



19 June 2018

Review of haemarthropathy cases

Following a meeting between my predecessor, Penny Mordaunt MP and the co-chair of the All Parliamentary Party Group on Haemophilia and Contaminated Blood, Diana Johnson MP, the Department set up a Working Group in October 2017 with individuals affected by contaminated blood to hear about their experiences with the application and assessment processes for disability benefits.

During meetings with the Working Group, concerns were raised about people affected by contaminated blood scoring nil or low points for PIP, and members were invited to share any such cases for review. After reviewing all of the cases received, a systematic problem was identified with how the functional needs of claimants with haemarthropathy (a severe type of arthritis caused by bleeding into the joints due to haemophilia) had been assessed for PIP. This was confirmed in a targeted audit of cases from the caseload. No problems were identified with the assessment of any claimant who did not have haemarthropathy.

As a result, a decision has been made to review PIP cases where the main disabling condition is haemophilia to identify and review claimants with haemarthropathy. Analysis shows that there are approximately 410 such cases across Great Britain, and we have designed an administrative exercise to fully review each one.

We intend to start reviewing these cases on 25th June 2018 and the exercise is expected to take approximately 4-6 weeks to complete. Claimants whose PIP awards are being reviewed will receive a letter advising that their claim was reviewed and if their award will remain the same or be increased. No claimant will have their award reduced. If the award is increased, payments and any subsequent passported benefits such as disability premiums in Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), will be backdated to the start of their PIP claim where applicable. If the claimant has since passed away, payment will be made to their estate.

The exercise will be conducted by DWP Case Managers, who will re-consider all of the original evidence that was gathered to support the individual's claim. In some cases, claimants and/or the health professionals that advocate for them may be contacted by phone for further information; claimants will not be required to attend a face-to-face assessment for this exercise. Case Managers have received guidance and training to review these cases.

Anyone with haemarthropathy who believes their case should be reviewed and has not received a letter by 23rd July 2018 should phone the dedicated phone line for this exercise (0800 121 4296) as soon as possible after that date. This telephone line will only answer queries relating to this exercise within usual business hours (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm).

In addition, the PIP Assessment Providers have developed new guidance to ensure their Healthcare Professionals assess such cases appropriately moving forward and that the Department's guidance, as set out in the PIP Assessment Guide, is implemented correctly. The Providers' guidance will be externally reviewed by medical experts in haemophilia over the coming 3 weeks; it will be implemented as soon as it is finalised.

The Department is committed to supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to live independently and we recognise the contribution that a PIP award can make to this. That is why upon evaluating the findings of the audit, Officials worked as quickly as possible to develop this administrative exercise, ensuring all necessary steps were taken so that it could be carried out quickly and safely.

I hope that this note gives clarity on the administrative exercise that is due to take place. Any questions on this subject can be directed to the dedicated phone line 0800 121 4296, which will be available from the 25th June 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Newton', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sarah Newton MP
Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work