations. DWP have advised that under the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Contract with Independent Assessment Services, the PIP assessment providers are responsible for supplying their own estate whilst for Work Capability Assessments (WCA), the Health and Disability Assessment Contract states that DWP themselves are responsible for providing premises.

In addition, DWP advise that PIP assessments cannot be undertaken by ESA assessors as they are different benefits paid for very different reasons and therefore require a different set of skills for each assessment. The Work Capability Assessment for ESA is a functional assessment which is focused on what an individual can do, rather than assuming their health condition or disability means they cannot work. The assessment for PIP focuses on a claimant's ability to carry out a range of activities which are fundamental to living an independent life and is designed to help working age people with the extra costs associated with their disability.

5.3 Response regarding Home Visits

DWP state that the contract providers adhere to DWP guidance and review every claimant's circumstances on an individual basis to decide whether their face to face consultation will be in one of their consultation centres or in the claimant's home. Situations where a claimant may need a home consultation can include where a person's diagnosis suggested a significant disability that may make travel extremely difficult, or the claimant provides evidence from a health care professional that they are unable to travel due to their health condition or impairment. Where a face to face consultation is required, the DWP requirement is that claimants do not have to travel for more than 90 minutes by public transport to a consultation.

Appointments are booked via an automated booking system that schedules claimants into the next available appointment slot that is closest to their home. If a taxi journey is approved by DWP, clients can claim the return journey expenses back from DWP. If a claimant has any difficulties attending their appointment, DWP advise they should discuss this with their assessment provider as soon as possible using the contact details in their appointment letter.

5.4 Response regarding undertaking PIP Assessments

DWP have advised that this would not be possible as the current providers have been awarded through a contracting process. DWP advises that it has a clear set of requirements on the professions, skills, experience and training of the health professionals and approval for a health professional must be conferred by the DWP Chief Medical Officer on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

6.0 LOCAL MITIGATION

6.1 In order to try and support clients who have to travel to Glasgow for assessments, funding from the Anti-Poverty Fund has been allocated to CVS Inverclyde (continuation of previous grant to Inverclyde Council on Disability (ICOD)). Support to travel to Glasgow with claimants is provided in certain situations with the £120 return taxi cost being paid by CVS and then claimed back from DWP rather than a client having to fund this cost upfront.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

Legal

7.2 No implications

Human Resources

7.3 No implications

Equalities

7.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix

This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend

No a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Repopulation

7.5 No implications

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None