

Claimant unable to undertake a Telephone Assessment (TA)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Some claimants are not able to undertake a telephone assessment because of their health condition/disability, having no access to a phone or because they encounter persistent phone connection issues which makes completing a telephone assessment impossible.
- 1.2 Identification that a claimant is unable to undertake a telephone assessment may happen at various points in the assessment process, and it may only be identified when they fail to complete or attend a telephone assessment. Health Professionals (HPs) will need to be aware of this and be able to adjust their approach accordingly.
- 1.3 Initially, HPs will undertake a Paper Based Review (PBR) and consider Further Medical Evidence (FME) then, where a telephone assessment is needed but cannot be undertaken, either with the claimant, or with an Appointee acting on the claimant's behalf, Assessment Providers will need to:
 - Check with DWP if there is evidence from any ESA/UC claims – the process and contact details to follow
 - Take steps to gain a claimant's phone number or establish an alternative telephone contact where the claimant does not have access to a phone or has persistent phone connection issues – see section 2 **if that is not successful;**
 - Make a best endeavours recommendation – see section 3

2. Claimants with no access to a phone or have persistent phone connection issues

2.1 Where there is no phone number held for a claimant, Providers should:

- Supply DWP CMPD with a list of claimants with no phone number so that DWP can search to obtain an alternative usable phone number.

Then, if a phone number cannot be obtained;

- Write to the claimant requesting them to supply a phone number.
If there is no response to the letter within 2 weeks;
- Ensure all steps to carry out a telephone assessment or PBR have been exhausted before completion of a Best Endeavours report.

2.2 It is recognised there may be a small group of claimants with persistent phone signal issues that mean the successful completion of an assessment is not possible. In these cases, providers should:

- Evidence that it is the claimant's persistent signal issues and not the HPs. (Evidence could include full signal displayed on the mobile phone and no other appointments were impacted for that HP that day)
- Make at least two attempts (on different days) to carry out the assessment
- Consider if there are any alternative phone numbers available to complete the assessment.

Then if a telephone assessment still cannot be completed;

- Ensure all steps to carry out a telephone assessment or PBR have been exhausted before completion of a Best Endeavours report. Any evidence gained from the abandoned telephone assessment should help with this.

3. Best Endeavours (BE) recommendations

- 3.1 Once all other options for completing an assessment have been exhausted a best endeavours recommendation can be made for those claimants who are unable to undertake a telephone assessment.
- 3.2 The Assessment Provider's HP should follow the Business As Usual (BAU) Best Endeavours process to make a recommendation to inform the DWP decision using the evidence available. Where evidence is very limited, cases should have shorter award review periods (e.g. minimum of 9 or 12 months). DWP Case Managers retain the discretion to make nil awards where, despite all attempts to gather evidence, there is insufficient evidence of entitlement to PIP.

Recording BE recommendations and decisions

- 3.3 Where a BE recommendation is made, HPs should annotate the top of the PA3 or PA4 'The report has been written as a PBR due to exceptional/extenuating circumstances'
- 3.4 CMs should note PIPCS decision assist – 'Covid19 Best Endeavours decision and the date'.

MI for Best Endeavour cases

- 3.5 APs will need to provide daily MI to DWP:
- NI numbers of BE cases
 - The reason for the BE decision which can be: health condition/disability, no access to a phone and phone connection issues
 - The type of claim e.g. New Claim / Change of Circumstance
 - Date of the case is being closed and returned to DWP.
- 3.6 To ensure the information is provided in a suitable format to use, please complete the template below:



Best Endeavours
Template - IAS.xlsx

Audit for Best Endeavours decisions

- 3.7 As the number of best endeavours cases is expected to be low, audit for these cases is suspended, provided these cases are appropriately marked and the correct process has been followed. CMPD will review a

sample to ensure the process is being applied correctly and carry out an extra check on cases which score nil/nil. This approach could be subject to change if the number of BE recommendations increase.