



RESPONSE TO THE DWP ON THE: **Consultation on the PIP assessment** **'moving around' activity**

Introduction

Disabled Motoring UK (DMUK) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Consultation on the PIP assessment 'moving around' activity. This document is our formal response to that consultation. We would be pleased to expand our comments if required and are happy for them to be made public. The consultation requested a response to a specific question and we enclose our response to that question. This document provides additional background information on DMUK.

Background

DMUK is a national charity that works to improve access and mobility for all disabled drivers, passengers, Blue Badge holders, scooter and wheelchair users. We currently serve around 14,000 members and we work with businesses and government to improve the transport issues faced by people with disabilities.

DMUK was formed at the end of 2005 by the merger of the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (DDMC) and the Disabled Drivers' Association (DDA). The Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (DDMC) was founded in 1922, the world's first motoring organisation for disabled people. The Disabled Drivers' Association was established in 1948 as the Invalid Tricycle Association, changing its name later to reflect changes in the vehicles members used.

Disabled Motoring UK publishes a monthly magazine that goes out to all of its members and is also distributed through various other voluntary organisations and healthcare providers. The magazine aims to empower its disabled readers and foster a sense of community as well as keeping people informed. We run regular features on road safety and updated legislation as well as more light-hearted features from our members on accessible holidays, disability sport and reviews of adapted vehicles.

What are your views on the *Moving around* activity within the current PIP assessment criteria?

Firstly DMUK would like to express our disappointment at the consultation period only being six weeks instead of the normal 12. We believe this has resulted in significantly fewer disabled people responding as many disabled

people only get to hear about consultations through charity magazines such as ours and printing deadlines mean our members only knew about the consultation on the 1st August giving them five days to respond.

When responding to the previous DWP consultation on the proposal to implement Personal Independence Payment, DMUK had understood that those who could walk 50 metres or more would not qualify for enhanced rate, but those who couldn't walk 50 metres would. We were therefore shocked to learn that the benchmark had actually been set at just 20 metres. This would obviously have the effect of excluding far more disabled people from claiming the enhanced mobility component, as many more people can walk 20 metres than 50 metres.

Had DMUK known that 20m was the benchmark to be used we would have vehemently opposed it in the consultation, as this current eligibility criteria will leave many disabled people isolated. At no point in the previous consultation process were DMUK aware that the 20 metre benchmark was going to be introduced.

Using 20m as the benchmark is a significantly different criteria to other disability benefits. Under Disability Living Allowance (DLA) 50 metres is often used as the benchmark distance to determine whether a claimant is "virtually unable to walk". It is also a significant distance for the purposes of assessment for entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and eligibility for a Blue Badge. Now that PIP is being introduced, eligibility for a Blue Badge has been changed in England to 8 points in the 'moving around' criteria, which is supposed to be the criteria most in line with the Blue Badge scheme as this is the criteria if you apply for a Blue Badge through the assessed rather than the automatic route. Surely this is an indication in itself that 50m should be retained as the benchmark for enhanced rate mobility PIP.

In addition official guidance on creating an accessible built environment including the Government's own publication, "Inclusive Mobility" (DfT), referenced in the Approved Document M of the Building Regulations recommends that parking spaces for Blue Badge holders should preferably be provided within 50 metres of the facilities they serve (paragraph 5.1, Car Parking).

One of our greatest concerns with the benchmark for enhanced rate mobility component of PIP being 20m is that many current Motability customers will no longer be eligible for the scheme. We have many members who can walk very short distances (less than 50 metres but more than 20 metres) and they are extremely fearful of what will happen when they lose their car. Motability not only offers affordable vehicles to disabled people but it also helps fund adaptations and driving lessons. As a result of this 20 metre benchmark many seriously disabled people will no longer have access to the Motability scheme and its additional benefits. Using public transport is often not an option if you have a severe disability especially those living in rural areas in the UK and the majority of people cannot afford a vehicle outside of the Motability scheme.

We also have a small number of members who were previous owners of invalid trikes. The criteria for receiving one of these was you could walk more than 20m but less than 50 metres. When these people gave up their trikes they were promised that they would receive an allowance for a private car for the rest of their life. DMUK is concerned that this promise is now going to be broken under the new PIP criteria.

In summary DMUK would like to see the criteria changed to a benchmark of 50m for someone to receive the enhanced rate or for it to be awarded under the current criteria for someone receiving 8 points or more which is akin to the Blue Badge criteria. Failure to change this benchmark will result in many disabled people becoming isolated in their own homes.

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