

#### Telephone etiquette

- Ensure there is minimal noise around you and that you are able to conduct the assessment in a confidential manner
- Be polite at all times and address people using their title
- Do not eat or drink during a telephone call
- Avoid placing a claimant on hold
- NEVER conduct any telephone calls from your car

#### Prior to the call

- Have your laptop set up and ready with access to EAS and PIPCS (for ID verification)
- Connect your headset/earbuds to your phone
- Obtain the claimant's telephone number from PIPCS

#### When making the call

- The call should take place at the prescribed time
- Withhold your number when you call
- Do not give your phone number out or text the claimant

Click on the links below to see the process for the following circumstances:

[What to do when the claimant answers the call](#)

[Identification and verification process](#)

[What to do when the claimant does not answer the call](#)

[How to identify whether a companion is present and how to manage appointments/companions](#)

[If a claimant requests to discuss their evidence](#)

[British Sign Language \(BSL\) interpreting service](#)

[What should you do if there are two people talking](#)

[How to end the call](#)

#### Top tip

Anything written in cyan blue can be used as a script

#### What to do when the claimant answers the call p.1/2

Dial the claimant's number (141xxxxxxx) and give the claimant a minimum of 12 rings (or when the voicemail invokes) to answer the call

**Phone is answered:** You must confirm that you are speaking to the claimant or their official appointee before disclosing the reason for your call.

*Hello my name is [state name], please can you confirm I am speaking to [claimant's name/appointee]?*

If the claimant does not wish to come to the phone and there is no official appointee, then please advise: *In order to proceed they must confirm their identification but after that companions can contribute and assist*

There may be instances when a claimant asks to be called on an alternative telephone number, for example their mobile reception is poor, but they have a landline number. If this happens, please follow these steps:

- Call the claimant back on the supplied alternative number
- Conduct the standard ID&V process and if they pass, proceed with the assessment
- If they do not pass ID&V, do not proceed with the assessment. Instead, you should follow the BAU approach of marking the case as 'attended not complete', selecting the 'Claimant – Suitable IDV not provided'
- Log that a different number was provided in the 'appointment summary' box

When you have confirmation that the claimant or their official appointee is on the call proceed to explain the purpose of the assessment.

*I am a Disability Assessor calling from the Capita Personal Independence Payment Team. I am working on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions/ Department for Communities to process the state benefit PIP. We have had a claim from [state claimant's name]. Can you confirm that you are [claimant's name/claimant's name official appointee]?*

...continue onto next page for ID&V process

#### Confirm Identity Verification (ID&V) for Telephone Assessments

The guidance below applies to telephone assessments only. The process differs between lot 2 and lot 4.

##### Lot 2 ID&V Process:

1. The DA will contact the claimant and ask for the following:
  - Date of Birth
  - Full Address
  - NINO
  - Alternative telephone number
2. If the claimant answers two questions correctly, you can progress with the call (stop as soon as they get two correct). You should record the questions asked and their answers, in the appointment summary box.
3. If a claimant can't answer two of the questions, or if you have any doubts about the validity of the person you're speaking to, the call cannot be progressed. Instead, you should follow the BAU approach of marking the case as 'attended not complete', selecting the 'Claimant – Suitable IDV not provided' option as shown below. Please add notes in the summary box to explain the reason the option was selected
4. In the case of a No Fixed Abode (NFA) claimant with no alternative telephone number, their D.O.B. and NI number should be given. However, if a claimant can't remember their NI number, DAs are allowed to use health conditions, prescribed medication etc. to confirm ID&V. This is in line with the existing process, pre-COVID-19.

##### Lot 4 ID&V Process:

Claimants must be able to answer three out of five questions below, one of which needs to be a 'High' question. Questions asked and their answers must be recorded within the appointment summary box.

| High   | Weak   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date of letter issued by PIP</li> <li>• Any hospitalisation details that may be held in PIPCS e.g. name of hospital, inpatient dates</li> <li>• Information held in PIPCS e.g. Name of GP or other Health Care Professional who is treating the claimant</li> <li>• Information held in PIPCS e.g. Address of GP or other Health Care Professional who is treating the claimant</li> <li>• Any information which the claimant or appointee has declared on Part 2 of the PIP Claim Form (How your disability affects you) and which would be known only to the claimant or appointee.</li> <li>• The claimant's National Insurance No.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postcode</li> <li>• Mobile Telephone Number</li> <li>• Address</li> <li>• Date of Birth</li> <li>• Home Telephone number</li> </ul> |

In the case of a No Fixed Abode (NFA) claimant with no alternative telephone number, their D.O.B. and NI number should be given. However, if a claimant can't remember their NI number, DAs are allowed to use health conditions, prescribed medication etc. to confirm ID&V. This is in line with the existing process, pre-COVID-19.

#### Claimant unable to provide suitable ID&V:

If the claimant is unable to provide suitable ID&V, the Disability Assessor must select the appointment outcome as 'Attended but Assessment not Completed' and select 'Claimant – Suitable IDV not provided', in the appointment detailed outcome. All questions asked must be recorded within the appointment summary box.

Appointment Outcome: Attended but Assessment not Completed

Appointment Detailed Outcome: Claimant – Suitable IDV not provided

Summary:

#### What to do when the claimant answers the call p.2/2

As with a face to face consultation explain what will happen during the assessment. You could explain that:

- The purpose of today is to complete your PIP assessment to enable a report to be written for the DWP/DIC.
- It is going to take approximately 40 minutes to complete as there is a structured format to the assessment.
- This assessment is different to speaking to your doctor or nurse as it is about what you are able to do on a daily basis and it is not about diagnosis or treating your condition.
- There will be several questions I will ask you about your typical day and about how your health conditions affect you.
- Whilst on the phone I will be making notes about the way you are speaking to and interacting with me as observations. This may include your speech, emotional state and reactions. Do I have your consent to continue?

In addition you must explain:

*In line with Government directives and to protect claimants during the outbreak of Coronavirus/Covid-19 we are completing your PIP assessment via this telephone call. We will not be completing any examinations due*

When the claimant states that they are happy to proceed you may begin their PIP assessment.

#### If a claimant requests to discuss new evidence during a telephone consultation the DA must:

1. Thank them for reporting they have further evidence
2. Ask them to send the evidence to DWP/DIC at the appropriate address.
 

**LOT 2:** Freepost RTTU-HAOT-SLBL  
Personal Independence Payment 1  
Mail Handling Site A  
Wolverhampton  
WV98 1AA

**LOT 5:** Freepost RTTU-OTUS-KOOR  
PIP MODU  
PO Box 42  
Llwynvay  
BT49 4AN
3. Ask the claimant to confirm what the evidence is e.g. consultant letter/care plan/appointment letter and use clinical reasoning to determine whether the FE would be considered 'high value' in its likelihood to give information pertaining to function. This will determine whether the DA should ask them for a synopsis or not. This can be considered on a case by case basis.
4. Document in the Further evidence box: *Further Evidence reported during telephone consultation as XXXXX advised to send to DWP/DIC and address given.* Then either:
 

(a) Where the further evidence is deemed to be supportive of the claim and refers to functional ability and/or severity of condition confirmation. The DA should document a reported synopsis of the information contained in the evidence e.g. "... which confirms assistance with all personal care over two calls per day AM and PM due to fatigue and shortness of breath."

(b) Where the further evidence is deemed not to be supportive of the claim as it does not refer to functional impact or severity of condition such as an appointment letter. The DA should document "... due to the nature of

## How to identify whether a companion is present and how to manage appointees/companions

When the claimant has answered the phone, you **must** identify who you are speaking to. It would be useful at this time to ask if they have a companion present as they may want to contribute information to the assessment. Ask:

*Do you have a companion present?*

If they say no, continue with the assessment. If they say yes, advise:

*If you would like your companion to be able to hear all aspects of the assessment, I would encourage you to make use of a speaker phone facility so that they can support and contribute as they are able to.*

*Please could I have your companion's name and their relationship to you so that I can document it in the report Explain:*

*As the assessment is being conducted over the telephone I want to ensure that I document everything relevant that I am told during the course of the assessment, therefore, I would appreciate if [state claimant's name] was able to answer my questions first and then [state companion's name] was able to offer any additional information after [state claimant's name] so that I can gather all of the relevant information.*

## Adding companions to Telephone Assessments

Claimants are encouraged to have someone with them during their Telephone Assessment. If the companion is with the claimant in the same location, they can contribute via loudspeaker. If not, they will need to be added to the call. The claimant should already have arranged for their companion to be ready to answer the phone at the time of the appointment.

Please remember that companions who are not formal appointees may not complete the assessment on behalf of the claimant or attend without consent from the claimant. **An Appointee can complete the assessment without the claimant present.** However, if desired, the claimant can be included on loudspeaker or be dialled in via conference calling.

For further guidance please find the appropriate guidance document. For example, what do to if a companion does not answer their phone 'FTA and ANC Guidance' or how to add a companion to a conference call 'Conference Calling Guidance'. These guidance documents and more are available on Totara.

## What should you do if there are two people talking at once?

Start by politely reminding the claimant this is a consultation between themselves and the assessor, and request one response at a time. If the issue continues please repeat this advice 3 times before politely advising the claimant a final time, that if coherent responses cannot be gathered the assessment will have to be rescheduled. All attempts should be made to complete the assessment – just like when face to face – so please be patient should a third party wish to speak. After the fourth warning the assessment may be terminated, and advice:

## How to end the call

A closing statement should be used when ending the telephone assessment, to advise the claimant of the next steps. End the consultation as you would normally, thank the claimant for their participation and ask if they have any further questions. Please advise the claimant that their report will be sent to the DWP/DIC for consideration as normal. Lot 2 and lot 4 closing statements differ in relation to DWP/DIC consideration.

**Lot 2 closing statement r.e. DWP timescale:** *I will now send a written report of your assessment to the Department for Work and Pensions. They'll write to you once they've made a decision on your PIP claim. You should hear from them within 8 weeks but this can be longer if they need any further information to make their decision. You don't need to contact them during this time unless any of your details have changed*

**Lot 4 closing statement r.e. DFC timescale:** *I will now send a written report of your assessment to the Department for Communities. They'll write to you once they've made a decision on your PIP claim. You don't need to contact them during this time unless any of your details have changed*

## What to do when the claimant does not answer the call

**Call attempt 1:** If able leave a voicemail but do not disclose any personal information:  
*Hello, my name is (first name only) and you will have received a text or letter reminder for your appointment that was booked for XX:XX (appointment time) today. To avoid any delays with progression, it is essential that I speak with you, so I will call you back at XX:XX (time – allow a minimum of 10 minutes after your current call) and then make one more attempt again, if you do not answer, I look forward to speaking with you then. Thank you very much*

**Call attempt 2:** Call back at time stated in voice mail or 10 minutes after first call if unable to leave voicemail. Give a minimum of 12 rings (or when the voicemail invokes). If claimant does not answer do not leave any additional voicemails during attempt 2.

**Call attempt 3:** Call back 10 minutes after second call. Give a minimum of 12 rings (or when the voicemail invokes). If able leave the following voicemail:  
*I'm sorry that we have not been able to speak to you today. Unfortunately, you will need to contact (Lot 2: 0800 1788 114 or Lot 4: 0800 1788 116) to rebook a suitable appointment.*

**In the event of FTA appointments (Failed to Attend), please also ensure you document the following in the appointment summary box;**

1A. Telephone consultation attempted due to business continuity strategy. Attempted call at "insert times" on telephone number xxxx and there was no response (voicemail left)

1B. Telephone consultation attempted due to business continuity strategy. Attempted call at "insert times" on telephone number xxxx and the number did not connect (no voicemail facility)

The DA must then take a screen shot of their call history and send this immediately via email to their line manager with the subject line "FTA PIPXXXXXX"

2. 'Appointee requested claimant to be supported by another on their behalf, who when attempted, cannot be contacted. DA confirmed call will need to be rescheduled and requested they call enquiry centre to confirm individual's name and telephone details to enable special instructions to be added for next DA, number given.'  
NOTE: Lot 4 the official appointee must be present. Both Lots A corporate appointee can be substituted.

## NEW British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting service

We have launched a video relay service that provides much needed assistance to claimants from the deaf community. This service is operated by SignVideo and is staffed by fully qualified and registered BSL/English Interpreters.

BSL claimants will be able to use this service to contact our Enquiry Centre or to contact a DA at the time of their assessment.

## A summary of how this will work:

1. The BSL claimant will contact SignVideo (instructions will be provided in their appointment letter).
2. The claimant will inform the SignVideo interpreter that they wish to call Capita regarding their PIP claim/for their assessment
3. The SignVideo interpreter will then connect the claimant to the Enquiry Centre Agent or DA.
4. The call proceeds as normal, including ID&V, via the interpreter.

Further details on this process can be found on Totara. Search Telephone in the course search.