



Eastbourne

**“Nothing has changed”
a disability and sickness benefits report**

January 2025 update

Introduction

Back in 2018 we produced a report on Sickness and Disability benefits, covering the experiences of our clients for what has been a significant part of our work. This was followed in 2019 with a report compiled by Citizens Advice East Sussex aptly titled “It’s Just Not fair”.

These reports highlighted examples of unfairness in the benefits system in relation to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) as well as Universal Credit and other related benefits. These are benefits which people rely on and which provide support for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. They are benefits which need to be effective as a safety net for anyone who becomes ill or develops a long term health condition or disability. That could be any of us.

Since those reports were produced, we have gone through the Covid-19 pandemic and now the Cost of Living crisis. Throughout these difficult situations PIP has remained a substantial “block” of work for our team, where people need advice and support with all stages of the process: at the outset, to apply and understand entitlement, during their claim when things are reassessed or their situation changes, challenging decisions to refuse PIP, both by mandatory reconsideration and at appeals. These are followed by renewals of claims and our clients often need help with this too.

The common themes are explored in more detail in this report with the overall message since our last report being “nothing has changed”. From our evidence and our client’s experiences, the system appears to reject people almost automatically, people who most of us would meet for five minutes and get a full impression of their health difficulties and the support they need. The system seems to treat the majority of applicants as if they are not genuine cases of need and therefore places additional obstacles in the way which people must overcome to receive the financial support they are entitled to. Entitlement to sickness and disability benefits is an important principle because this is established in law. This principle underlies all our work in this area.

Our team of volunteers and paid supervisors and caseworkers continue to work hard to support disabled people and those with health difficulties, both physical and mental health difficulties, and this report is produced in the hope of improvements being made to these systems which are failing people too often.

Thank you for reading this report.

Alan Bruzon
Chief Officer

Previous reports:

Sickness and Disability Benefits Report February 2018

https://www.eastbournecab.co.uk/_app_/resources/documents/www.eastbournecab.co.uk/Sickness%20and%20Disability%20Benefits%20February%202018.pdf

“It’s Just not Fair”

https://www.eastbournecab.co.uk/_app_/resources/documents/www.eastbournecab.co.uk/Citizens%20Advice%20East%20Sussex%20PIP%20and%20ESA%20report%20FINAL%20Feb%202019.pdf

Developments in Disability & Health Condition related queries from last topic update in 2018

Eastbourne Citizens Advice handled 2221 Disability and Health Condition benefit related issues, or 9 per day in 2023/24, a 10% increase since the last report in 2018. Disability and health condition benefits now account for nearly a quarter (24%) of the total issues handled, an increase from 17% in 2018/19.

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) continue to top the number of disability benefit issues at 1617 an increase of 32% from 2018/19, and PIP issues now account for 73% of all disability benefit & health condition issues, up from 61% in 2018/19. Limited Capacity for Work elements of Universal Credit (UC) issues have nearly doubled since 2018-19 from 131 to 228 per year in 2023-24, now accounting for 10% of disability & health condition benefit issues.

Attendance Allowance issues have also more than doubled from a small base of 31 in 2018/19 to 86 in 2023/24

The figures for other disability related benefits have either remained static or declined as they become closed to new applicants with existing legacy claimants being transferred to elements of Universal Credit and/or PIP.

Number of Citizens Advice Eastbourne Issues by Financial Year – April-March

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Personal Independence Payments	1226	1324	1122	1369	1488	1617
Universal Credit – Limited capacity for work elements	131	161	134	258	187	228
Employment Support Allowance	408	336	170	220	172	150
Attendance Allowance	31	65	55	43	95	86
Disability Living Allowance	134	136	80	77	70	78
Carers Allowance	76	65	68	59	57	55
Universal Credit – Carers element	6	6	11	20	18	7
Incapacity Benefit	3	2	-	-	-	-
Total for all disability benefit Issues	2015	2095	1640	2046	2087	2221
Disability benefit issues as % of all issues	17%	19%	19%	21%	21%	24%

Fig 1 - Disability and Health Condition Benefits – Number of Issues by Financial Year

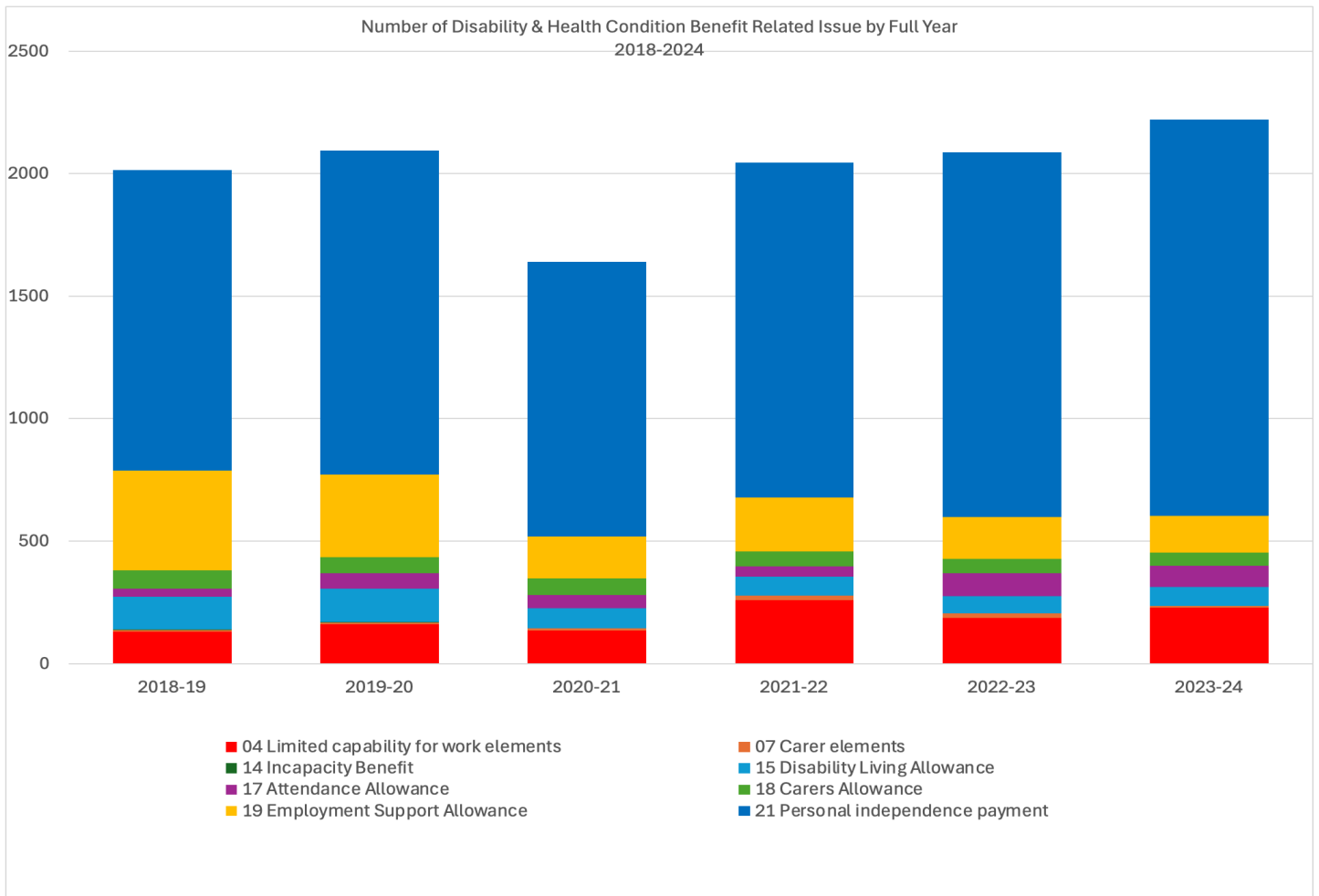
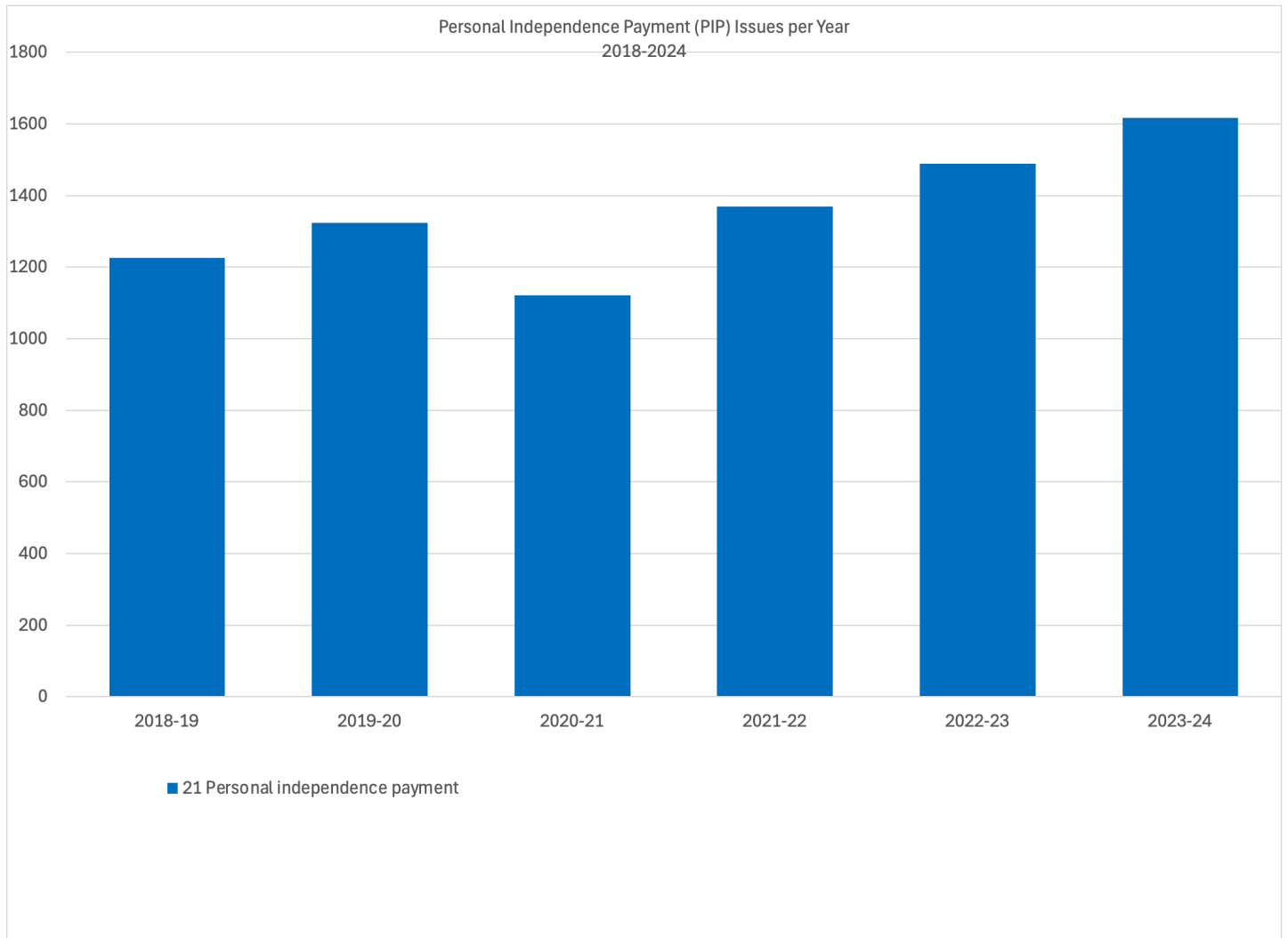


Fig 2 Graph of Disability and Health Condition Benefits – Number of Issues by Financial Year

*All figures in this report exclude issues handled by the Eastbourne based national DWP funded national “Help to Claim” scheme.

Deep dive into Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

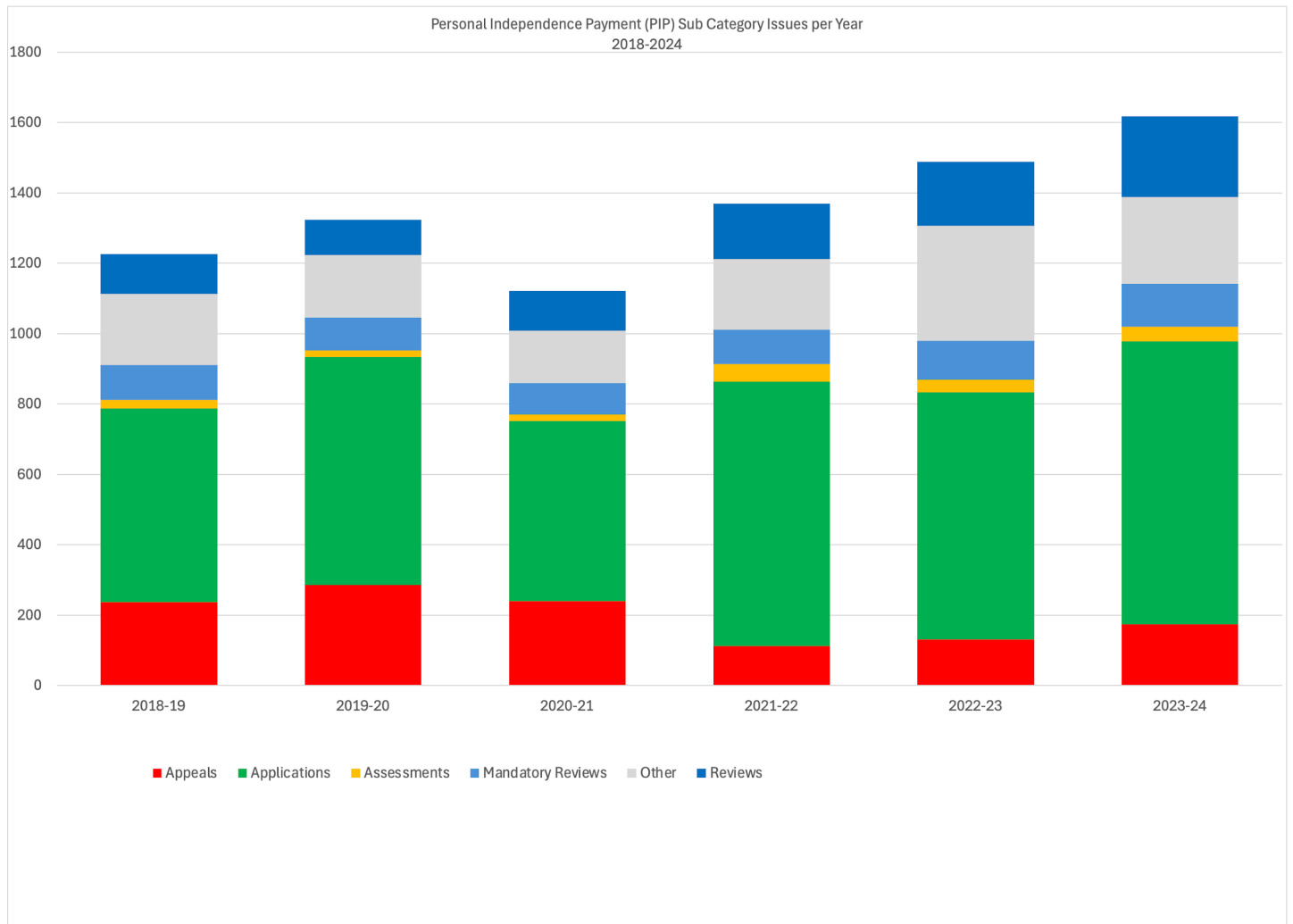
Fig 2 – Personal Independence Payments (PIP) Issues by Financial Year



The number of PIP issues handled by the Eastbourne Citizens Advice has risen year on year, except during the 2020/21 COVID pandemic, from 1226 in 2018-19 to 1617 in 2023-24 a 32% increase. There is some qualitative evidence that this increase is partly due to greater cost of living pressures and an increase in mental health issues.

These enquiries covered all aspects of the benefit from starting a claim and filling out the forms to dealing with assessments, mandatory reconsiderations and appeals. Often these processes are long and drawn out and we advise people on related matters like financial difficulties, debts and where else they may get help. With the result that we need to have multiple engagements with these clients, with an average of over 2 issues per PIP client.

Fig 2 PIP Issues split by subcategory by year



The most common reasons for needing PIP advice concerned Applications, including eligibility advice, making a claim, filling out forms and getting medical evidence. The number of PIP Application issues has increased significantly by 50% since 2018-19 to 2023-24, now accounting for 47% of total PIP issues handled.

The number of Review issues has also increased, with instances of clients having their PIP payments stopped because they have been too unwell to respond to a review, and review assessments stating, without supporting evidence, that a long term permanent impairment has improved.

Help with appeals accounted for 14% of PIP issues in 2023/24. As for the rest of England, the majority of appeals have resulted in the overturning of initial assessments & mandatory reviews to the benefit of the client. PIP appeals have however become a long drawn out process often extending over one to two years, resulting in financial hardship, stress and large back payments from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

We have dealt with particularly concerning cases where:-

Incorrect PIP advice by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) is given to clients combined with clients becoming too ill to respond to renewals/reviews, as an example:-

Maladministration by DWP on PIP review and ESP advice - July 2024.

50 year old client had been working before she became ill in 2016. At that time she had made a claim for Contribution based Employment Support Allowance (ESA). She was living with a partner, and as he worked more than 24 hours, no income related ESA was relevant at the time.

However, the relationship broke down and her partner left their home in July 2021. With only her Contribution based ESA and PIP coming in, she struggled to pay the mortgage and bills. She was also struggling with her health and the PIP claim she had made in 2016 stopped between November 2021 and July 2022 because she had become too ill to complete the renewal form on time. During the break from PIP payments the client fell into significant financial difficulties. She was unable to pay her mortgage from January 2022.

The client had called the DWP and asked if there was anything they could pay her to top up her income. However, she was incorrectly told that there used to be something called income related ESA, but as far as the DWP operative knew, it was no longer available.

Our caseworker asked DWP to make an anytime review of the decision to not pay income related ESA to the client from the date of the call. This became a lengthy process involving the MP to use their direct lines and making a complaint to the DWP, which we took to the Independent Case Examiner. Eventually our client was paid income related ESA and it was backdated to the 1st January 2022. She was also compensated for the mal administration from the DWP.

We represented her to appeal the rates of PIP she was being paid and she now gets the Enhanced rate of the Mobility component to PIP as well as the Standard rate of Daily Living she had before.

Client's backdated benefits amount to over £15K (£9,000 of income related ESA and £6,960.80 of PIP) and she was also helped to complete her Help with Mortgage Interest loan form, to clear her mortgage arrears.

Client twice turned down for PIP; DWP advised that this was because he was working 30 hours per week

A 60-year-old man with a degenerative lung disease was denied Personal Independence Payment (PIP) due to incorrect information and an inaccurate health assessment. Despite his condition worsening, he continued to work due to his passion for his job.

Citizens Advice helped him appeal the decision with evidence from his workplace and legal arguments. As his health deteriorated further, he was granted PIP and Employment Support Allowance under terminal illness special rules. The man received a substantial weekly payment and was relieved to have financial support in his final months. Due to his condition, he was unable to participate fully in the appeal hearing, but Citizens Advice intervened and successfully updated the Tribunal panel.

The panel acknowledged the severity of his condition and awarded him enhanced rate daily living and mobility benefits without requiring a formal hearing. The caseworker also expedited the payment process to ensure the man received his arrears promptly. The client expressed gratitude for the support and relief from financial burden during such a challenging time.

Poor review assessments

We continue to help clients deal with poor PIP assessments, particularly on review and those with cognitive and/or mental health issues.

Lack of consideration of Cognitive issues in PIP assessment

Client is a single parent in her 40's with significant mental health conditions as well as short term memory issues and slow processing of information caused by a brain tumour. The combination of these restrict her abilities to complete the Daily Living PIP activities. She was unable to explain her limitations effectively to the assessor because of her slow processing of information and short term memory issues; which resulted in her PIP being stopped on review.

This had a knock on effect of reducing her income related ESA because she was no longer entitled to a premium.

Client contacted the main bureau for help with asking for a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR), but we were unable to contact her. She contacted us again having tried to get the decision changed herself by asking the DWP for an MR, but this had been rejected.

A caseworker discussed the issues with client and lodged an appeal for her, explaining that she would not have been able to explain to the DWP's Health care professional the level of her limitations, because of the very nature of her conditions.

The DWP looked again at everything they had had before when the MR was rejected. The DWP reinstated clients' Enhanced rate of Daily Living and awarded this for 4 years. Clients income was increased by a weekly figure of £101.75.

Protracted appeals processes

We have examples of the appeals process taking years for a decision.

Incorrect assessment overturned more than a year later on appeal

Client is a single man in his 50s. He has a care co-ordinator and a support worker from the Rapid rehousing programme. At the time of the PIP refusal client was getting encouragement and reminding in most aspects of self-care from these two people. Client was placed in the UC Limited Capability for Work group around the same time.

Before the client came to the Citizens Advice he already had an unsuccessful PIP Mandatory Reconsideration completed (DWP had awarded 0 points), so he was referred straight to a Caseworker. He hadn't considered challenging the decision on his work capabilities.

Caseworker lodged an appeal with HMCTS (His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service) in November 2022 on the PIP refusal and in September of the following year his case was heard (hearings take a long time). HMCTS awarded Standard rates of both components going back to the beginning of his claim in March of 2022. This generated a backdated payment of £6,970.40.

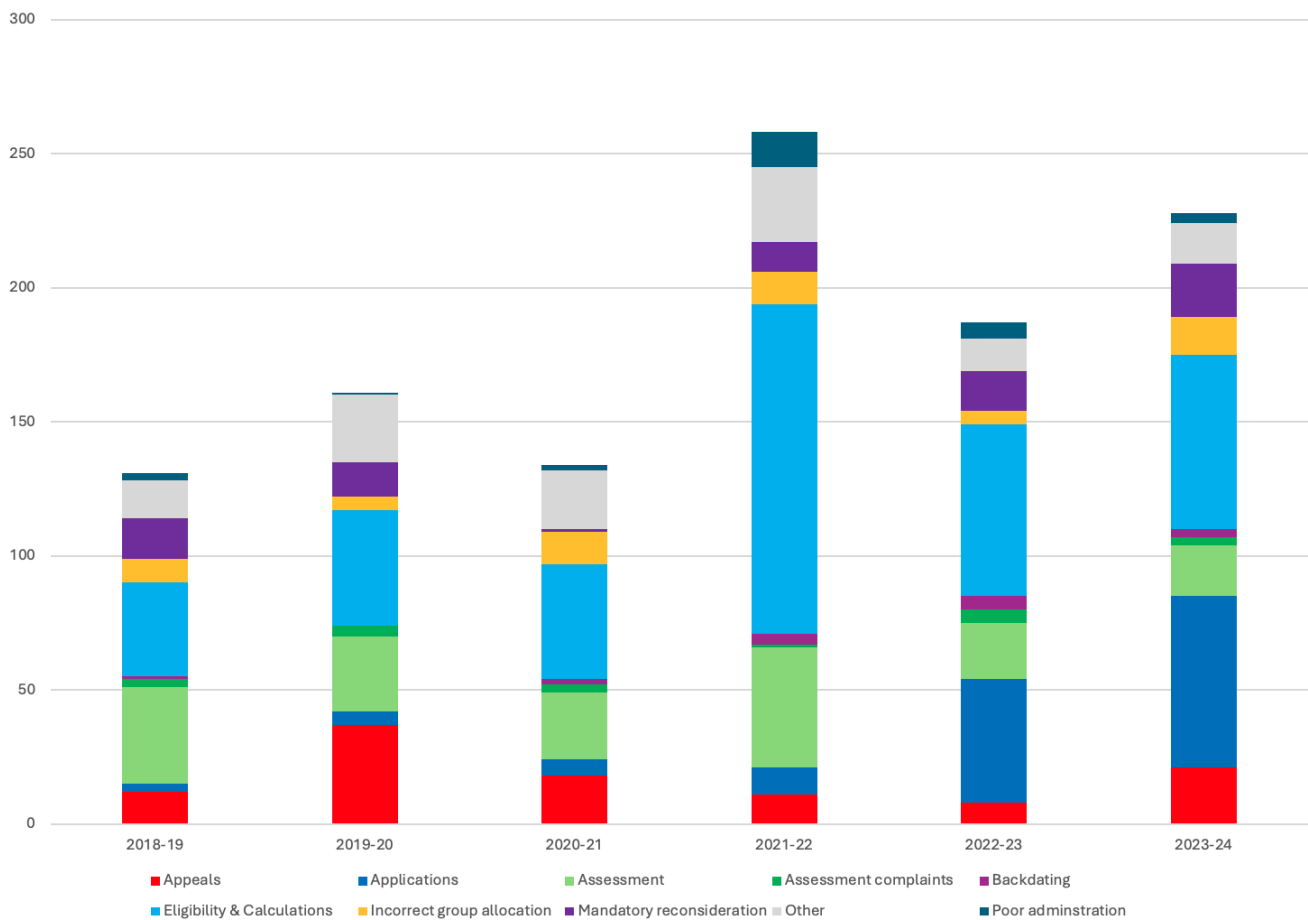
In the meantime Caseworker was in discussion with clients support workers regarding the Work Capability decision, this was challenged with MR and then with appeal. Following the PIP appeal success, client didn't need to wait a year to have his Work Capability challenge heard as the DWP lapsed the appeal and awarded client the LCWRA element from the start of his limitations in February of 2022, increasing his monthly income by £390.06 a month.

Deep dive into Limited Capacity for Work element of Universal Credit (UC-LCfW)

Issues regarding the limited capacity for work element of Universal Credit for disabled people of working age out of work and/or low incomes, has risen from 131 in 2018/19 to 228 in 203/24 a 74% increase.

Much of this growth has been in eligibility advice and help in filling in application forms, accounting for nearly half of issues. With 18% of issues helping with mandatory reconsiderations and appeals.

Fig 3. Limited Capability for Work elements of Universal Credit (UC-LCfW) issues by subcategory



We spend a considerable amount of time helping clients with their UC50 forms and calculating complex eligibility criteria. As with PIP we are finding that assessment quality can be variable. For example:-

Incorrect Capacity for Work Assessment - Visual impairment and mental health issues - Jan 2024

Client is a single man in his 50's. He was born with a Visual impairment (his vision is 5% in his right eye). Client's mental health had worsened and he had developed OCD, depression, agoraphobia and insomnia so had stopped working. His health had further deteriorated with Type 2 Diabetes, IBS , High cholesterol, High blood pressure, Migraines and Eczema. His anxiety is significant, he has twice weekly panic attacks.

The NHS gave him cognitive behaviour therapy and prescribed him medications, but he lives with the limitations caused by his mental health.

Client contacted the bureau in June 2023 for help with his UC50 form for his Universal Credit health element review. This is the Limited Capability for Work Related Activity or LCWRA, which is worth £390.06 every month. His PIP was also up for review at the same time, this all affected the client's ability to cope with his anxiety, but he pushed through to attend the bureau to get help.

We helped him with his UC50. Unfortunately the DWP assessed that the client had gotten better and was no longer entitled to the LCWRA. When his UC was reduced in August, we helped client challenge the decision with Mandatory Reconsideration. Unfortunately in the DWP's MRN, the decision remained unchanged and in October his case was assigned to the Welfare benefits team.

A caseworker lodged an appeal with the client over the phone mid-October. Client was anxious about the appeal, waiting to find out what would happen, affecting his mental health. However, he didn't need to wait for much longer because at the end of November the DWP called the client and said having read everything, they were lapsing the client's UC appeal. Client was relieved that the issue was resolved, he brought chocolates and thank you cards to the volunteers and caseworker.

Mental Health & Memory issues - Universal Credit-Limited Capacity for Work Related Activities & PIP

Cli is 65 single lady who was living alone. She was battling with addiction, severe depression and anxiety caused by childhood trauma and recent passing of her mother as well as Hypersomnia (sleep disorder) and having had half of her thyroid gland removed. She had falls and was in pain from injuries caused by them. She was having problems with her Universal Credit because she couldn't communicate effectively with her work coach.

Her main difficulty resulted from her anxiety that she managed with alcohol and from her memory problems which were possibly caused by the alcohol use. She had become incapable of work, she had persevered with her self employment for a long time, but it had become too much for her. She applied for limited capacity for work and for PIP. However, as her memory issues were, at that time undiagnosed, she was refused both.

The Adviser supported the client to challenge both decisions and to ask her GP to support that she shouldn't be liable for Council Tax. Her GP confirmed the client's memory issues and supported the application for no liability to her Council Tax. It was difficult to contact the client because of how her conditions affected her, so her friends helped. One of her children met with the adviser and her friend and as he had her consent to obtain her medical records we used these to show the Tribunal her limitations.

The client was placed in the Limited Capacity for Work Related Activities which means she can receive UC without the need to speak with the DWP or visit the Jobcentre. She was awarded the maximum rates of both PIP components. Overall she was supported to increase her income by £1138.64 each month (LCWRA £390.06 monthly and PIP Daily living Enhanced rate £101.75 weekly with PIP Mobility Enhanced rate £71.00 weekly). She benefited from no stress surrounding any council tax liability and received over £14,000 in backdated payments as the solutions took a long time.

Other disability benefit issues

Disability Living Allowance(DLA) for children

We continue to see distressing cases where DWP have not applied the rules correctly in assessing DLA for children. For example DWP have used a child attending a mainstream school as a reason for refusal. All disabled children have the right to a mainstream education and this should not be used in assessment for DLA.

October 2024

Incorrect assessment for child DLA, over 2 years to appeal - April 22 to Oct 24

Client is a father and husband. One of his children's Disability Living Allowance had been refused from 20/04/2022. Of his son's conditions, The Department for Work and Pensions only recognised sickle cell anaemia. His child's conditions were much more complex, however, he had an inherited condition where the body doesn't have enough of an enzyme that helps red blood cells work properly. He also had a right shoulder issue and was 'borderline' regarding a heart condition, as well as other issues.

The DWP considered clients' child's needs were only relevant during and after an acute sickle cell crisis. The DWP referred to their own guidance instead of the regulations in refusing the claim. And focused on the fact that the client's son was able to attend mainstream education.

The Adviser prepared a submission that outlined the risk to our clients' son was only reduced by constant supervision, encouragement to the child to be careful and preparations above those needed for another (well) child of his age. Also that the child was at substantial risk when he walked.

Unfortunately there were significant delays including the first hearing being postponed. It took almost 2 years for the client to have his case heard by His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service. It was worth the wait, the Tribunal allowed the appeal. Client, on behalf of his son, was awarded both components of DLA. He now has the High rate of Mobility and Middle rate of Care. The award goes back to April 2022, a backdate of £16,937.10. With ongoing payments £593.60 every 4 weeks.

Client emailed his thanks, "...[I] thank God for your professional and empathetic interventions".

Incorrect assessment & Mandatory Reconsideration of 3yr old child for DLA Mobility, 1 year to appeal Feb 2023 to Feb 2024

Client came to the bureau for help understanding the DWP decision to not award Mobility for her son who was aged 3 and has Down's Syndrome. An Occupational Therapist for East Sussex Wheelchair Service had assessed the client's son and prescribed him a special pushchair to meet his mobility needs. Client's son's nursery had also sent a report about his difficulties witnessed at the nursery.

However, the DWP had refused the Mobility component of DLA for the client's son. Client had already asked the DWP for a Mandatory Reconsideration, but this hadn't changed the DWP's decision (which had been Middle rate Care which client agreed with as her son didn't need any night-time care).

Caseworker advised how clients' son's age affected the rules around mobility. Caseworker explained the decision the DWP had made and what reasons the DWP had cited. Client had learning difficulties which affected her ability to fully explain to the DWP. Caseworker discussed in detail the difficulties the client's son has with walking and advised the client who to contact for the right evidence.

Caseworker lodged an appeal and uploaded relevant evidence onto the appeals portal. Following reading of relevant evidence and the appeal form, the DWP contacted the client and put the Highest rate of Mobility into place. The DWP paid the client £2,213.50 going back to the start of her claim on 08/02/2023 till when the appeal lapsed on 19/09/2023 as well as additional ongoing £71.00 weekly.

ESA - DWP maladministration - October 2024

Client is a single mum who had been working full time till she became too ill to work. This was in 2019. She has a complex medical history, her doctors were unsure if she had epilepsy or not and on top of that confusion, she has pain and fatigue from other conditions. When her Statutory Sick Pay ended she moved on to Contribution based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Client was placed in the Support Group of ESA, which meant her Contribution based ESA wasn't time limited. Personal Independence Payment had already been in payment for 3 years before the client became too ill to work.

Client contacted the bureau in April of 2022 to ask for help with her claim for Personal Independence Payment, which had ended on review. An appeal was lodged, but her complex conditions were not understood by the panel, and in confusion, the panel refused the appeal.

With help from Expert Advice, our adviser asked the First tier Tribunal to set their decision aside, which they did.

The appeal was heard again and the Standard rate of Daily Living was put back in place, going back to February 2022, when her PIP had stopped. Paying a backdated amount of £4,342.25.

Now that the client had a continuous claim for PIP Daily Living, dating back to when her ESA had started; the adviser could look at her entitlement to income related ESA. This was because she now came comfortably into the protected group of those who could remain on legacy benefits at the time of her Contribution based ESA claim in 2019.

We filled in the relevant forms in July 2023 and waited for the DWP to respond. At first the DWP ignored the forms and follow up letters. They were also unhelpful and confusing on the phone. We had to raise a complaint through the client's MP to get any response from the DWP. It took a year to finally get clients ESA paid correctly. The DWP paid backdated income related ESA of both the Severe and Enhanced Disability premiums to the start of her ESA claim, paying her £20,935.42.

Financial Gains for Clients (C2a)

Since the last report in 2018, the advice given between 2018-19 and 2023-24 for these disability related benefits has resulted in actual and expected gains of £7,779,000 across 931 clients, or an average of £8,355 per client.

In the first 7 months of this financial year (April-Oct 2024) advice given across these disability benefits has already resulted in actual and expected gains of £1,095,000 across 101 clients, an average of £10,846 per client.

Advice on Personal Independence Payments (PIP) accounts for vast majority of client finance gains from disability benefits, accounting for 78% of total disability benefit client financial gains; followed by Limited Capacity for Work elements of Universal Credit and Employment Support Allowance both accounting for 9% of total disability benefit client financial gains.

Government Consultation on Benefits

A consultation on benefits began mid-2024 and Citizens Advice national team responded. This covered various aspects of sickness and disability benefits in particular PIP. You can read about the national response here:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/policy/publications/modernising-support-for-independent-living-citizens-advice-response-to-the/>

Assessments

The quality of assessments at the outset of the application process for PIP, ESA and UC remains a concern. Clients tell us that the assessments often do not reflect the conversation they had with the assessor and sometimes crucial information is either missing or incorrect.

This was a concern raised in the previous reports and it remains a central reason why the benefits system is failing vulnerable people. There appear to be no quality assurance checks on assessments and we have heard reports that assessors are [paid per case](#) so it is in their interests to assess more people and this compromises quality.

As a result, people are refused benefits who should be eligible and they are faced with the process of challenging the decision through mandatory reconsideration or, if this is unsuccessful, appealing the decision which can take months to conclude. Some clients get through this lengthy process with the help of our specialist caseworkers and even though they may receive a lump sum payment for the benefits they have been denied, most feel little sense of satisfaction at that point. Some are then reassessed within a short period of time, which puts their claim at risk again.

The system urgently needs to change.

What needs to change? Our recommendations

In our 2018 report we included a number of recommendations about what needs to change to improve these benefits. Continuing with the theme that “nothing has changed” we repeat those recommendations here as they are still valid several years later:

ASSESSMENTS

- The assessments need to be fair and the individual’s circumstances listened to.
- Quality standards need to be applied and the assessor’s report should be judged on accuracy
- Assessors need to be properly trained and have understanding of the conditions the claimant has.
- Assessment interviews to be recorded / videoed Assessments to be held in accessible places and at reasonable times

PROCESS

- Medical evidence must be taken into account
- Mandatory Reconsiderations need to be effective
- When changing benefits (e.g. DLA to PIP) including Managed Migration to Universal Credit people should be automatically transferred on the same rate, not made to reapply DWP to have time limits for replying to claimants throughout the process
- It should not be possible for a person’s existing benefit award to be taken away after having requested a mandatory reconsideration

APPEALS

- Appeals needs to be arranged sooner, without delay, to reduce the stress and waiting time
- DWP need to accept the decision of the 1st tier tribunal and make payment including hardship payments for PIP

REASSESSMENTS

- Frequency of reassessment should be based on the condition / prognosis
- Frequency of ESA assessments reduced – PIP should be similar.

MISCELLANEOUS

- GP reports charges should be abolished
- Make application forms easier to complete - PIP, UC50s, Attendance Allowance

and we make three further recommendations :

- short awards of PIP should only be made when it is likely that the claimant’s health will improve
- for clients with mental health limitations - if they do not complete a review form or make a new claim their award should be extended to allow time or for an appointee to be considered
- Issues with ESA should be resolved before the client is asked to apply for Universal Credit as these issues can affect the amount of UC paid e.g. disability premiums or being in the ESA support group.

Appendix 1 - Disability & Health Condition Benefits, a brief introduction

In England benefits and financial support for Disability & Sick Benefits in England are made up of the following payments:-

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) can help with extra living costs if you have both:
a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability
difficulty doing certain everyday tasks or getting around because of your condition

PIP is not means tested & can be applied for by people of working age.

Limited Capacity to work element of Universal Credit

The Limited Capability for Work (LCW) and Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) elements of Universal Credit are for people who have difficulty working due to a health condition or disability.

LCW

You may be able to work in the future, but you need to take part in work-related activities to keep receiving Universal Credit. You can earn a certain amount before your Universal Credit payment is reduced, called a Work Allowance.

LCWRA

You are not expected to be able to work soon, so you don't need to look for work or prepare for work. You'll receive extra money to support your needs.

To determine if you qualify for LCW or LCWRA, you'll undergo a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). The WCA uses a points system to assess how well you can perform a range of activities. You'll score points if you are unable to perform a task reliably and repeatedly. You'll need to score at least 15 points in total to qualify for LCW.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA) 'New Style'

You can apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if:

- you have a disability or health condition that affects how much you can work
- and have enough National Insurance contributions
- work less than 16 hrs/week and earn less than £183.50/week

ESA gives you:

- money to help with living costs if you're unable to work
- support to get back into work if you're able to

Some other benefits available in England:-

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

There are still some people that are still waiting to be transitioned from DLA to PIP. DLA is still awarded to eligible disabled children under 16 years of age rather than PIP.

Carers Allowance

If you care for someone at least 35 hours a week and they get certain disability related benefits. You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for. You do not get paid extra if you care for more than one person.

If someone else also cares for the same person as you, only one of you can claim Carer's Allowance.

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance helps with extra costs if you have a disability severe enough that you need someone to help look after you, and if you are of state pension age or older. It is not means tested.

Access to Work

Access to Work can help you get or stay in work if you have a physical or mental health condition or disability.

The support you get will depend on your needs. Through Access to Work, you can apply for:

- a grant to help pay for practical support with your work
- support with managing your mental health at work
- money to pay for communication support at job interviews

Previous versions:

Feb 2018 update - Sickness & Disability Benefits

June 2017 - Sickness & Disability Benefits

Contributors: Alan Bruzon, Greg Smith, Paul Howard