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Social Research

Claimant experience of telephone-based health assessments for PIP, ESA and UC

Technical report

July 2021

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1. Introduction

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals in the UK claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Universal Credit (UC) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA), due to their health condition or disability were required to undergo a face-to-face assessment to provide evidence towards their claim if a benefit decision could not be made via a paper-based assessment (where a benefit decision is made based on information provided on-line and via the post only). The PIP assessment considers the claimant's ability to carry out activities and how their condition affects their daily life. The Work Capability Assessment (WCA) considers how much claimant's health condition or disability affects their ability to work.

Since the introduction of the COVID-19 lockdown measures in March 2020, the usual face-to-face assessments were temporarily suspended and replaced with telephone assessments. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to explore how the new format of telephone assessments was experienced by claimants. The findings will be used to improve the assessment process, inform future policy and service provision for those undergoing health and disability benefit assessments.

This technical report is accompanying the main report on claimant experience of telephone-based health assessments for PIP, ESA and UC.

2. Survey overview

NatCen Social Research carried out two surveys to examine the claimant experience of telephone assessments and to gauge preferences for using telephone, face-to-face or video for assessment on an ongoing basis. The first survey comprised Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants who underwent a telephone assessment to determine their eligibility for the benefit. The second survey was of Universal Credit (UC) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants who underwent a telephone Work Capability Assessment to assess whether they should be considered able to undergo any work-related activity. Telephone interviews were conducted with 837 claimants of PIP and 1146 ESA or UC claimants between April and October 2020.

The rest of the technical report covers the survey's development, fieldwork details, sampling, weighting of the data and analysis

3. Sampling

The samples for both surveys were provided by DWP. Prior to passing the samples to NatCen DWP stratified them by key variables and sampled randomly within strata to represent the population of claimants receiving telephone assessments during this period.

Both PIP and WCA claimants’ samples did not contain missing data and all cases were included in the fieldwork samples.

PIP Survey

The sample included 8000 cases of PIP claimants who had their assessment between May and June 2020. The sample was checked for missing data (e.g. telephone numbers) and stratified by gender, type of provider (Capita or IAS), age group and type of assessment (new claim or reassessment). Prior to fieldwork, NatCen split the sample into batches and issued 6000 cases.

WCA Survey

The sample included 8000 cases of new and repeat claimants who had a WCA telephone assessment between May and July 2020. The sample was checked for missing values and stratified by age group, gender, type of assessment (i.e. new claim or change of circumstances reassessment), outcome (LCWRA and non-LCWRA).

4. Questionnaire development

The questionnaire explored claimants’ views and experiences of having a telephone assessment for PIP or WCA. It covered questions on how the telephone assessment was conducted, whether claimants’ needs were met, preference for assessment channel for future assessments (phone, face-to-face, video) and suggestions for improvement. Table 1 below outlines the questionnaire sections and main subject areas covered. Copies of the questionnaires can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

Table 1. Questionnaire structure

A: Survey introduction & consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the survey • Providing reassurance about confidentiality of information and that participation is completely voluntary.
B: Benefit status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing whether claimants have applied for the benefit for the first time, or whether it is a repeat claim.
C: Assessment information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and support clamant might have received ahead of the telephone assessment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether they had any support prior to the assessment. • How useful the support was in helping them understand the nature of the assessment. • Whether they were made aware that they could have a third person on the call with them for support/assistance. • Whether they requested any adjustments and if they received these (WCA survey only)
D: Access/technical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the assessor called on time • Whether claimants experienced any technical or practical difficulties during the call. • If a third person was present on the call and how useful this was.
E: Quality of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well the assessor explained the assessment before the call and whether they listened to the claimant. • Whether the claimant felt able to explain their health condition and how it affects their daily life. • Suggestions for improvement to the service.
F: Preference for assessment channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the claimant prefers phone, face-to-face or vide assessment and why.
G: Disability/health condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health condition/disability and how it affects them.
H: Employment status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current employment status
J: Survey end & support information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking consent to participate in future DWP-commissioned research and to link their survey answers with DWP records.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing respondents with advice and support organisation details.
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5. Fieldwork

Interviewer briefings

All interviewers working on the project attended a telephone briefing delivered by the research team. As part of this briefing, all interviewers received written interviewer instructions which provided them with background information about the project, questionnaire content and information about the claimant groups being interviewed.

Contact procedures

Claimants selected for the survey were sent an invitation letter outlining the aims of the surveys and letting them know they would be contacted by a telephone interviewer. The letters included a Freephone number and email address to contact if claimants did not wish to be contacted further or if they required further information about the study. The letters were produced in both English and Welsh (for Welsh residents). Respondents could request versions of the letter in Easy-Read and large print formats.

For claimants who did not wish to be contacted further about the survey there was an opt-out period of 10 days. The details of those who contacted NatCen before the end of the opt-out period were removed from the final sample before the start of fieldwork. After that point, if a claimant opted out, their record was removed from the Telephone Unit sample file directly.

Fieldwork

The surveys were conducted through computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) with new and repeat claimants who had taken part in a telephone assessment for PIP and WCA. The interviews lasted 25 minutes on average.

The survey used quotas by key variables to meet required number of interviews. Once a specific quota was met, the telephone interviewers ceased attempting to contact claimants in that group. Table 2 below presents information about fieldwork on both surveys.

Table 2. Fieldwork information for PIP and WCA surveys

Fieldwork information	PIP survey	WCA survey
Quota variables	age, gender and assessment provider	age, gender and the outcome of the assessment.

Fieldwork dates	14th July – 2nd August 2020	18th August – 11th October 2020
Achieved number of interviews	837	1146

Response rate

PIP survey

In total, NatCen achieved 22% of the final resolved eligible sample.

This includes claimants who were eligible for an interview and where a final fieldwork outcome was recorded. This could be a completed interview or refusal to take part, including opt outs prior to fieldwork commencing. The definition of final resolved eligible sample excludes claimants who died and claimants with invalid or incorrect telephone numbers.

This figure should not be considered a response rate, as the survey used quotas. Once the quota was met, NatCen ceased to contact claimants in this group.

The overall conversion rate was 14 per cent. This is calculated as the number of interviews achieved as a proportion of the overall fieldwork sample (based on the number of advance letters sent out). This figure includes ineligible claimants.

Table 4: fieldwork conversion rates.

Advance letters sent	6000
Final resolved eligible sample	3814
Complete interviews	837
Eligible sample conversion rate	22%
Overall conversion rate	14%

Table 5: fieldwork figures.

Before fieldwork	
Sample provided by DWP	8000
Advance letters sent	6000
Opt-outs before fieldwork (office refusals)	70
Sample loaded into CATI	5930
During fieldwork	
Productive interviews	837
No contact - call back	2612
Refusals	213
Opt-outs during fieldwork (office refusals)	23

Language barrier	23
Ill at home/Physically or mentally unable to take part	28
Wrong number / number disconnected/call blocking	35
Deceased	4
Other unknown eligibility	7
Unresolved sample	2147

WCA survey

In total, NatCen achieved 36 % of the final resolved eligible sample.

This includes claimants who were eligible for an interview and where a final fieldwork outcome was recorded. This could be a completed interview or refusal to take part, including opt outs prior to fieldwork commencing. The definition of final resolved eligible sample excludes claimants who died and claimants with invalid or incorrect telephone numbers.

This figure should not be considered a response rate, as the survey used quotas. Once the quota was met, NatCen ceased to contact claimants in this group.

The overall conversion rate was 14 per cent. This is calculated as the number of interviews achieved as a proportion of the overall fieldwork sample (based on the number of advance letters sent out). This figure includes ineligible claimants.

WCA survey

Table 9: fieldwork conversion rates.

Advance letters sent	8000
Final resolved eligible sample	3313
Complete interviews	1146
Eligible sample conversion rate	36%
Overall conversion rate	14%

Table 10: fieldwork figures.

Before fieldwork	
Sample provided by DWP	8000
Advance letters sent	8000
Opt-outs before fieldwork (office refusals)	128
Sample loaded into CATI	7872
During fieldwork	
Final resolved eligible sample	3313
Productive interviews	1146
No contact - call back	1647

Refusals	285
Opt-outs during fieldwork (office refusals)	23
Language barrier	6
Ill/Physically or mentally unable to take part	67
Wrong number/number disconnected/call blocking	134
Deceased	1
Other unknown eligibility	11
Unresolved sample	4552

6. Weighting

For each survey, calibration weighting was used to adjust the profile of respondents in order to match the profile of the sample supplied by DWP. The data was weighted to the sample profiles because no population data on PIP and WCA claimants was available. In each case the weights bring the profile of the respondent samples into line with the selected samples. In turn this should make the weighted samples representative of the populations from which they were drawn.

PIP Survey

The following four variables were used in calibration weighting of the PIP survey data:

- Provider (Capital or IAS);
- Assessment type (New Claim, Planned Intervention, Re-assessment, Unplanned Intervention);
- Gender (Male or Female);
- Age (grouped into six 10-year age bands: ≤25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, ≥65).

WCA Survey

The following five variables were used in calibration weighting of the WCA survey data:

- Outcome (non LCWRA or LCWRA);
- Claim type (New claim or Re-assessment);
- Benefit type (ESA only, ESA+PIP, UC only, UC+PIP);
- Gender (Male or Female);
- Age (grouped into four 10-year age bands: ≤35, 35-44, 45-54, ≥55).

7. Analysis

Sub-group analysis

The quantitative findings presented in the report are based on frequencies and cross-tabulations of questions to explore the differences between various sub-groups. These included how responses differed by a range of socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, main health condition, previous experiences with telephone health assessments, and preferences for different methods of assessment (face-to-face, telephone, and video). All percentages cited in the report are based on weighted data and are rounded to the nearest whole number. Don't know and refusal responses were not included in questions' base sizes.

Logistic regression was used to test whether differences were statistically significant and only results significant at the 95 per cent level or above were reported. This means that the probability of having found a difference of at least this size, if there was no actual difference in the population, is 5 per cent or less. Regression analysis aims to summarise the relationship between a 'dependent' variable and one or more 'independent' variables. It is often undertaken to support a claim that the phenomena measured by the independent variables cause the phenomenon measured by the dependent variable. However, the causal ordering, if any, between the variables cannot be verified or falsified by the technique. Logistic regression was used in this case because the dependent variables were categorical and strictly speaking linear regression assumes both independent variables (e.g. demographic information such as age) and dependent variables (e.g. attitudinal questions) are measured on an interval-level scale.

Regression analysis

Multiple regression modelling has been used in this report to investigate the relationship between individual characteristics and key outcomes of interest, while controlling for other related factors. This allows us to investigate which factors explain statistically significant differences in our outcomes of interest, above and beyond the other individual characteristics that are included in these models. Binary logistic regression models are used in these analyses as the focus for each model is on individuals' preference for any single assessment mode versus other modes or no preference.

The multiple logistic regression models included in these analyses use the weighted data from the surveys with PIP and WCA applicants separately to predict applicants' preference for telephone, face-to-face and video assessments. The independent variables included in these models included: assessment outcome, previous experience of face-to-face assessments, sex, age and health conditions. The relationship between explanatory and outcome variables is reported in the text if they are found to be significant at the 95% confidence interval.

The predicted likelihoods included in this report are obtained from logistic regression models using the 'margins' command in Stata. This produces the average probability

of an outcome if everyone in the data is treated as if they have a specified value of the covariate of interest (for example, if everyone was successful in their application and then if everyone was unsuccessful in their application). These predicted likelihoods are displayed in the plots included in the main report when there are significant differences (at the 95% confidence interval).

Regression model development

Overall, five sets of models were built with the two different sets of data; the first for PIP applications and the second for WCA applicants. Variables in these models were as recoded, where necessary, to ensure that they were as consistent as possible across the data sets. However, assessment outcomes were recorded differently for the two sets of applicants; these were classified as “awarded”, “disallowed” and “no outcome to date” for PIP applicants and “LCWRA” or “awaiting further assessment” for WCA applications.

Each model predicted a respondent favouring a particular assessment preference, in contrast to all other available options. These preferences – generated from two separate survey questions giving respondents either two or three options for their assessment mode - were:

- When asked about preference for telephone or face-to-face assessments
 - Preference for telephone assessment in 2-choice question (rather than face-to-face assessment or no preference)
 - Preference for face-to-face assessment in 2-choice question (rather than telephone assessment or no preference)
- When asked about preference for telephone, video or face-to-face assessments
 - Preference for telephone assessment in 3-choice question (rather than face-to-face assessment, video assessment or no preference)
 - Preference for face-to-face assessment in 3-choice question (rather than telephone assessment, video assessment or no preference)
 - Preference for video assessment in 3-choice question (rather than face-to-face assessment, telephone assessment or no preference)

These models have been built in a stepwise fashion, starting with a variable denoting the outcome of an applicant’s assessment as there is evidence from the bivariate analysis that an assessment outcome is a strong predictor of a respondents’ preference for different types of assessments. From this, additional explanatory factors were added to the model to determine if these were significant, when controlling for application outcome and other variables included in the model, and if their inclusion changed the relationship between assessment preference and application outcome.

Variables were added into each set of models in the following order:

Model 1: Assessment preference + application outcome

Model 2: Assessment preference + application outcome + previous face-to-face assessment

Model 3: Assessment preference + application outcome + previous face-to-face assessment + age + gender

Model 4: Assessment preference + application outcome + previous face-to-face assessment + age + gender + health conditions

Interactive effects were also tested, and the small number of significant interactions detected for preferences amongst WCA applications are reported from these models. However, no significant interactions were detected in the PIP models.

Appendix 1: PIP Survey Questionnaire

Note: Not all questions were asked for all respondents. Filters were used to direct interviewers to the right selection of questions as appropriate to the individual.

Assessment information

IntroA

“I’d like to start by asking you some questions about the information and support you might have received ahead of the telephone assessment.”

FstClaim

“How did you first hear about PIP?”

1. From a GP/health professional
2. From a social worker or care and support worker
3. From my local authority
4. From a friend or relative
5. From a charity or support group
6. From the JobCentre
7. On the DWP website or GOV.UK website
8. From the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
9. Received a letter from DWP telling me I was moving from DLA to PIP
10. Social media
11. Through my work
12. Other website (PLEASE SPECIFY)
13. From someone/somewhere else (PLEASE SPECIFY)

HelpPrior

“What information, if any, did you receive about the telephone assessment from the Jobcentre, DWP or the organisation doing the assessment?”

1. Had telephone contact
2. Received a letter
3. Received a text message
4. Received an email
5. Received a leaflet
6. Visited gov.uk website
7. I received no information
8. Can’t remember
9. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

HelpInfo

“And how helpful, if at all, was this information to help you understand what would happen during the assessment?”

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not helpful

OthInfo

“What {IF HelpPrior=1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 9: ‘other information’; IF HelpPrior= 7 or 8: ‘information’}, if any, would have been helpful to receive before the assessment?”

1. OPEN: PLEASE SPECIFY
2. No other information necessary

OthHelp

“And did you receive support from anyone else to help you prepare for the PIP assessment? This could include other organisations; support services or people you may know.”

1. GP or health professional
2. Social worker or care and support worker
3. Friend or relative
4. Someone else claiming PIP
5. Someone from a charity or support group (PLEASE SPECIFY)
6. Someone from the Job Centre
7. Capita or IAS (the assessment provider)
8. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
9. Someone else (PLEASE SPECIFY)
10. Did not receive support from other sources

ThirdAware

“Were you aware that you could have someone on the call to support you during the assessment? This could include someone you requested to join who provided support or assists with hearing, or language difficulties, or a family member or friend.”

1. Yes
2. No

Access/technical issues

SchTime

“Did the assessor call you at the scheduled time?”

1. Yes
2. No

Techlss

“And did you experience any technical issues during the call? For example, this could include being cut off from the call or having difficulties hearing each other.”

1. Call disconnected / line cut completely
2. Signal dropped in and out
3. Respondent having trouble hearing the assessor due to poor sound quality
4. Assessor not able to hear respondent due to poor sound quality
5. Background noise at assessors’ end
6. Third person got cut off from the call
7. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. No technical difficulties

CallDiff

“Did you experience any other difficulties taking the call? For example, this could include being unable to find a quiet place in your home or finding it challenging to hold the phone throughout the call.”

1. Was not able to find quiet place to take the call
2. Difficulty holding phone for duration/unable to use loudspeaker
3. Difficulties hearing due to health condition or disability
4. It was tiring/ needed to take breaks
5. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
6. No other difficulties

ThirdP

“Was a third person on the call with you to support you? This could include someone you requested to join who provided support or assists with hearing or language difficulties, or a family member or friend.” If yes, who was that?

1. Carer
2. Support Worker
3. Someone providing British Sign Language interpretation
4. Language Interpreter
5. Family member
6. Friend
7. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. No assistance on call

WhereThird

“Was this third person with you in the house or in a different location?”

1. At home with me
2. Dialed in from different location

ThirdPF

“And how helpful was it to have the other person present during the call? Was it...”

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not helpful

Quality of assessment

IntroC

“I’m now going to ask you a few statements regarding your experience of the telephone assessment. For each one could you let me know whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.”

1. “The assessor explained clearly at the beginning what would happen during the call.”
2. “The assessor listened to me and made sure they understood what I was saying.”
3. “During the assessment I was able to explain how my health condition or disability affects my daily life.”

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

ExplainWhy

“And why do you feel that you were not able to explain how your health condition or disability affects your daily life?”

PLEASE SPECIFY

ConDis

“How comfortable or uncomfortable did you feel sharing information about your health condition or disability over the phone?”

1. Very comfortable
2. Comfortable
3. Uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable

DiffTopic

“And were there any other topics which you found difficult to talk about over the phone?”

1. Discussion of my physical health or disability
2. Discussion of my mental health
3. Discussion of toileting
4. Discussion of washing and dressing
5. Discussion of my mobility
6. Discussion around my work
7. How my condition affects my concentration
8. Discussion around my childcare/family
9. Discussion around my hobbies
10. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
11. None – I was comfortable with everything

Satis

“Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your experience of how the telephone assessment was conducted?”

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied

SatisWhy

“And please could you describe why you were dissatisfied?”

PLEASE SPECIFY

Improv

“What would have improved your experience of the telephone assessment?”

FFPast

“DWP would like to find out how your experience of the PIP telephone assessment compares to having face to face assessments.

Have you had a face to face assessment in the past for a PIP claim or another health-related benefit?”

1. Yes
2. No

TelFF

“Assuming that government advice allows for face-to-face assessments in the future, would you prefer to have benefit assessments by phone or face to face?”

1. Phone
2. Face to face
3. No preference

TelPrefRea

“And could you tell me why you would prefer to have a telephone assessment?”

1. I find it easier / more comfortable speaking to someone by phone
2. I feel able to show how my condition affects me
3. The person I bring to the assessment can help me more
4. Less stressful than F2F
5. Less tiring
6. I cannot travel to face to face assessments / don't have to travel
7. Shorter than face-to-face
8. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

FFPrefRea

“And could you tell me why you would prefer to have a face to face assessment?”

1. Easier /more comfortable speaking to someone in person
2. I feel able to show how my condition affects me
3. The person I bring to the assessment can help me more
4. Less stressful
5. Less tiring
6. I can build better rapport with the assessor
7. Easier to communicate
8. Worried about connection issues
9. Worried about security of my information by phone
10. Shorter than telephone
11. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Video

Video

“Is a video call something you have used in the past? This could include having a call with someone, such as friend, family member or colleague, where you can see each other via a laptop, tablet or phone.”

1. Yes
2. No

VidComf

“How comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel taking part in the assessment by video?”

1. Very comfortable
2. Comfortable
3. Uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable

VidComfWhy

“And why do you say that you are {textfill answer from VidComf} about taking part in assessment by video”

PLEASE SPECIFY

VideoAssess

“Again, assuming the that government allows for face to face assessments in the future, which of these three options would be your preference: assessment by video, phone or face-to-face?”

1. Video
2. Phone
3. Face to face
4. No preference

Disability(ies)/health condition(s)

HealthChk

“I would now like to ask a question about your health condition(s) and/or disability(ies). This is so we can understand your situation a bit more. You can refuse to answer these questions if you do not feel comfortable. Please be reassured that your response is confidential and will not affect your benefits or dealings with DWP in any way.

Is it alright for me to continue and ask you a question about your health?”

1. Yes
2. No

Edise

“Do any of your health condition(s) or disability(ies) affect you in any of the following areas? Please only answer “Yes” if you continue to be affected in these areas after receiving any treatment, medication or after using devices to help you such as a hearing aid.”

1. Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)
2. Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)
3. Mobility (e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs)
4. Dexterity (e.g. lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)
5. Learning or understanding or concentrating
6. Memory
7. Mental health
8. Stamina or breathing or fatigue
9. Socially or behaviourally (e.g. associated with autism, Attention Deficit Disorder or Asperger's syndrome)
10. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
11. SPONTANEOUS: I do not have a health condition

MainHltCn

“And which area does your health condition(s) and/or disability(ies) affect the most?”

Employment status

CurrWork

“The next question is about what experiences you have of work. Again, please be reassured that your response is confidential and will not affect your benefits or dealings with DWP in any way. Which of the following statements best describes your current working activity? Are you...”

1. In paid work as an employee full time
2. In paid work as an employee part-time
3. Employed full time but currently on furloughed
4. Employed part-time but currently on furloughed
5. Working self-employed
6. Doing voluntary or other unpaid work
7. Not working/unemployed but actively looking for work (paid or unpaid)
8. Not working/unemployed and not looking for work
9. In education or training
10. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Demographics

IntroD

“The next question is about you and is for classification purposes only. This information will be held in the strictest of confidence and you can refuse to answer.”

Ethnic

“How would you describe your ethnic background?”

1. White British
2. White Irish
3. White Other Background (PLEASE SPECIFY)
4. Mixed White and Black Caribbean
5. Mixed White and Black African
6. Mixed White and Asian
7. Mixed Other background (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. Black or Black British Caribbean
9. Black or Black British African
10. Black or Black British Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
11. Asian or Asian British Indian
12. Asian or Asian British Pakistani
13. Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
14. Asian or Asian British Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
15. Asian or Asian British Chinese
16. Other Ethnic Background (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Appendix 2: WCA Survey Questionnaire

Note: Not all questions were asked for all respondents. Filters were used to direct interviewers to the right selection of questions as appropriate to the individual.

Assessment information

IntroA

“I’d like to start by asking you some questions about the information and support you might have received ahead of the telephone assessment.”

HelpPrior

“What information, if any, did you receive about the telephone assessment from the Jobcentre, DWP or the organisation doing the assessment?”

1. Had telephone contact
2. Received a letter
3. Received a text message
4. Received an email
5. Received a leaflet
6. I received no information
7. Can’t remember
8. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

HelpInfo

“And how helpful, if at all, was this information to help you understand what would happen during the assessment?”

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not helpful

OthInfo

“What information, if any, would have been helpful to receive before the assessment?”

PLEASE SPECIFY

OthHelp

“And did you receive support from anyone else to help you prepare for the work capability assessment? This could include other organisations; support services or people you may know.”

1. GP or health professional
2. Social worker or care and support worker
3. Friend or relative
4. Someone else claiming UC/ESA
5. Someone from a charity or support group (PLEASE SPECIFY)
6. Someone from the Job Centre

7. CHDA (the assessment provider)
8. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
9. Someone else (PLEASE SPECIFY)
10. Did not receive support from other sources

ThirdAware

“Were you aware that you could have someone on the call to support you during the assessment? This could include someone you requested to join who provided support or who assists with hearing, language difficulties, or a family member or friend.”

1. Yes
2. No

Adjustment

“Sometimes claimants require some extra help with the assessment process to take into account their disability or health condition. Did you request any of the following adjustments?”

1. Having breaks during the telephone assessment
2. Having the telephone assessment over more than one phone call
3. Receiving a copy of the assessment information in a larger text letter
4. Receiving a copy of the assessment information in braille
5. Having the assessment via a video call with a sign-language interpreter present
6. Didn't know I could request adjustments
7. Didn't need any adjustments

AdjustGiven

“And did you get the help you requested?”

1. Yes
2. No

Access/technical issues

SchTime

“I am now going to ask you some questions about the call itself. To start with, did the assessor call you at the scheduled time?”

1. Yes
2. No

Techlss

“Did you experience any technical issues during the call? For example, this could include being cut off from the call or having difficulties hearing each other.”

1. Call disconnected / line cut completely
2. Signal dropped in and out
3. Respondent having trouble hearing the assessor due to poor sound quality
4. Assessor not able to hear respondent due to poor sound quality
5. Background noise at assessors' end
6. Third person got cut off from the call
7. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. No technical difficulties

CallDiff

“Did you experience any other difficulties taking the call? For example, this could include being unable to find a quiet place in your home or finding it challenging to hold the phone throughout the call.”

1. Was not able to find quiet place to take the call
2. Difficulty holding phone for duration/unable to use loudspeaker
3. Difficulties hearing the assessor due to health condition or disability
4. It was tiring/ needed to take breaks
5. Other
6. No other difficulties

ThirdP

“Was a third person on the call with you to support you? This could include someone you requested to join who provided support or assists with hearing, language difficulties, or a family member or friend.”

1. Carer
2. Support Worker
3. Someone providing British Sign Language interpretation
4. Language Interpreter
5. Family member
6. Friend
7. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. No assistance on call

WhereThird

“Was this third person with you or in a different location?”

1. With me
2. Dialed in from different location

ThirdPF

“And how helpful was it to have the other person present during the call? Was it...”

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not helpful

Quality of assessment

IntroC

“I’m now going to ask you a few statements regarding your experience of the telephone assessment. For each one could you let me know whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.”

1. “The assessor explained clearly at the beginning what would happen during the call.”
2. “The assessor listened to me and made sure they understood what I was saying.”
3. “During the assessment I was able to explain how my health condition or disability affects my daily life.”

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

ExplainWhy

“And why do you feel that you were not able to explain how your health condition or disability affects your daily life?”

PLEASE SPECIFY

ConDis

“How comfortable or uncomfortable did you feel sharing information about your health condition or disability over the phone?”

1. Very comfortable
2. Comfortable
3. Uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable

DiffTopic

“And were there any other topics which you found difficult to talk about over the phone?”

1. Discussion of physical health or disability
2. Discussion of mental health
3. Discussion of toileting
4. Discussion of washing and dressing
5. Discussion of mobility
6. Discussion about work
7. How my condition affects my concentration
8. Discussion around childcare/family
9. Discussion about hobbies
10. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
11. None – I was comfortable with everything

Satis

“Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your experience of how the telephone assessment was conducted?”

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied

SatisWhy

“And please could you describe why you were dissatisfied?”

PLEASE SPECIFY

FollowUpInfo

“Were you given clear information before the call ended on what would happen next?”

1. Yes
2. No

Improv

What would have improved your experience of the telephone assessment?”

FFPast

“DWP would like to find out how your experience of the telephone assessment compares to having a face to face assessment. Have you had a face to face assessment in the past for a UC, ESA claim or another health-related benefit?”

1. Yes
2. No

TelFF

“Assuming that government advice allows for face-to-face assessments in the future, would you prefer to have benefit assessments by phone or face to face?”

1. Phone
2. Face to face
3. No preference

TelPrefRea

“And could you tell me why you would prefer to have a telephone assessment?”

1. Easier / more comfortable speaking to someone by phone
2. I feel able to show how my condition affects me
3. The person I bring to the assessment can help me more
4. Less stressful than face-to-face
5. Less tiring
6. I cannot travel to face to face assessments / don't have to travel
7. Shorter than face-to-face
8. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

FFPrefRea

“And could you tell me why you would prefer to have a face to face assessment?”

1. Easier /more comfortable speaking to someone in person
2. I feel able to show how my condition affects me
3. The person I bring to the assessment can help me more
4. Less stressful
5. Less tiring
6. I can build better rapport with the assessor
7. Easier to communicate
8. Worried about connection issues
9. Worried about security of my information by phone

10. Shorter than telephone
11. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Video

Video

“Is a video call something you have used in the past? This could include having a call with someone, such as friend, family member or colleague, where you can see each other via a laptop, tablet or phone.”

1. Yes
2. No

VidComf

“How comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel taking part in the assessment by video?”

1. Very comfortable
2. Comfortable
3. Uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable

VidComfWhy

“And why do you say that you are comfortable about taking part in assessment by video?”
PLEASE SPECIFY

VidUncomfWhy

“And why do you say that you are uncomfortable about taking part in assessment by video?”
PLEASE SPECIFY

VideoAssess

“Again, assuming the that government allows for face to face assessments in the future, which of these three options would be your preference: assessment by video, phone or face-to-face?”

1. Video
2. Phone
3. Face to face
4. No preference

Disability(ies)/health condition(s)

HealthChk

“I would now like to ask a question about your health condition(s) and/or disability(ies). This is so we can understand your situation a bit more. You can refuse to answer these questions if you do not feel comfortable. Please be reassured that your response is confidential and will not affect your benefits or dealings with DWP in any way.”

Edise

“Do any of your health condition(s) or disability(ies) affect you in any of the following areas? Please only answer “Yes” if you continue to be affected in these areas after receiving any treatment, medication or after using devices to help you such as a hearing aid.”

1. Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)
2. Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)
3. Mobility (e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs)
4. Dexterity (e.g. lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)
5. Learning or understanding or concentrating
6. Memory
7. Mental health
8. Stamina or breathing or fatigue
9. Socially or behaviourally (e.g. associated with autism, Attention Deficit Disorder or Asperger's syndrome)
10. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
11. I do not have a health condition

MainHltCn

“And which area does your health condition(s) and/or disability(ies) affect the most?”

Employment status

CurrWork

The next question is about what experiences you have of work. Again, please be reassured that your response is confidential and will not affect your benefits or dealings with DWP in any way.

Which of the following statements best describes your current working activity? Are you...

1. In education or training
2. Doing voluntary or other unpaid work
3. Not working – retired
4. Not working/unemployed and not looking for work
5. Not working/unemployed but actively looking for work (paid or unpaid)
6. Working self-employed
7. Employed part-time but currently furloughed
8. Employed full time but currently furloughed
9. In paid work as an employee part-time
10. In paid work as an employee full time
11. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Demographics

IntroD

“The next question is about you and is for classification purposes only. This information will be held in the strictest of confidence and you can refuse to answer.”

Ethnic

“How would you describe your ethnic background?”

1. White British
2. White Irish
3. White Other Background (PLEASE SPECIFY)
4. Mixed White and Black Caribbean
5. Mixed White and Black African
6. Mixed White and Asian
7. Mixed Other background (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. Black or Black British Caribbean
9. Black or Black British African
10. Black or Black British Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
11. Asian or Asian British Indian
12. Asian or Asian British Pakistani
13. Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
14. Asian or Asian British Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
15. Asian or Asian British Chinese
16. Other Ethnic Background (PLEASE SPECIFY)