



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Topic Guide For Depth Interviews With Claimants – Wave 1

Personal Independence Payment
Claimant Research, Ipsos MORI

September 2018

- Please select relevant sections of the topic guide according to the stage the claimant is at – see suggested routing in section 1.
- Prioritise key questions, marked in **bold**. Probes will be used where helpful and where time permits, but not all will be used in every interview.
- Low priority questions are in *italic*.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND (ALL)

- Introduce yourself and the research, explain confidentiality/anonymity, explain their PIP claim will not be affected in any way by what they say, seek consent for participation, seek permission for audio recording
- If the participant has applied for a number of benefits, identify with the participant the correct benefit this interview relates to. Explain what PIP is and show relevant PIP materials such as PIP2 form.
- Check/confirm what stage of the PIP application process the claimant is at and use the guide accordingly.
 - He/she has received the PIP2 form ‘how your disability affects you’ but has not started to complete it (ASK SECTIONS 1, 2, 3 (about their intentions) AND 7)
 - He/she is completing the PIP2 form ‘how your disability affects you’ (ASK SECTIONS 1, 2, 3 AND 7)
 - He/she has sent back PIP2 and is waiting to hear the next steps (ASK SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND 7)
 - He/she has sent back the PIP2 form and has an appointment for a face to face (f2f) consultation over the coming weeks (ASK SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND 7).
 - He/she has had a f2f consultation but is not aware of the outcome of their claim yet (ASK SECTIONS 1, briefly 2, 3, 4, 5 AND 7).
 - He/she has had a f2f consultation already and is aware of the outcome of his/her claim (ASK SECTIONS 1, briefly 2 and 3, 4, 5, 6 AND 7).

- How did you hear about/come to know about PIP?

PROBE: From who/where?

- How much do you know about PIP as a benefit?

LISTEN FOR: covers the extra costs of disability, not means-tested, you can work and claim PIP, daily living and mobility components, standard and enhanced rates, different award lengths, different from DLA etc.

What were your main reasons for applying?

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: THIS IS NOT JUST ABOUT ILLNESS/CONDITION – PROBE ON HOW THEY THINK IT WILL HELP, e.g, **to help with extra costs (which ones?)**, unable to work, aware of other people with similar conditions receiving PIP, suggested to them by a friend/relative, suggested to them by charity/support group, previously on DLA.

- **And when you were thinking of applying for PIP, to what extent did you feel that you had nothing to lose by applying?**

- How sure were you that you were/would be eligible to receive PIP?
PROBE: Reasons; extent to which understood what would make a person eligible for PIP; other reasons for applying
- If you were previously on DLA and received a letter about PIP – **Do you understand why you need to re-apply?**
PROBE: How clear was the letter? **What, if anything, did you not understand in the letter? IDENTIFY SPECIFIC UNCLEAR POINTS**

SECTION 2: REGISTERING THE CLAIM

- **How easy or difficult was it to make the claim?**
PROBE: How did you know what number to call/how to register the claim?
- What help, if any, did you get when you registered your claim?
PROBES: **Reasons needed help**; who helped; what type of help; **What help did you need that you didn't receive, if any? (KEY PROBE)**
- FULL PIP ROLL OUT ONLY: Did you agree to submit your DLA evidence or not? To what extent was it clear how it would be used? IF NOT CLEAR: What was not clear? *IF DID NOT AGREE TO SUBMIT DLA EVIDENCE: What were your reasons for this?*
- Would you have preferred to use a different format to complete this process? E.g. online, If yes, why?
- When the call ended, were you clear what the next steps would be? What did you expect would happen next?
PROBE: IF UNCLEAR, what specifically was unclear?

SECTION 3: COMPLETING THE 'HOW YOUR DISABILITY AFFECTS YOU' FORM (ALSO CALLED PIP2). KEY SECTION.

'PIP2 FORM' IS DWP TERMINOLOGY. CLAIMANTS WILL KNOW THIS FORM AS 'HOW YOUR DISABILITY AFFECTS YOU'

SHOW EXAMPLE OF PIP2 FORM AND BOOKLET TO TRIGGER PEOPLE'S MEMORY

USE PAST/PRESENT TENSE FOR THE QUESTIONS DEPENDING ON THE STAGE THE CLAIMANT IS AT.

Process of completing PIP2:

- Who completed it?
- Overall, how did you find completing the form? PROBE FULLY: How easy or difficult was it? Why?

- Were there any questions you found particularly difficult? Which ones? Why?
- Were you able to say everything you wanted to on the form?

PROBES: Did the form allow you to describe and explain how your disability/condition affects you in the way you wanted? If not, what needs to change on the form? (KEY QUESTIONS FOR CLAIMANTS WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION)

- **How would you feel about completing the form online rather than on paper? What would be the impact on your claim if the form had to be completed online? IF SAY THEY DON'T WANT ONLINE, ASK Why?**

Feedback on the booklet and help and advice to complete PIP2

- **Did you get a chance to read the booklet about how to complete the form before/while completing it?**

PROBE: (if not why not)? How useful was it? **Which bits were particularly useful/not useful?** Was it clear? Was there anything you wanted to know that was not covered? *How appealing the booklet was to read?*

- What other sources of information did you use, if any, to help you prepare for completing the form? PROBE FOR: websites; names of books; names of organisations. Why did you choose that source of information? How helpful was it? Did it meet your needs?
- How did this information compare to the DWP booklet? More or less useful? Why do you say that?
- Thinking now about actually completing the form, did anybody else help you?
IF SO:

PROBES: Who? (e.g. doctor; friend; family member); what they did do to help? (e.g. did they tell them what to write, completed it for them; helped carry out research)

IF NOBODY HELPED THEM COMPLETE THE FORM: awareness of where could go for help.

- Did you seek/receive support from DWP to complete PIP2 form?

PROBES: awareness of DWP support/advice, experience of using it.

IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED: Did you use the PIP helpline? How helpful was it?

PROBES: positive aspects; areas for improvement

IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED: Did you use the gov.uk website? How helpful was it?

PROBES: positive aspects; areas for improvement

IF NOT USED SUPPORT FROM DWP BUT NEEDED ADVICE/SUPPORT, ASK: **Why not?** Was there any more information DWP could have provided? Was it easy to find and get support from DWP?

- Overall, to what extent would you say you got the help you needed to complete the form?

PROBE: Anything else that would have helped.

Timings to complete the form

As you may be aware, there is a one-month deadline to complete the form.

- Do you know what happens if you miss the deadline?
- Are/were you aware you can/could call DWP and ask for an extension if you run/ran out of time? Did you try this? Did it help? How long was the extension granted, was it long enough?

Providing evidence with the PIP2 form to support the claim

- How important do you think it is to send additional evidence with your form?
- Did DWP make it clear to you that they wanted you to provide evidence to support your claim?
- How clear are you on 1) how much evidence you should submit? 2) what type of evidence to submit with your form?
- Did you read DWP's guidance on submitting evidence?
PROBES: Awareness; overall thoughts; positives; negatives; level of clarity; how helpful; what was particularly clear/unclear or helpful/unhelpful
- Did you need/seek advice on what evidence to submit from anywhere else? **Who from? Doctors, nurses, CAB, friends?** Did the advice/guidance answer your queries?
- Did you have any issues with getting the evidence you needed by the deadline? What issues did you have?
- What kind of evidence did you supply? [IF MULTIPLE HEALTH CONDITIONS/IMPAIRMENT TYPES] Did you supply evidence for all your health conditions/illness/impairment types?
- IF THEY SENT EVIDENCE ABOUT JUST ONE OR SOME OF THEIR CONDITION, ASK: Why didn't you send evidence about your other condition(s)? How did you decide which condition(s) to send evidence about? In the end, was there any evidence you would have liked to provide but couldn't? Why not?
- Did you submit any additional evidence after sending the PIP2 form? Why?

Overall

- IF NOT ALREADY COVERED: Is there anything that DWP could do to make the process of completing the form 'how your disability affects you' smoother/easier for claimants?

Next steps

- What do you expect will happen next/once you have sent the form? CHECK IF THEY KNOW MOST CLAIMANTS HAVE TO TAKE PART IN A F2F ASSESSMENT/CONSULTATION AT THAT POINT

SECTION 4: PLANNING/PREPARING FOR THE ASSESSMENT

USE PAST/PRESENT TENSE DEPENDING ON THE STAGE THE CLAIMANT IS AT.

- Did you know that you would have a face-to-face assessment?
PROBES: Do you know why a face-to-face assessment was needed? Did you know what to expect from it, what it would involve?
- How long did you expect it to take to get an appointment for a face-to-face consultation/assessment? How long did it actually take?
PROBES: Thoughts about any discrepancies between expectations and reality
- Discuss what happened once they received a letter about the assessment.
 - Did you prepare for it in any way? How? What did you do to prepare?
 - **Did you seek any advice or guidance prior to the assessment? Why/why not? Who from? How helpful was it?**
 - How did you feel about the amount of notice you were given to attend an assessment or have an assessment at your home? Did you attend the appointment you were offered? Do you intend to attend? **IF NOT Why not?**
 - Did you attempt to re-arrange the appointment? PROBE: **How easy or difficult was this, in terms of liaising with the assessment provider?**
 - Did you collect any further evidence to bring to the assessment? If so, what sort of evidence? **Why did you not send it with PIP2?**
 - Did you know that you could take someone else to the assessment with you?
If not, how could this have been made clearer?

Next steps

- IF HE/SHE HAS NOT HAD THEIR OUTCOME YET: What do you understand the next steps to be after you have had your assessment?
- **If you are awarded PIP, how do you intend to use it?**
PROBES AROUND INDEPENDENCE: To help you start work, work more hours in the week, find more suitable work, study, socialising, carrying out daily tasks at home, to help to get around, for daily living e.g. paying rent, buying food, utility bills.
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN AWARDED PIP: **And can you tell me what you usually end up using the money for?**
PROBE: how does this compare to what you intended to use it for?

SECTION 5: CONDUCT OF THE ASSESSMENT

- Where did the assessment take place?

PROBES: in home, local health centre, assessment centre?

- FOR THOSE WHO TRAVELLED TO AN ASSESSMENT CENTRE:

How easy or difficult was it to travel there?

PROBE: Any issues regarding your health on that day that had an impact on travelling; impact of the distance of travel; impact of cost of travelling there?

- Were you there on your own or did you have a carer/relative/friend with you? Why did you choose/ have you chosen that person?
- Once at the assessment centre, how long did you have to wait to be seen? Was this in line with how long you expected to wait? Did the waiting time cause you any issues?

ASK THE PARTICIPANT TO TALK THROUGH WHAT HAPPENED AT THE ASSESSMENT:

- How much information about the assessment and what was going to happen did the assessor provide?
- To what extent were you clear about whether or not your DLA evidence would be used in the assessment?

- **Which aspects of the assessment process went well, if any?**

PROBE: opportunity to say all the things they wanted to say; given chance to explain how their condition affects them, enough time to go through all the things wanted to cover; felt listened to

- IF CLAIMANT ATTENDED THE ASSESSMENT WITH A CARER: To what extent do you feel each of you were given the chance to say what you wanted to say?
- How would you describe the assessment?

PROBE: **extent to which you were asked clear and relevant questions about the impact of health condition/disability on day-to-day life; *actively listening***

- Thinking of the functional examination and examinations carried out during the assessment, did they seem appropriate to your situation?
- **What, if anything, could be improved about the assessment?**

SECTION 6: THE DECISION FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT

Waiting for a decision

- **Were you aware that you just needed to wait to get a decision at this stage and that you did not need to do anything else?**
- Was the length of time you had to wait in line with what you expected?
- **Did you have to chase to find out about the status of the claim?**

Receiving and understanding the decision

- **When you received your letter, how clear was the decision?**
- **Did you understand the reasoning behind the decision made?** If not, what made it difficult to understand?

PROBE: understanding of points awarded for each of the 10 activities, understanding of how the points were added up and what this meant in terms of decision?

- Was it clear to you how the evidence you provided was taken into account?
PROBE: Anything they think wasn't taken into account? Why?
- Did you seek/receive any help from DWP to understand the decision?
PROBE: IF SO: How did you get on? Usefulness
- *Is there anything that DWP could do to improve the way decisions are communicated to claimants?*

ASK ONLY IF TIME PERMITS:

- IF GRANTED PIP: What, if anything, do you know about how your award will be reviewed? CHECK IF THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR CLAIM WILL BE REVIEWED IN THE FUTURE, AND WHY IT WILL BE REVIEWED.
- IF GRANTED PIP: If your condition or your circumstances change, what would you do? IF NOT CLEAR, PROMPT: awareness that they should contact DWP to tell them if their condition or circumstances change

SECTION 7: NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- Overall, and just to sum up, how would you describe your experience of applying for PIP so far, and why? What has worked well? What not so well? What needs to change?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience of applying for PIP, that we haven't already covered?

THANK AND CLOSE, HAND OUT 'THANK YOU' LETTER AND INCENTIVE