

15. Supporting PIP claimants who are in a vulnerable situation

This fact sheet outlines how DWP will support those claimants who are in a vulnerable situation.

DWP recognise that some claimants may be in a vulnerable situation and may need some additional support to access their service.

When DWP refer to claimants in a vulnerable situation they mean someone who may have difficulty in dealing with the demands of DWP processes at the time they need to access a service.

Some claimants may have active support mechanisms in place and be able to make their claim without further support, but others may not.

DWP have worked with a range of external support organisations to ensure that they and other external organisations have sufficient information about PIP, so that they can provide advice and assistance to claimants who may have difficulty when making their claim to PIP.

DWP will make full use of alternative formats, for example TextBox or Braille to support deaf, speech impaired or blind people.

DWP understand that a claimant may be in a vulnerable situation at any point or at all points during their claim, for instance someone may be in a temporarily vulnerable situation because of a recent bereavement.

DWP have put a range of processes in place to ensure that they can identify when a claimant is in a vulnerable situation whenever they contact DWP. This may be during the initial phone call to make a claim, during the assessment or when the decision is communicated to the claimant.

DWP will make their staff are fully trained to identify and support a claimant in a vulnerable situation whenever they are in contact with the claimant.

DWP will mark the PIP computer systems to show that claimants in a vulnerable situation may require additional help and support for them to complete their claim.

DWP will provide help and support when it is needed. For example where it is identified at the new claim stage that a claimant has mental health, learning needs or cognitive impairment and they do not return their ['How your disability affects you' form](#), DWP will arrange for the claimant to be referred directly to the assessment provider for their medical assessment, without the need for them to complete the form.

For the most vulnerable claimants DWP visiting will be available to provide a face to face service as they do now.

In addition, PIP has learned from rare cases across DWP when a claimant has threatened self harm or suicide. DWP have introduced a role to support claimants in these circumstances.

It is expected that these instances will continue to be rare, but every Benefit Centre will have a 'champion' in place to provide any additional help as required.

DWP are experienced at dealing with customers in a vulnerable situation but have recognised that staff need support to ensure that they provide the best possible service for a customer in a vulnerable situation.

DWP will provide the required support to staff by developing new learning and development packages and by ensuring their learning is refreshed on a regular basis.

More detailed information about Personal Independence Payment: www.dwp.gov.uk/pip