

Personal Independence Payment Evaluation: Wave 1 Claimant Survey Findings

*Survey findings from Wave 1 of the quantitative
research: initial claims process*

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A report of research carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.

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Executive summary

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake three waves of quantitative and qualitative research with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants, designed to give an in-depth understanding of claimants' experiences of the various stages of the PIP process. This interim report presents headline findings from the first wave of the quantitative strand, comprising over 1,100 telephone interviews with claimants, focusing on the application process.

The survey findings show that overall, the claim line and application processes are working well. Claimants know they need to call the claim line and tend to find the experience as they expect or easier. Claimants find the application form allows them to explain their condition and that the information from DWP is helpful.

Claimants are clear about their reasons for applying for PIP, with most claiming due to extra costs relating to their health condition, or to supplement or replace their incomes.

There is a lack of prior knowledge about PIP before people call the claim line, particularly in relation to the awards process. There was also evidence that people are unclear about the next steps after they complete and return the form although there is greater knowledge about the appeals and reconsideration processes. Half of claimants have worries or concerns about the process before beginning, highlighting the importance of effective communication about the process beforehand.

Many claimants have help at various stages of the process. Health professionals, social or care workers, charities, Citizens Advice and friends and family are consulted before applying, when completing the form and when deciding what information and evidence to include. Over half of claimants sought help with filling in the form, primarily because of their disability or illness or because they did not understand the questions.

A minority of claimants would have preferred to claim online, a consistent finding across claimant types and demographic subgroups.

While few claimants reported using the DWP website and helpline at specific stages of the process, a sizeable minority (35 per cent) had contact with DWP or used information provided by them at one or more points before or during the application process. These claimants typically had more positive experiences throughout the claims process. Those who used the website, helpline, or DWP guidance generally found them useful.

The research found a number of differences between customer types (new claimants, reassessment cases, and those in the full PIP roll-out category). New claimants have much lower prior knowledge about the process but are more likely to seek different types of advice before applying. They are clearer about what to expect from subsequent steps in the process than other claimant types. They are also more likely to find the process easier than they anticipated.

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1 Acknowledgements

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The research would not have been possible without the contribution of Personal Independence Payments claimants who were willing to take part in a telephone interview – we appreciate their time.

The Ipsos MORI telephone unit did an excellent job of carrying out the interviews and dealing with any difficulties or concerns which arose.

2 Glossary of terms

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) - is a tax-free, non-means tested benefit which helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term ill-health or a disability for people aged 16 to 64, available to those both in and out of work. It replaces DLA (Disability Living Allowance). Applications for PIP are made to the DWP. It involves an initial call to a claim line followed by completing a paper form.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) - is a tax-free, non-means tested benefit for disabled people who need help with mobility or care costs, available to those both in and out of work. This is being phased out and people aged 16-64 who were previously on DLA are now being rolled onto Personal Independence Payment. Those aged under 16 years can still claim for DLA.

Full PIP roll-out - those who previously claimed DLA who have been invited to apply for PIP as part of the process for replacing DLA (even if their previous award has not ended).

Reassessment - Also known as natural reassessment - those who have been claiming DLA that have been asked to apply for PIP because their circumstances have changed.

New claimant - those who have started an entirely new PIP claim and have never claimed DLA, or claimed in the distant past, but have not had a recent award.

3 Abbreviations

DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
DLA	Disability Living Allowance

4 Background and methodology

Personal independence payment (PIP) is a tax-free, non-means tested benefit that helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term ill health or disability. It is the replacement for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and was first introduced in 2013. An Independent Review of PIP was carried out by Paul Gray in 2014, which recommended further research by DWP to better understand claimant experiences¹. This research seeks to fulfil this aim.

The research comprises three waves, each investigating a key stage of the PIP application process. Wave 1 looks at the initial claims process, including motivations for claiming, the initial call to the claim line, completing the form, and expectations of next steps. Wave 2 will cover the face-to-face assessment stage and decisions. This includes preparing for the assessment, experiences of the assessment itself, and the decision stage. Wave 3 will examine mandatory reconsiderations and appeals.

Each wave employs both a quantitative and qualitative methodology. The quantitative research consists of a large scale national survey (including a longitudinal element following claimants through the stages) via structured telephone interviews. Postal questionnaires are available as an alternative method for those who were not able or willing to take part by telephone. The qualitative research consists of in-depth face-to-face interviews in claimants' homes or in-depth telephone interviews.

This report contains headline findings from wave one of the quantitative strand, supported by relevant findings from wave one of the qualitative research which ran concurrently. Selected findings from the qualitative research have been included where they provide additional context for results from the quantitative survey. The full qualitative findings will be reported on comprehensively in a separate report.

Figure 4.1 shows a simplified flowchart of the PIP application process, and which waves of research covers which aspects of the process:

¹ Gray. P. (2014) An Independent Review of the Personal Independence Payment Assessment. London: Stationary Office. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387981/pip-assessment-first-independent-review.pdf

PIP Evaluation: Wave 1 Claimant Survey Findings

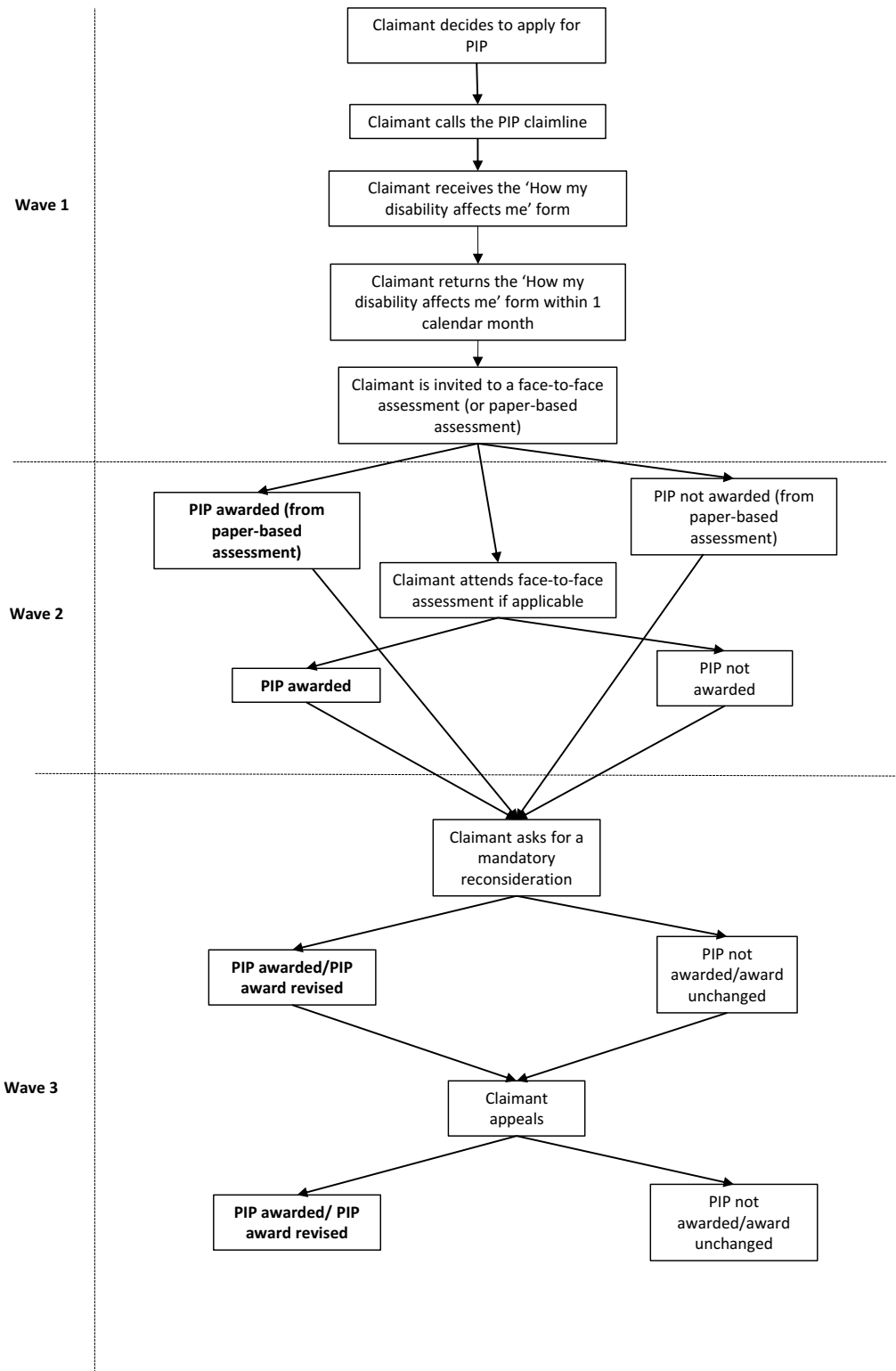


Figure 4.1

The report focuses on the initial telephone claims process and the experience of filling out the PIP application form. The questionnaire was designed to identify the primary reasons for claiming PIP, to establish levels of understanding about the

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claims process, and to explore the extent to which claimants' experiences of the process matched their expectations.

In wave one, Ipsos MORI sought to interview claimants who had called the PIP claim line to request a form, had received the form, and had not yet attended an assessment interview or received a final decision. The participant could be the claimant or someone claiming on another's behalf (for example, a family member or a carer). DWP provided Ipsos MORI with a sample of 8,000 people who had requested a PIP application form in early August 2016. Each sample member was sent a letter which informed them of the study and gave instructions about how to opt-out of any further contact regarding this research.

Opt outs were received from 905 people before fieldwork began and a further 90 contacted Ipsos MORI during fieldwork to opt out. Fieldwork took place between 19th September and 17th October 2016, and 1,106 interviews were achieved. A further 1,869 people agreed to take part but were ineligible because they had advanced too far in the PIP claim process.

The survey included a recontact question asking participants if Ipsos MORI could contact them for future waves. Agreement to recontact was given by 999 of the 1,106 participants completing the survey, and they will be contacted in the second wave of the quantitative research in early 2017.

Key characteristics of the sample include a reasonably equal split between genders and age groups. Half of the sample is made up of new claimants (those who have started an entirely new claim and have never claimed DLA or claimed in the distant past), with a further quarter made up of natural reassessment claimants (those who have been asked to apply for PIP because their circumstances have changed) and those part of the full PIP roll-out (where those who previously claimed DLA were invited to apply for PIP as part of the process for replacing DLA) respectively. Over half of the sample stated that they are 'long term sick or disabled' when presented with a list of ways in which they might describe their current work status, while six per cent reported being in full-time employment and six per cent in part-time employment. Some reported being unemployed, whether looking for a job (five per cent) or not (13 per cent).

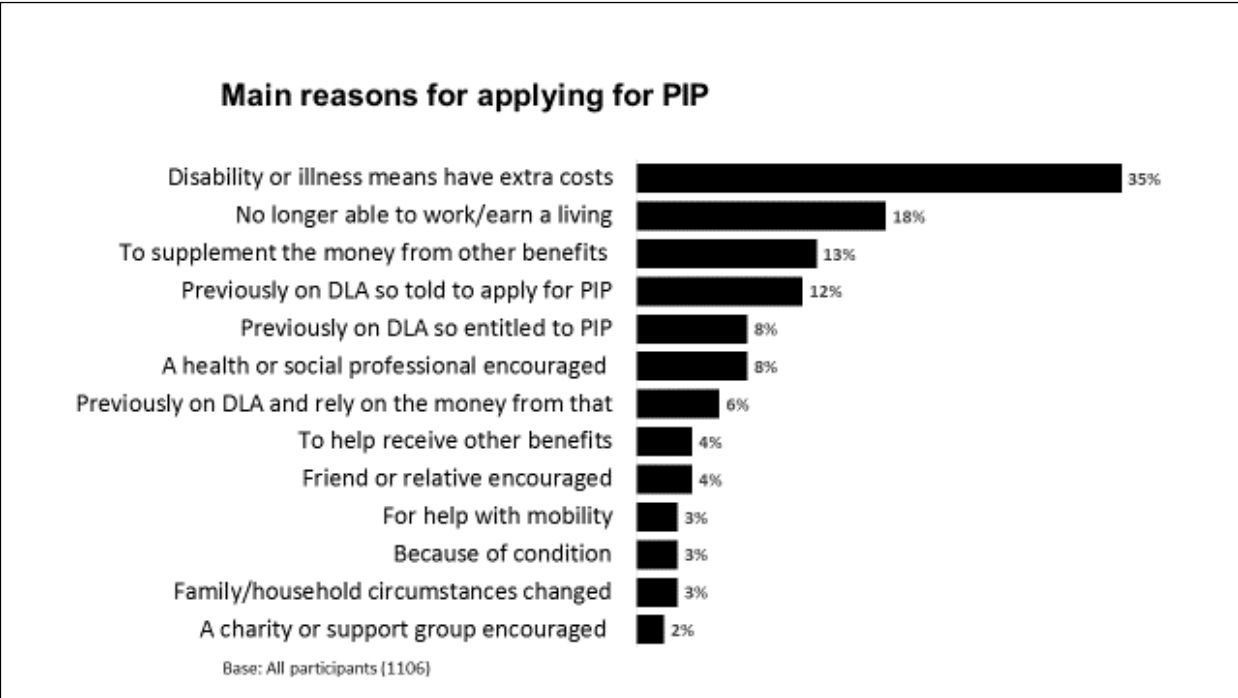
The differences highlighted and described in the text of this report are statistically significant unless otherwise stated. Further information on sampling and statistical reliability can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

5 Before claiming

This chapter covers the reasons claimants give for claiming and discusses their knowledge and concerns about the process. As this chapter shows, claimants’ circumstances and attitudes before deciding to contact the PIP claim line are an important part of the claimant journey. Claimants report applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for a variety of reasons, in particular to cover extra costs related to their disability or illness and, in some cases, to replace income lost because they cannot work. Prior knowledge about PIP is low (particularly among new claimants), and a sizeable minority do not speak to anyone before calling the claim line.

Reasons for claiming

Claimants’ most commonly cited reason for applying for PIP is because they have extra costs associated with their disability or illness, though claimants mentioned a number of different reasons for applying, including needing to supplement their income, as shown in Figure 5.1:



Question wording: B8a. What were your main reasons for applying for PIP (for the person you are applying on behalf of)? INTERVIEWER: If respondent just states their condition or disability here: What reasons did you have for applying for PIP in light of your/their condition(s) and the impact which they have on your/their life?

Figure 5.1

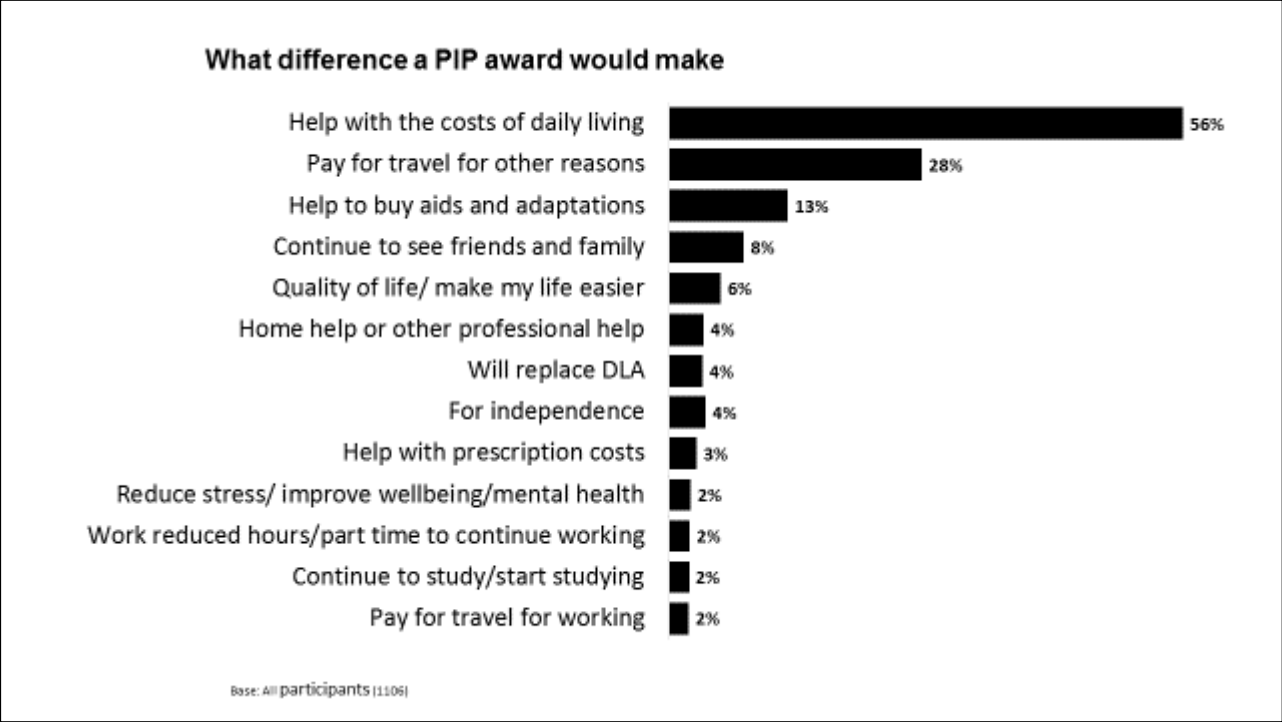
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Over one-third (35 per cent) cite the additional costs of their disability or illness as the reason they applied for PIP. Some claimants said they did so because they are no longer able to work (18 per cent), with some applying to supplement the money from other benefits (13 per cent). New claimants were the most likely group to say they applied for PIP because they are no longer able to work (26 per cent, compared to 12 per cent of reassessment cases and eight per cent in full PIP roll-out). Other reasons for claiming PIP were that the person was previously on DLA and was told to claim (12 per cent) or that they were on DLA so felt entitled to PIP (eight per cent).

Those who said their disability or illness meant they had extra costs were asked what costs they incurred. Travel is the most common additional cost mentioned, with over half of this group of claimants incurring additional costs here (54 per cent). The qualitative research also found that travel was a key additional cost that participants wanted PIP to cover. For a number of participants, walking or taking public transport was difficult because of their illness, impairment or health condition and as such they intended to use PIP to cover the extra transport costs that they incurred e.g. by having a car, using taxis or public transport.

As well as travel, 29 per cent of claimants in the quantitative research, reported help at home as an additional cost. Those in the full PIP roll-out process were more likely than new claimants to mention costs associated with help at home (42 per cent compared to 23 per cent). One-quarter of claimants cited general extra costs (without specifying further), while almost one in five have extra costs from aids or adaptations or medication or treatment (both 19 per cent). Though small by comparison to the types of additional cost mentioned above, some claimants cited more fundamental costs, such as for food or shopping (five per cent), for clothing or footwear (two per cent), for bills, rent or mortgage (two per cent) or for heating (two per cent). The qualitative interviews indicated that where participants spoke of using the money for additional costs, they tended to be thinking about these fundamental costs, with household bills and food shopping most commonly mentioned.

Figure 5.2 shows what difference claimants think receiving a PIP award will have on their lives. The most commonly-cited difference that receiving a PIP award would make is help with the costs of daily living, with over half of claimants saying this (56 per cent).



Question wording: F2. What difference, if any, do you think receiving a PIP award will make to your/their life?

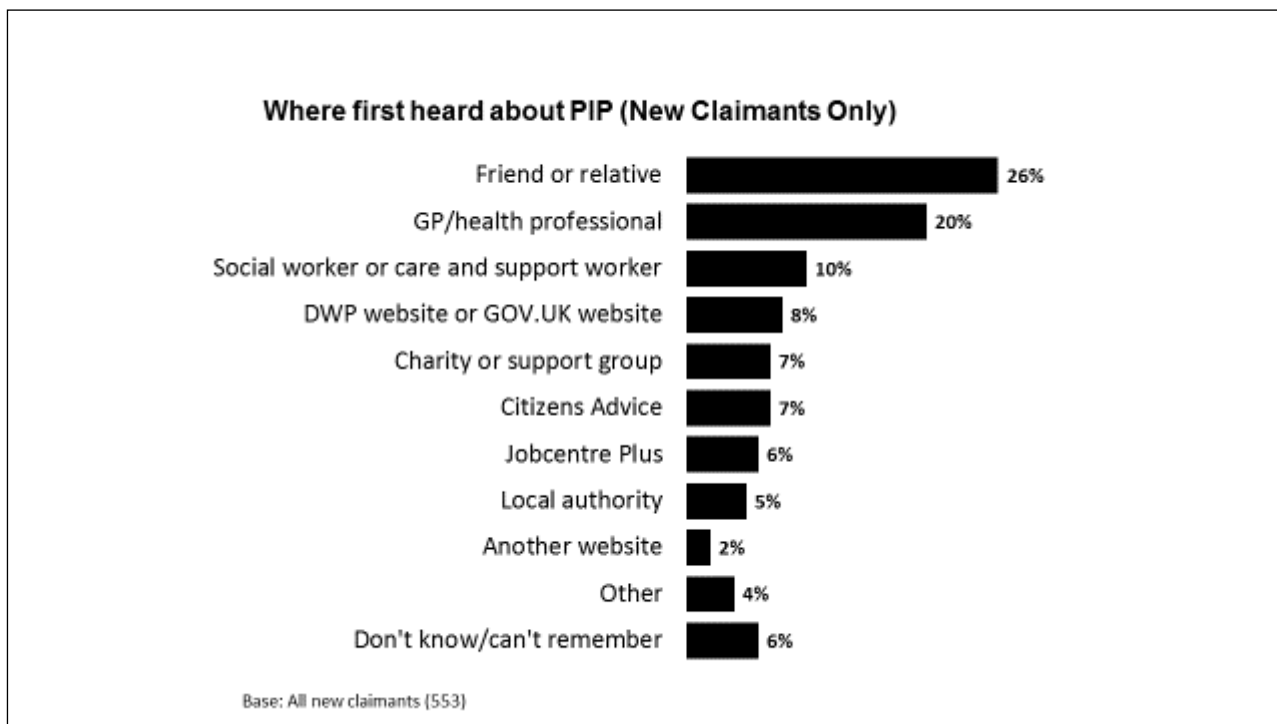
Figure 5.2

A further 28 per cent of claimants said that PIP would help them pay for travel for other reasons (far more than the two per cent who said it will help them to pay to travel to work). Other perceived impacts include those related to quality of life: eight per cent said it will allow them to continue to see friends and family, six per cent said it will improve their quality of life or make their lives easier, and four per cent said it will enable independence. The qualitative interviews also explored what difference a PIP award would make to participants. Some thought that it would improve their quality of life and independence, giving them greater access to services (such as short breaks/ respite, or a paid carer/support worker) and to family/friends and activities such as specialists sports team (by covering transport costs).

A limited proportion of claimants think PIP will enable them to work reduced hours or work part time to help them to work (two per cent), suggesting that work enablement is not the top of mind consideration for claimants, even among the 18 per cent of claimants who said they applied for PIP primarily because they are no longer able to work.

Previous knowledge and advice

New claimants were asked how they first heard about PIP. This question was not asked to people who had previously been on DLA as they would have been invited to apply for PIP by DWP. As shown in Figure 5.3, new claimants are most likely to have heard about PIP from a friend or relative (26 per cent), followed by a GP or health professional (20 per cent). Fewer than one in ten people had heard about PIP through the DWP website or GOV.UK website (eight per cent). Others had initially heard of PIP through charities, Citizens Advice or Jobcentre Plus (seven per cent, seven per cent and six per cent respectively).



Question wording: B1. How did you first hear about PIP?

Figure 5.3

All claimants were asked about their prior knowledge of the PIP process, before calling the claim line. People reported low levels of prior knowledge, with 36 per cent of claimants saying they know nothing about why a person might be awarded PIP and 46 per cent knowing nothing about the process for claiming PIP. This is not to say that claimants know nothing about PIP itself, rather that they do not consider themselves knowledgeable about the award criteria or the process beyond the initial telephone call. Overall, around three-quarters of people felt they knew nothing at all or knew just a little about why a person might be awarded PIP or the process for claiming (73 per cent and 79 per cent respectively). In contrast, between one-quarter and one-fifth of participants felt they knew a great deal or fair amount (24 per cent and 20 per cent respectively).

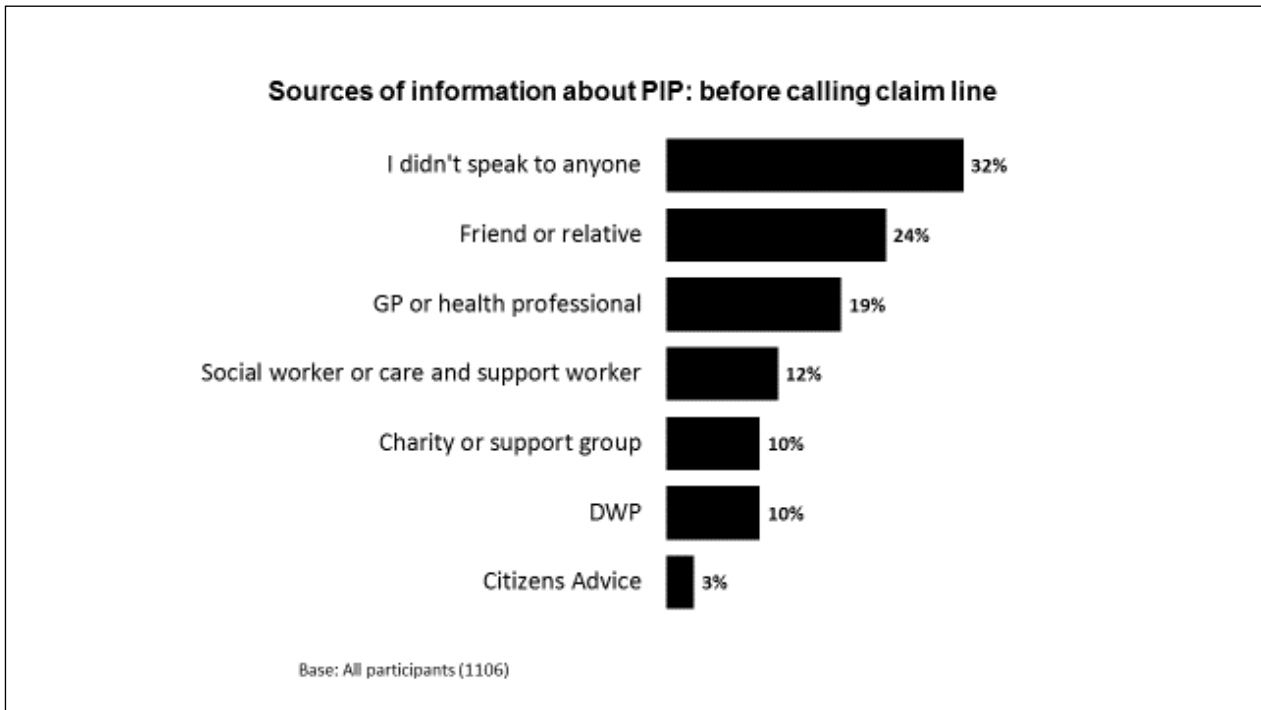
New claimants are the least knowledgeable about PIP prior to making their claim. Two-fifths (42 per cent) of new claimants said they knew nothing at all about why a person might be awarded PIP (compared to 32 per cent of people in the full PIP roll-

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out process and 28 per cent of reassessment cases), and 51 per cent said they knew nothing about the process for claiming (compared to 35 per cent of reassessment cases). The qualitative research found that many of those who made a new claim for PIP had been advised to apply by someone else; usually a health professional, a social worker, someone involved in another benefit claim, or friend/family. Often these participants had been given the number to call and gone through the steps without doing prior research, assuming that they would probably be eligible as they had been advised to claim.

Knowledge is also linked to reasons for claiming. More than a third (35 per cent) of people who are claiming because their disability or illness means they have extra costs say they knew nothing about why a person might be awarded PIP, compared to 17 per cent of people who are claiming because they are no longer able to work, and 13 per cent of people claiming to supplement the money from other benefits. Similarly, 32 per cent of people claiming because their disability or illness gives them extra costs say they knew nothing about the process, compared to 20 per cent of people claiming because they are no longer able to work and 13 per cent of people claiming to supplement benefits. Knowledge of why PIP is awarded and the process for claiming it is therefore much lower among those who are claiming it because their disability or illness means they have extra costs.

In addition to where they first heard about PIP, participants were also asked who, if anyone, they spoke to about PIP before contacting the claim line (as shown in Figure 5.4). Around one-third did not speak to anyone (32 per cent), with a quarter speaking to a friend or relative (24 per cent) and around one-fifth speaking to a GP or health professional (19 per cent). Only one in ten claimants got information about PIP from DWP before claiming (ten per cent).



Question wording: B3. And thinking about your decision to apply for PIP, who, if anyone, did you speak to about it, before you contacted the claim line? PROBE FULLY: Anyone else?

Figure 5.4

The qualitative research found that similar sources were consulted before contacting the claim line. In the small number of cases where participants actively carried research out before calling to claim PIP, the sources of information used included:

- Gov.uk website
- Online disability forums
- General online searching of PIP

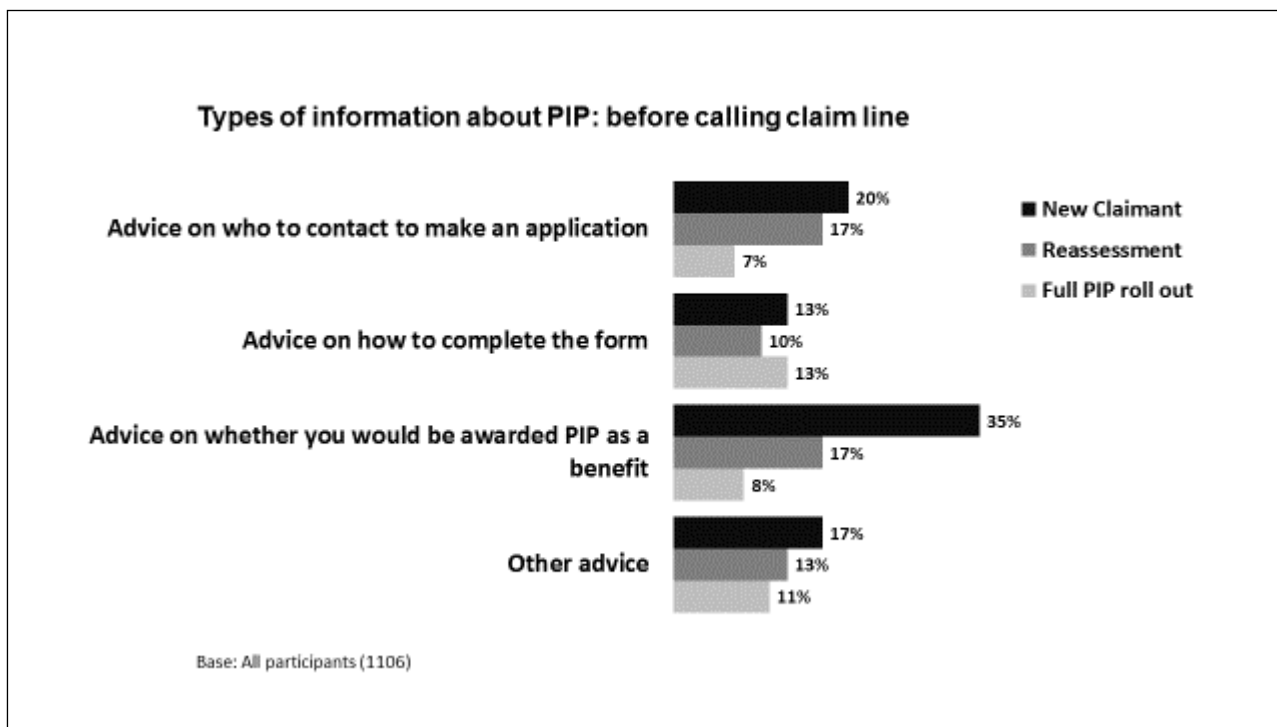
New claimants are most likely to have spoken to someone (84 per cent compared to 61 per cent of reassessment cases and 46 per cent of roll-out cases). New claimants are also more likely than the cohort overall to have consulted a range of different people about PIP. This could be a reflection of new claimants having had less experience of DWP processes compared with those who have previously claimed DLA.

There is no relationship between knowledge of the PIP application process and whether or not claimants sought information when deciding to apply for PIP. Those who spoke to someone in advance of applying to PIP were equally likely to say they knew nothing about why a person might be awarded PIP as those who did not speak to anyone (35 per cent for people who spoke to someone compared to 32 per cent for people who did not speak to anyone which is not a significant difference), and to say they knew nothing about the process for claiming (46 per cent for those who spoke to someone, compared to 41 per cent for those who did not speak to anyone, not a significant difference). There is no evidence that those who seek advice are better informed.

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Participants were asked what information they received from these sources, with the most common advice being whether they would be awarded PIP as a benefit² (24 per cent). A further 16 per cent received information on who to contact to make an application, with 13 per cent getting advice on how to complete the form and ten per cent advice on how the process works. A further 14 per cent received other information from these sources.

As shown in Figure 5.5, new claimants are the claimant group most likely to receive each type of advice. In particular, they are most likely to get advice about whether they would be awarded PIP as a benefit, with over one-third receiving advice on this (35 per cent) compared to 17 per cent of reassessment cases and eight per cent of those in the full PIP roll out group. They are also more likely to receive information about who to contact to make an application than those in the other groups (20 per cent compared to 13 per cent in the reassessment group and seven per cent in the full PIP roll-out group).



Question wording: B5. What information did you receive from {insert source of information}?

Figure 5.5

It is clear that different types of advice are given by different sources. Advice about eligibility is most commonly given by GPs or health professionals (47 per cent), social workers or support workers (48 per cent), and friends or relatives (32 per cent). Charities or support groups are most likely to be contacted for advice on completing

² Please note that this is the wording of an answer code in response to the question ‘What information did you receive from [source]?’, covering any comments made by claimants relating to their eligibility for a PIP award.

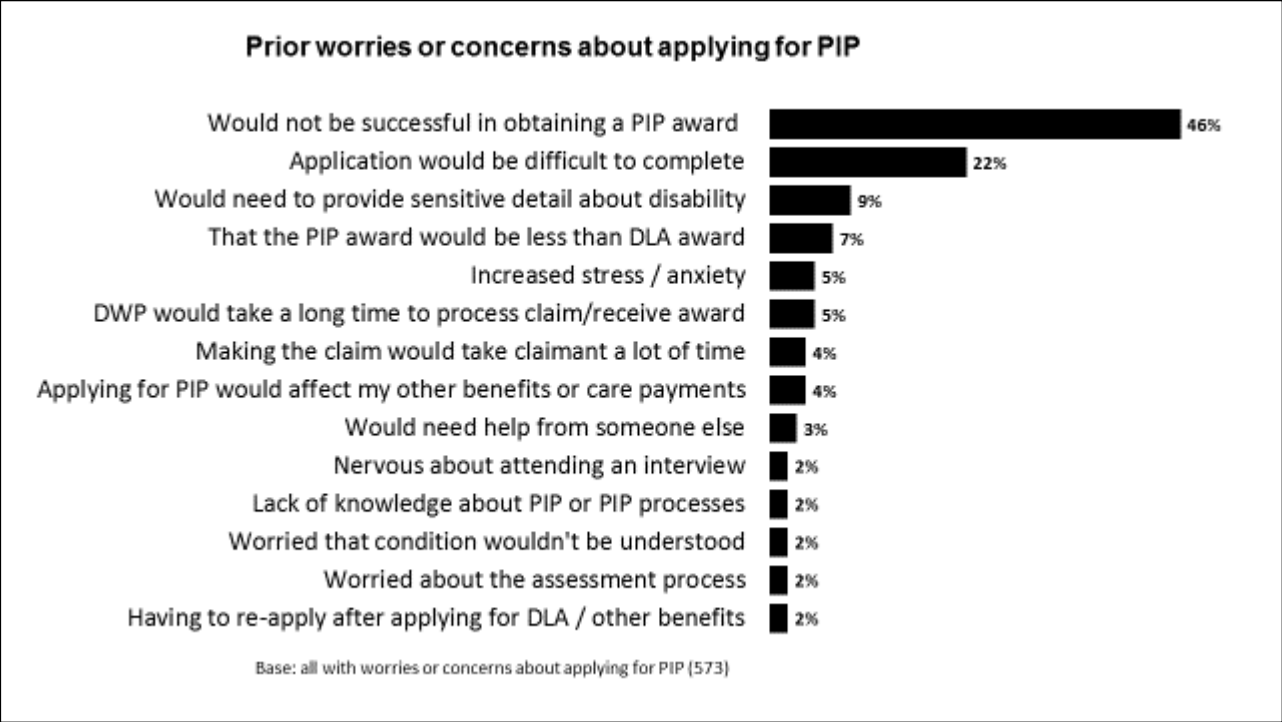
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the form (41 per cent). Two-fifths of claimants who contacted DWP did so for advice on who to contact to make the application.

Reflecting these findings, the qualitative interviews highlighted that many participants generally first heard about the PIP as a benefit from health professionals, social workers, and friends or relatives. It was once participants had started the process and received the forms that they would sometimes seek support from charities, usually to help them complete the form.

Concerns about applying

Just over half of claimants said they had worries or concerns about applying for PIP (52 per cent, compared to 48 per cent who did not). Among those with concerns, the most significant worry is whether they will be awarded PIP, expressed by 46 per cent of claimants. Over one-fifth worried that the application would be difficult to complete (22 per cent). The next most common worries were that they would need to provide sensitive details about their disability (nine per cent) or that the PIP award would be less than DLA awards (seven per cent), as figure 5.6 shows.



Question wording (if stated had worries): B7. What were your main worries or concerns about applying for PIP?

Figure 5.6

Levels of concern are fairly consistent among claimants. There are no significant differences between new claimants, reassessment or full PIP rollout cases within these answer categories, nor were there any significant attitudinal differences based on whether claimants sought advice (or not) or had worries or concerns (or not).

6 Making the application

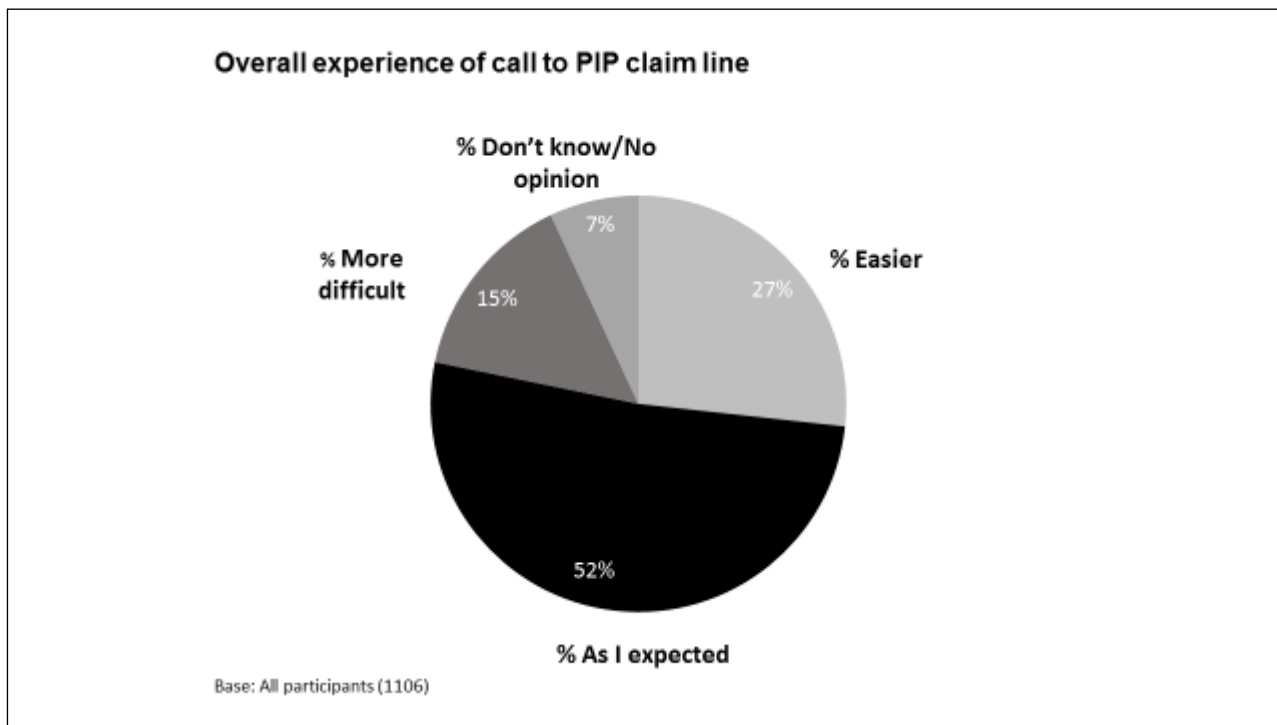
This chapter covers the initial call to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim line, the experience of filling in the form, and the process of providing evidence to support claims. Experiences of the initial call to the claim line were generally positive, with many finding the experience as expected or easier. Many claimants sought help with filling in the form, often from friends and family, charities, social workers or Citizens Advice, and similar numbers sought help with selecting the information and evidence to provide to support their claim. A minority used the DWP helpline and website or read the DWP guidance to decide what evidence to provide.

Experience of initial call

Claimants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with statements relating to the initial call. Specifically, were they clear about the need to call the claim line to request a claim pack, did they understand what would happen during the call, and were they clear on how soon they would receive the pack after the call. To note, the DWP standard operating process is to issue claim packs within approximately three working days of the claim registration date.

The majority of claimants knew they need to call the claim line to request the claim pack (83 per cent). Slightly fewer said they understood what would happen when they called the claim line (69 per cent), and a similar proportion knew how long it would take them to receive the claim pack after the call (70 per cent). Thus, while people may have felt they had low knowledge of the process, they were clear on how to initiate their claim.

Claimants were asked how easy or difficult they found the process of making a call to the PIP claim line compared with their expectations. As shown in figure 6.1, over half found the call as expected (52 per cent) and 27 per cent found it easier than expected. A smaller proportion – 15 per cent – found the process more difficult than they expected.



Question wording: C3. And was your overall experience of your call to the PIP claim line easier than expected, more difficult than expected, or just as you expected?

Figure 6.1

The qualitative research largely reflected the quantitative findings. The majority of participants found it reasonably easy to register their claim by phone. Finding the correct phone number to call and providing the registering information to DWP were described as straightforward, and participants found DWP staff friendly and helpful. However, a few participants needed assistance from someone else to make the call, due to memory problems (making it hard for them to remember the information needed to register the claim); having high anxiety; or due to a hearing or a speech impairment.

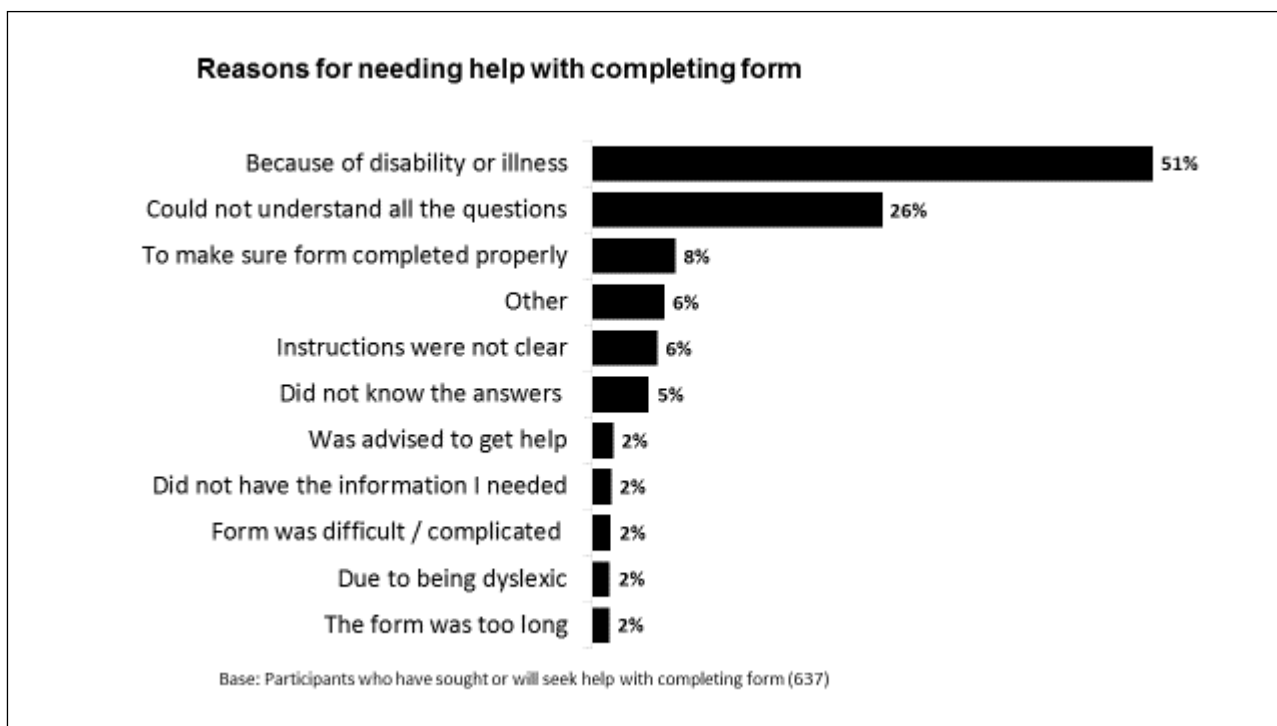
There are some differences by claimant type and by prior worries in the quantitative findings. Those in the full PIP roll-out category were less likely than reassessment cases to find the process as they expected (48 per cent compared to 58 per cent). Claimants who had prior worries or concerns about the process are more likely than those who did not have prior worries or concerns to have found the process harder than expected (19 per cent compared to 11 per cent).

Experience of filling in the form

Over half of claimants sought or will seek help with completing the claim form (59 per cent). There are some differences by claimant type, with new claimants being more likely to seek help than those in the full PIP roll-out category (62 per cent compared to 54 per cent).

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Over half of people who sought help said they did so because of their health condition or illness (51 per cent), with a further quarter (26 per cent) requiring help because they could not understand the questions (see Figure 6.2). Smaller proportions sought help because they wanted to make sure the form was completed properly (eight per cent), because they thought the instructions were not clear (six per cent) or because they did not know the answers to the questions on the form (five per cent). A small proportion cited other, more specific, reasons (six per cent).



Question wording: D10. And why did you/will you need help with completing the form itself?

Figure 6.2

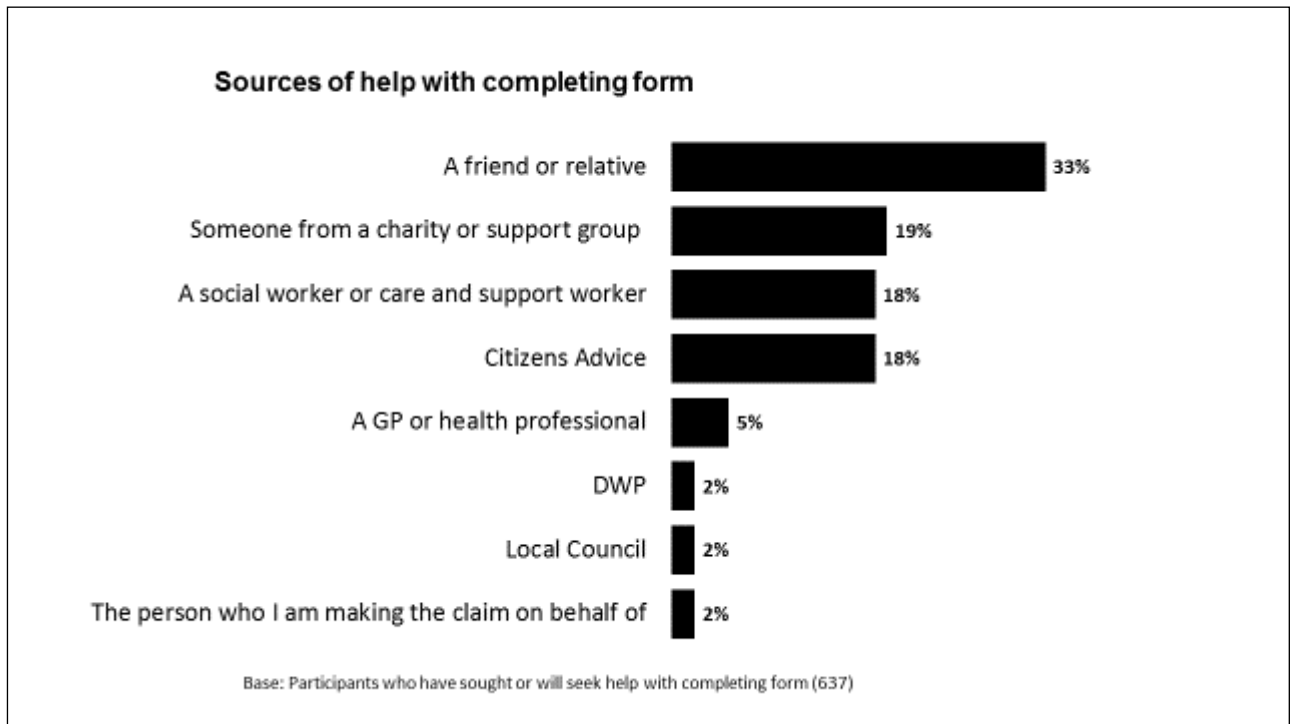
The qualitative findings closely align with reasons given in the quantitative research. Difficulties due to disability or illness and issues with the complexity of the form were frequently cited by participants as reasons for needing help with the form. Some also spoke of their willingness to provide accurate and comprehensive answer as another reason for seeking support.

There appears to be a relationship between type of disability and whether or not people seek help in the quantitative findings. Claimants who reported vision, hearing, and mental health problems were more likely than other groups to report seeking help with completing the form (67 per cent for those with vision problems, 66 per cent for those with hearing problems, and 61 per cent for those with mental health problems).

Claimants sought or will seek help from a range of sources. One-third of claimants who sought or will seek help completing the form seek help from a friend or relative (33 per cent). Around one in five people seek help from someone from a charity or

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support group (19 per cent), a social worker or care and support worker (18 per cent), or Citizens Advice (18 per cent), as Figure 6.3 shows:



Question wording: D9. Who helped you/will help you to complete the PIP application form itself?

Figure 6.3

Only two per cent seek help from DWP with completing the form. DWP offer home visits to help complete the form, so it may be that claimants are not aware of this, or that they would rather have help from someone unrelated to the PIP process. There are no clear patterns for sources of help by disability type, so there is no evidence to suggest certain groups are relying on specific sources of help.

The qualitative research explored why participants did not seek support from the DWP. Reasons included:

- An assumption that DWP only provides administrative support – e.g. helping with extensions
- A preference for other sources of support, that are not involved in the PIP assessment and decision process
- A concern about long waiting times on phone lines
- A want for face-to-face contact and limited awareness of DWP ability to do home visits
- A general lack of awareness that DWP does offer support.

The majority of claimants in the survey agreed that the form allowed them to explain how their condition affects them (69 per cent), with less than one in five disagreeing (19 per cent). There are no clear patterns by health condition. However, in the qualitative research, not being able to read and understanding questions because of

an impairment, health condition, or low level of English were often mentioned as reasons preventing participants from saying everything they wanted to say. Those with a mental health condition found that the form was too focused on physical disability and that this prevented them from explaining in full how their condition affected them.

The majority of claimants in the quantitative research also found the supporting information from DWP about filling in the form useful, with 68 per cent finding it useful and 20 per cent finding it not useful. This may help to explain low reported usage of the DWP website and helpline (as discussed in chapter 10). In the qualitative research participants who had used the guidance document supplied by DWP found it very useful. They referred to it when they found certain questions difficult and to better understand what information was needed. They also spoke of using it to complement other guidance being used.

The majority (92 per cent) of claimants were able to complete all sections in the form, with only four per cent unable to do so. Of this four per cent, 21 people³ said some sections or questions were irrelevant or did not apply to them, while 11 people said the form was too complex for them to complete. Seven participants did not complete all the sections because they did not know the answers to all the questions. Only one person did not complete the form because it was too long, and a further three people did not have time to complete all the sections.

While the vast majority of claimants found their original call to the claim line as easy or easier than expected (79 per cent), a comparatively smaller proportion (63 per cent) found completing the form as easy or easier than expected. Claimants are more likely to find completing the form more difficult than they expected than they were to find it easier than expected (34 per cent compared to 14 per cent).

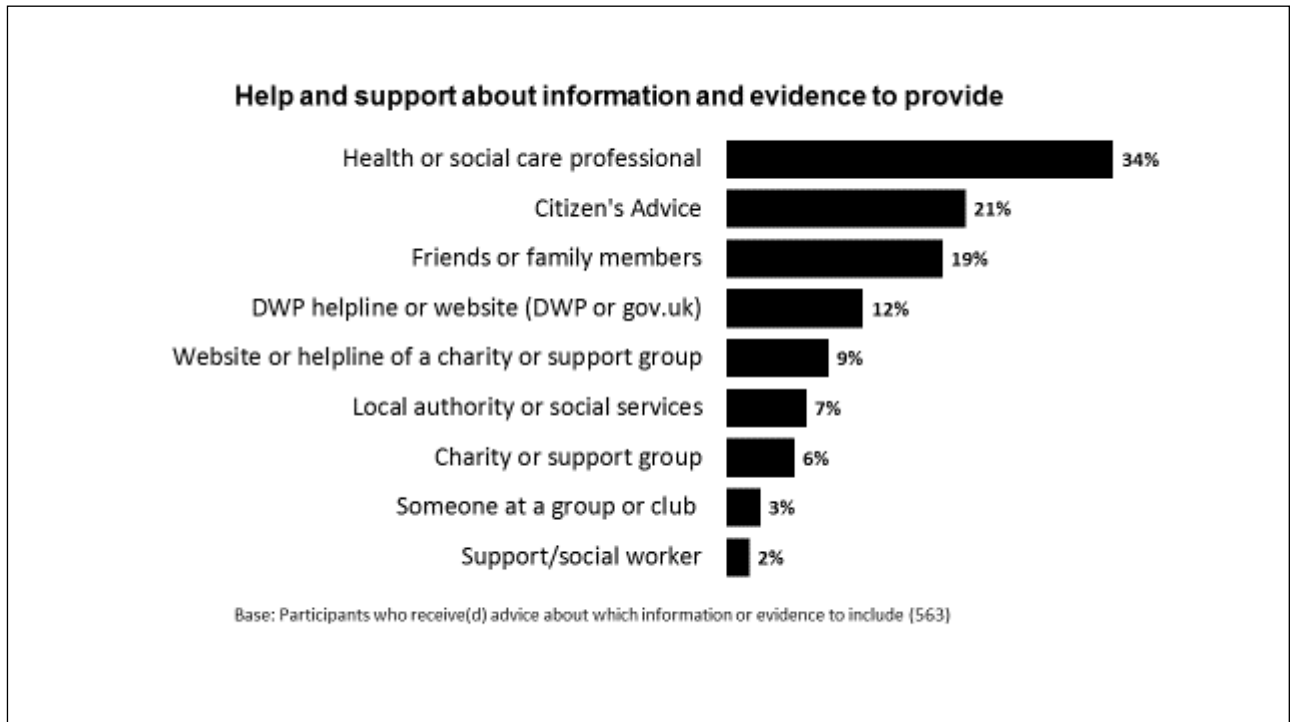
6.3 Submitting supporting evidence with the claim

6.3.1 Help, support and guidance on submitting evidence

Around half of claimants (52 per cent) sought help and support about the information and evidence to provide to support their claim, and this help came from a range of sources. Few used the DWP helpline and website for advice on submitting evidence, but those who did fed back positively about them and found them useful.

Figure 6.4 shows the proportions of people who sought help from each source. Over one-third sought help from a health or social care professional (34 per cent), and around one-fifth sought help from Citizens Advice (21 per cent) or friends or family members (19 per cent).

³ These results are given as numbers of claimants rather than percentages as the bases (number of people answering) are less than 50.



Question wording: D3. Which people, or information sources, did you / will you consult when thinking about which information or evidence to include when completing the PIP application form?

Figure 6.4

About one in ten (12 per cent) used the DWP helpline or website specifically for advice about submitting evidence. Of those who consulted DWP for this type of advice, the majority had used either the website or the helpline, rather than both. Of this small group, and including those who used both, 34 people used the website and 33 people used the helpline. Of those who used the website, 20 people agreed the information was useful and 16 people got the support they needed.⁴ Among those who used the helpline, 27 claimants agreed the information was useful and 16 claimants got the support they needed. Twenty-two people agreed it was easy to get through to the helpline (with seven people disagreeing), suggesting, indicatively, that DWP resources are seen on balance as helpful when they are accessed.

The primary reasons claimants gave for not consulting the DWP website or helpline for advice about what evidence to include revolved around lack of awareness of their existence or of their helpfulness. Around one in five people said they did not know that the website or helpline existed (19 per cent), while others said they did not think it would be helpful (12 per cent). A further seven per cent said they did not know how it would help them. Others felt they did not need help from DWP: eight per cent of people said other people were helping them or they did not need help because they knew what to do (seven per cent). A further seven per cent were not able to access the website because they couldn't use a computer or their computer was broken.

⁴ These results are given as numbers of claimants rather than percentages as the bases (number of people answering) are less than 50.

6.3.2 Submitting evidence

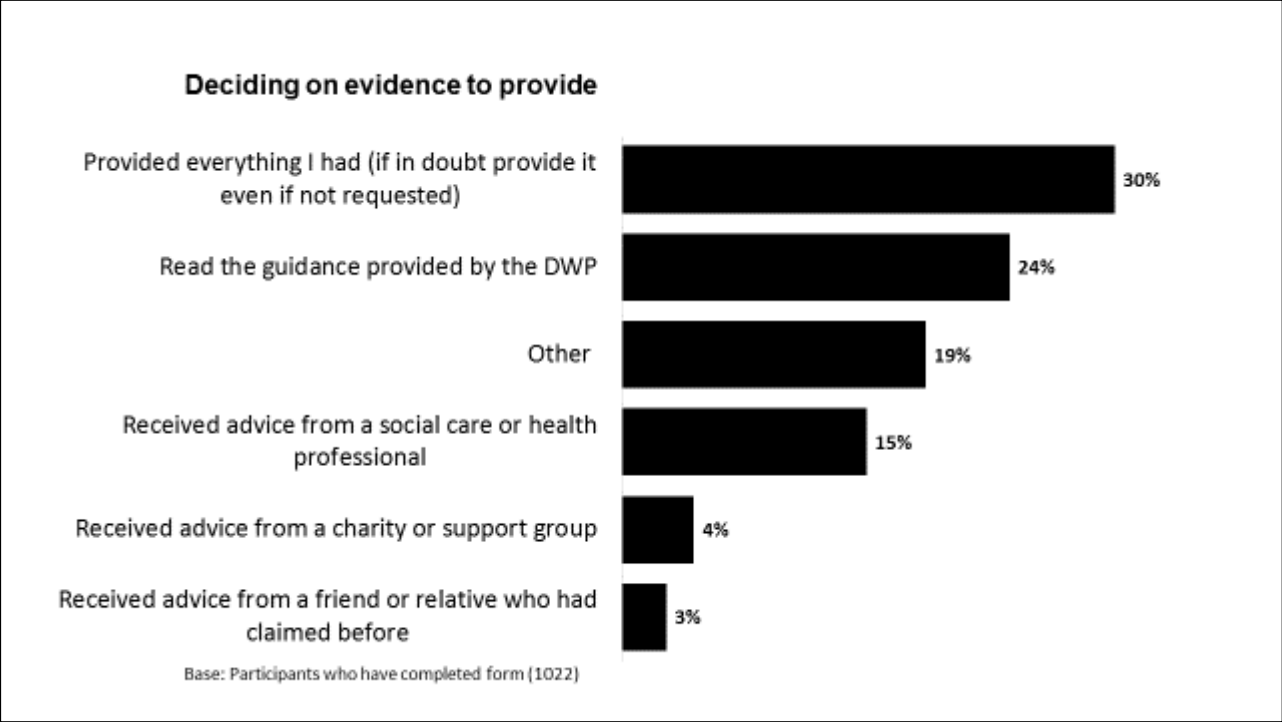
Figure 6.5 shows that, when deciding about what evidence to provide, claimants are most likely to say they provided everything, whether or not the information was requested (30 per cent). One-quarter read the guidance provided by DWP (24 per cent), with a very small proportion (six claimants) contacting DWP via the helpline. This was also found in the qualitative interviews where often participants had not read or only skim read the guidance. This tended to be because:

- they felt clear on what to provide;
- they struggled to read and understand the guidance because of poor literacy or an impairment; or
- they had ignored it – usually when they felt overwhelmed by the length of the form.

As with the quantitative finding, where the guidance had not been read, referred back to, or understood, participants were frequently uncertain about what to provide. This often lead participants to take a precautionary approach, sending all information easily accessible to them, without taking further steps to discern if the information would help DWP assess their claim.

Advice from a social care professional or health professional was also an important source for deciding what evidence to provide, with 15 per cent taking their advice into consideration. Only four per cent used advice from a charity or support group when deciding what evidence to provide, despite six per cent receiving advice from these sources when completing the form. Friends and relatives who had claimed before provided limited advice about what evidence to provide (three per cent).

One in five claimants (19 per cent) said they had decided what evidence to submit using other sources of information (beyond those shown in Figure 6.5), covering aspects such as claimants' own common sense or best judgement (three per cent) - reflecting the qualitative findings. Small numbers reported asking Citizens Advice (11 people), 13 people reported sending in the same information as they had used for previous benefit claims, including DLA and ESA, while 21 people got advice from other people, including family members who had not claimed before and council or local authority workers.

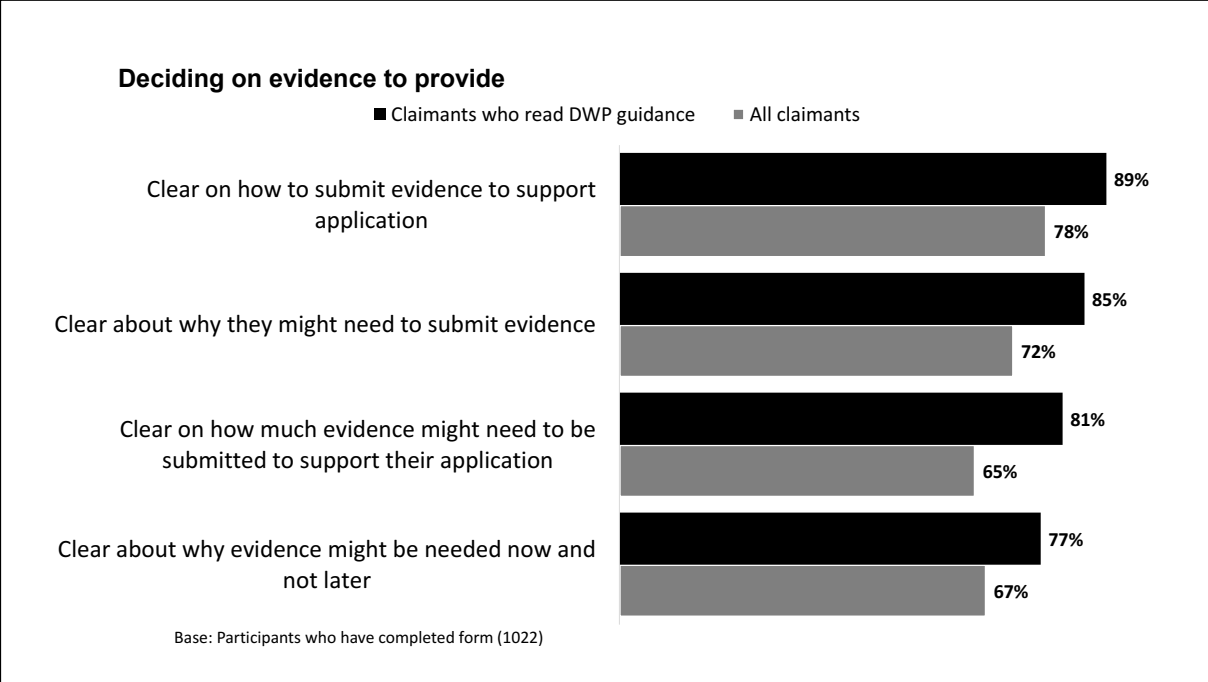


Question wording: D20. How did you decide what evidence, if any, to provide?

Figure 6.5

Those who read the DWP guidance on submitting evidence were more likely than claimants overall to be clear about why they might need to submit evidence, why evidence might be needed now and not later, how much evidence is needed to support an application and how to go about submitting evidence.

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Question wording: D19. And how clear, if at all, was the explanation in the form about...?

- A. Why you might need to submit evidence to support your application?
- B. Why evidence to support your application might be needed at this stage (rather than later)?
- C. How much evidence you might need to submit to support your application?
- D. How you should submit any evidence to support your application?

Figure 6.6

With regard to what information claimants said they provided, the majority would be classed as relevant to PIP claims⁵. The most common evidence claimants supplied were reports from health professionals, with 62 per cent of participants reporting that they submitted these. Just under one-quarter reported providing prescription lists (24 per cent), and 11 per cent reported providing hospital discharge letters.

Smaller proportions provide evidence that cannot be used in deciding a claim – seven per cent provided appointment letters or cards, and four per cent provided factsheets about their condition or treatments. Sixteen per cent did not provide any evidence to support their application, falling to nine per cent among those who had used the DWP guidance. The qualitative interviews found that a number of participants did not provide more complete evidence about their health condition as they mistakenly believed that the DWP had access to their medical records or that it would contact their doctor directly anyway.

Around three in ten claimants (31 per cent) had evidence they wanted to submit but could not. Among those who had evidence they wanted to submit but could not, 28 per cent did not have time to put it together, 17 per cent never had this evidence, and eight per cent had lost or mislaid the evidence. Seven per cent were not able to provide evidence due to the cost of providing it. Lack of time was mentioned more

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/448596/pip-advisers-claimant-journey.pdf

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frequently by new claimants (28 per cent) and reassessments (34 per cent) than by full PIP roll-out cases (21 per cent). The data do not suggest that lack of time was particularly associated with other reasons for not being able to provide evidence.

7 Next steps

This chapter covers expectations of the next steps after returning the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) form, and why people might choose not to claim. There are low levels of awareness about the next steps, and a lack of consensus about the assessment process and timeframe. In contrast, there is better knowledge about the later stages of reconsiderations and appeals. Very few people decided not to claim, with the most common reason for doing so being they did not think they would be given an award.

After returning the form

The standard claims process allows one calendar month⁶ for the claim form to be returned, but this can be extended in some circumstances. The majority of claimants (91 per cent) agree⁷ that they were clearly informed about long they had to return the form, with only six per cent disagreeing⁸. However, knowledge about the next steps in the process is poorer, linking back to the low levels of knowledge about the process overall as discussed in chapter 5. As many claimants agreed as disagreed that they knew how long it would take for a final decision to be made about their application (43 per cent and 41 per cent respectively). New claimants were more likely to agree than those in the full PIP roll-out group (48 per cent compared to 36 per cent). The qualitative research found that participants who received updates by text message were generally clearer about next steps and how long they would have to wait. These participants spoke of getting text messages at regular intervals informing them of the status of their claim.

Knowledge about the assessment process is also poor. Under half of claimants expect a face to face assessment (46 per cent), despite the fact that the majority of claimants in the national population are required to be assessed face-to-face⁹.

⁶ PIP Handbook:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519119/personal-independence-payment-handbook.pdf

⁷ per cent strongly or tend to agree

⁸ per cent strongly or tend to disagree

⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/547146/pip-assessment-guide.pdf

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Around one in five expect a decision to follow after an assessment (21 per cent), the correct expectation for those expecting a face-to-face assessment. However, another one in five (18 per cent) expect a decision without an assessment at all which, given the less common circumstances in which this would be the case, is likely to be an incorrect assumption for many. Some 16 per cent of claimants say they do not know what the next steps are, suggesting high degree of uncertainty about the next stage in the claims process.

Expectations vary to some degree between different claimant types: 54 per cent of new claimants expect a face to face assessment, compared to 40 per cent among those in the full PIP roll-out category and 37 per cent of reassessment cases. This could be because those previously claiming DLA anticipate a similar process for PIP with no requirement for an assessment. Indeed, 23 per cent of people in the full PIP roll-out group expect to receive a decision without assessment, compared to 13 per cent of new claimants. As observed earlier, there is a feeling among a small group of claimants that they feel entitled to PIP on account of their previous DLA entitlement (eight per cent gave this as a reason for applying for PIP).

Generally low knowledge about the assessment stage could be because claimants have not yet reached this stage in the claims process – as discussed in chapter 4, the sample population was drawn from people who had received a form but not yet attended an interview or received a final decision. As such, their focus may be on the form and not the next steps in the process.

Claimants were also asked when they expected to hear the outcome of their application from DWP. There is no consensus on timeframe, with 31 per cent expecting to hear within a month, 21 per cent expecting to hear within one to two months, and 28 per cent saying they don't know when they will hear.

There is greater knowledge and awareness about the reconsideration and appeals processes than the initial decision process. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of claimants agree¹⁰ that DWP has made it clear that they can ask for their application to be reconsidered, while 59 per cent agree that DWP has made it clear that they can appeal if they are still unhappy with the decision. New claimants are the clearest of all claimant types on both counts (73 per cent and 64 per cent respectively). This could be linked to the fact that new claimants were more likely to seek advice from DWP at other stages of the process.

¹⁰ per cent strongly or very agree

The decision not to claim

Only 25 participants out of 1,106 participating claimants had decided not to claim. Eight did not claim because they did not think they would be successful in obtaining an award, while seven found the form too difficult. Four did not claim because their circumstances changed, and three were not well enough to complete the form. Because so few people taking part in the survey decided not to claim, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about what stops people from applying, so these findings should be treated as indicative only.

8 Accessing information and completing the form online

This chapter covers claimant views on online completion and also brings together the data on use of DWP information throughout the application process. A minority would prefer to complete the form online. Just over a third reported contacting DWP or accessing DWP information at some point in the process of making a claim.

Preference for online/offline

There is little appetite among claimants for completing the PIP application online. A minority (21 per cent) said that they would have preferred to complete the form online, with little difference between claimant types and most other demographic subgroups, including those completing the form on someone else's behalf. While younger claimants aged under 40 years were more likely to say they would have preferred to complete the form online than those aged 55 years and over (30 per cent vs. 13 per cent), this was still the minority view. It is also the minority view of those with internet access who said they use the internet at least once a day (36 per cent of this group would have preferred to complete online).

Among the smaller group of claimants who said they would have preferred to complete the form online, it is the relative ease and speed of doing so which were the perceived advantages. More than half of those who would like to complete online (55 per cent) said that it is easier than writing on a paper form, while 29 per cent said they thought it would have been quicker.

For the majority of claimants (73 per cent) who would have preferred not to complete the form online the main reasons are access issues. One in five (20 per cent) said they do not have a computer, and a similar proportion (19 per cent) said they do not know how to complete online forms. Others felt that it is easier to write on a paper form (28 per cent) and/or to read or see a paper form (nine per cent). Security of the information provided online (one per cent) was a concern raised by very few claimants.

9 Conclusions

Overall, feedback on the application process for PIP is positive. While many claimants tend to express concerns about the process in advance, the majority who completed the process found it as they expected or easier, with only a minority finding it more difficult. However, there is a difference between the stages. At the call to the claim line stage more claimants find it easier than expected than find it more difficult than expected. In contrast, at the application form stage more claimants find it more difficult than expected than find it easier than expected. At both stages about half find it as they expected.

Prior knowledge about PIP is minimal, but knowledge and understanding of what to do at specific stages in the process (for example, knowing they need to call the claim line and understanding how long they had to return the form) is higher. Knowledge of the reconsideration and appeals stages is higher than the initial stages.

Few claimants reported using the DWP website and helpline at specific stages of the process (when asked about all the sources of information they accessed), but greater numbers use the guidance booklet provided by DWP with the application, and claimants found this information useful. Those who had used DWP resources at any stage in the process were generally more knowledgeable about the process and more positive about their experiences, but this may not be a causal relationship. A number of other sources were also accessed at stages in the process to varying degrees: in particular, friends and family, health and social care professionals, social and care workers, charities and Citizens Advice.

Few claimants were interested in making a claim online, regardless of demographic characteristics including age. Security is a minimal issue for claimants, with preference for paper forms and issues with access being more prominent concerns.

Most claimants are aware of the role and importance of evidence in the application process, and those who have used the DWP guidance are particularly prepared for this stage. However, nearly a third of claimants do not provide all the evidence that they would like to, generally because they cannot access it in time, because they never had access to it, or because it has been lost. This may indicate why useful evidence is sometimes submitted at later stages.

Throughout the process, there are clear differences between claimant type. New claimants have less prior knowledge about the process than other claimant types (which may be expected), but are more likely to seek help and to have greater knowledge of the next steps. They also have a more positive experience of the initial call. This may suggest that new claimants actually go into the process having done more to prepare than reassessment customers or those undergoing the full PIP roll-out because they do not have as much prior knowledge of the DWP system. Other claimant types who have received DLA previously might expect the DLA and PIP processes to be the same, accounting for not seeking help and for the poorer

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experiences of the process. Future waves of research will continue to analyse findings by claimant group to add to this picture.

Ipsos MORI will run a further two waves of this research. Wave 2 will cover the assessment process, while wave 3 will look at reconsiderations and appeals. Participants from the first wave will be re-contacted to enable a longitudinal analysis of the PIP process, and new participants will also be included at each wave. The qualitative strand runs alongside the quantitative strand and findings from both elements will be analysed together at the end of the project.

10 Bibliography

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387981/pip-assessment-first-independent-review.pdf