

The **Potteries Gold** Post

NO POINTS FOR P.I.P?

NUMBER OF 'POINTLESS' DECISIONS RISING – BUT NUMBER OF CLAIMS ALSO UP SHARPLY.

To qualify for the disability benefit **Personal Independence Payment** you have to make a phone call, complete a claim form and, in most cases, go to a medical. At the end of this, a **Decision Maker** decides how many **points** you score for 'daily living' and how many for 'mobility'.

Recent media reports suggest that the number of people getting **no points** at all when they claim PIP has been rising but this might be because many more PIP assessments are being carried out.

Last year, there were usually around **200 PIP claims per month** from people living in Stoke-on-Trent but, from September, the numbers shot up, peaking at **over 1000**.

PIP IN STOKE-ON-TRENT

- There are about **6,860** people in Stoke who claim PIP.
- In this area, only **71% of ex-DLA claimants** and only **44% of new claimants** are being awarded PIP, less than the national average.
- According to the DWP, most PIP claimants in North Staffordshire are suffering from a '**psychiatric disorder**', but their classification of psychiatric disorders includes learning disability!
- Most claimants with a **physical disability** have a musculoskeletal disease like osteoarthritis.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Across the UK, **18%** of PIP decisions are changed in the claimant's favour if you request a **reconsideration** but **65%** (almost **two-thirds**) of people who go on to take their case to an **independent tribunal** win it.

Spotlight on Stoke

Because PIP is a big issue for Stoke, the City Council have been carrying out a **Spotlight Review** to look at problems faced by local people.

We gave evidence to the Council, sharing things our Champions have told us about like problems with the **forms**, **face-to-face medicals** and **poor decisions**. We raised the difficulties with access at **Winton House**, the venue in Stoke used for PIP assessments, and also that people were being asked to go to Derby for their medicals. We also had cases where Capita reports after home visits were wrong – in the worst case, they recording that someone who lived in an **adapted bungalow** could use stairs to get to the bedroom and bathroom upstairs!

The Council's review will be reporting soon but we would still like to hear **your accounts** of problems with PIP.

And a change of law too!

Some PIP descriptors have changed from 16th March 2017. The daily living descriptor about '**Managing Therapy**' no longer includes 'taking or applying, or otherwise receiving or administering, medication...'. The rules on '**Planning and Following a Journey**' have changed too, to stop people who suffer psychological distress when they are trying to get about outdoors from getting the enhanced rate, unless they have other mobility issues too – for example physical difficulty walking, problems with their sight or hearing, or a learning disability.

Ask us for advice if you are making or renewing a PIP claim!

Potteries Gold is a **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent** project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system

★ **Benefit Talks for your community group** ★ **Pop-Up Benefit Advice** ★
★ **PIP/ESA Workshops** ★ **Benefit Leaflets** ★ **The Potteries Gold Post** ★ **Volunteering** ★

www.sncab.org.uk/about-us/potteries-gold

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: search for **Potteries Gold**



LOTTERY FUNDED