

Claiming PIP during COVID-19

NAWRA Findings September 2020

“If the fog went away would it be mist?”

**Report prepared by Craig Samuel
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#BeKind

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The National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers

The National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA) was established in 1975 as the Welfare Rights Officers' Group, and then the National Welfare Rights Officers' Group before becoming NAWRA in 1992. It represents advisers from local authorities, the voluntary sector, trade unions, solicitors, and other organisations that provide legal advice on social security and tax credits. NAWRA currently has more than 200-member organisations.

We strive to challenge, influence and improve welfare rights policy and legislation, as well as identifying and sharing good practice amongst our members.

Our members have much experience in providing both front line legal advice on benefits and in providing training and information as well as policy support and development.

This questionnaire was informed by a survey of NAWRA members carried out in July 2020 that received 107 responses and was digested and processed August 2020.

NAWRA is happy to be contacted to provide clarification on anything contained within this document.

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Executive Summary

NAWRA holds four conferences throughout the year across the UK, attended by members from all sectors of the industry. An integral part of these events are workshops that help to develop and lead good practice.

When COVID-19 struck our communities, what became clear was a plethora of experiences or claimants being unable to, or at least restricted, when claiming PIP and this experience was backed up when DWP released their quarterly figures and this showed a 40% reduction in claims being made. (1)

In Scotland responsibility for disability benefits was due to be introduced in 2020 and, whilst the Scottish Government is openly frustrated and saddened by delays due to COVID-19, PIP is now the responsibility of Scottish Government and paid by Scotland. Therefore the Scottish Government needs to start being responsible as soon as possible, as promised.

What we were hearing from our members was that making a claim for PIP was becoming extremely difficult due to a plethora of reasons, so we needed to act and find out why. Hopefully, in our paper, we can see some reasons and see what requires addressing and funding.

One would imagine that when the world is facing a global pandemic and our health becoming affected then disability benefits would be something to rely on but sadly this has not been the case. Even when changes were made to policy for PIP, this was many weeks into the pandemic, and PIP statistics in June 2020 confirm that the number of claims in April 2020 was significantly reduced.

For many people, when COVID-19 subsides, impairment and disability in their life will be less of a concern. However, for many disabled people, ongoing difficulties will remain, and when the fog goes away invariably the mist will not.

NAWRA is a people-led organisation in respect of our policy work and we recommend more involvement with disabled people as we move forward. The priorities from our survey show that what is required is practical measures such as offering an electronic version of PIP questionnaire to all

who ask. Local provision also needs investment as many bridges of support are broken due to COVID-19.

Findings

Thank you for taking the time to read our report, and to our members who have contributed both in attending our conferences and completing the survey.

Any life-altering event or disability clearly has an impact on not just the person but the whole family be that long term or short term. As we travel through the fallout from COVID-19, what is clear is that the lack of support for furloughed support staff with caring responsibilities has had a detrimental impact on disabled people.

We know that families, with at least one member of the household having a disability, are more likely to be living in poverty, and of course still facing the prospect of conditionality and no disability payments so COVID-19 is an unwelcome addition.

According to Joseph Rowntree research figures in 2017/18, 31% of the 13 million people with disabilities in the UK lived in poverty – around 4 million people. However, only 2.5 million people receive PIP (Personal Independence Payment) ⁽²⁾

At the time of writing this report we see families that have been impacted in a negative way not only with Personal Independence Payment but the fallout with UK government and their heavily criticized Benefit cap policy running parallel with a lack of access to PIP and disability benefits meaning double and triple threats. Many systems we see and rely upon are often designed by people with no disability so appreciation of risk is limited.

Hopefully our findings will help to provide an evidenced-based picture of people working and witnessing how inaction creates a detrimental outcome to people, families and communities.

Whilst we see some positives like electronic questionnaires being introduced these cannot silence the lack of access when we are making every effort daily to find parity of place, pay or equal opportunity for disabled people.

Do you have any comments on disability, PIP and the COVID-19 pandemic?

“DWP created a great deal of unnecessary confusion with their Pandemic response”

“Procrastination by DWP in terms of issuing guidance for people with disabilities has hurt too many families so the sooner staff are returned from U/C the better as families dealing with disabilities should not lose out”

“Assisting claimants through the PIP claims process has been much more difficult during the C19 pandemic as face to face services have ceased.”

“Health Service being on an emergency footing and the impact on the pandemic on support agencies has meant fewer claims to PIP.”

“I assisted a client to complete an emailed version of the PIP2 form which was very helpful”

“There should be a proactive evidence gathering process by DWP.”

“Why can’t every disabled person not be treated the same?”

“I’m experiencing a lot of difficulty getting medical evidence in support of new claims (more so than normal) Health Service being on an emergency footing and the impact on the pandemic on support agencies has meant fewer claims to PIP.”

“Phone assessments have been unsympathetic, dismissive and assessors appear to have a total lack of empathy/understanding of the effects of cancer both physically and mentally.”

“We work with Deafblind people and it's very hard to not see people face to face. One client has had a phone assessment with no support from myself or my colleague. He was not awarded PIP and now has to go through the appeal”

“Experience of client having assessment down by phone is that assessor failed to recognise her anxiety and that she had to be prompted (by mother) to provide answers.”

“I have had really bad attitudes from staff, one advisor would not slow down her speech so the client could understand her and continued to be rude and told her if she couldn’t answer she would end the call.”

“Very poorly managed, the removal of staff and cutting of service is unacceptable.”

“The ability to email DS1500's for special rules claims has been very good.”

“It's good that electronic PIP2s have been introduced.”

“I’ve experienced difficulties with making a new PIP for client who has no family support and high level of needs and chaotic life.”

“Simplified claim process would help claimants”

“PIP forms need to be more accessible online to allow advisers to assist clients remotely people have struggled consistently to contact claims over the phone and are complaining about being on hold and attempting to make calls many times before getting a response.”

“We have also heard that it is a 'pilot' and only applies to certain claimants.”

Whilst we see appeal figures showing that tribunals continue to be successful (at a rate of 76% and not below 74% for the last 5 quarters) our friends at Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (The ALLIANCE) have confirmed issues with the bridges of support in our communities being lost during Covid-19. [\(3\)](#)

NAWRA’s survey has indicated similar issues both with assessments and with making the initial claim - here we can see some extracts from experiences across United Kingdom.

How could the PIP claim process be improved?

- Allow for reps to make new claims over the phone
- Direct claims
- Online claims
- Remove PIP 1 process
- Accept existing medical evidence
- Remove external agencies
- External agencies are damaging to DWP
- Electronic PIP2 should be offered to all
- Electronic PIP2 should not be luck or random when offered
- People should be able to complete PIP2 at home
- Use universal credit portal
- SERCO should be more responsible
- PIP1 should be accepted as signature and verification
- Reduce blanket rule of making a phone call to claim
- Online should be available
- PIP claim should be like claiming Attendance Allowance
- Need a route to help people with chaotic lifestyles and nobody at home to help
- Allow advisers to check claim form
- Protect date of claim by allowing 3rd parties to make the claim
- Protect the date of claim by using systems like AA/DLA
- Be more human and flexible
- Use trusted partners certificates similar to advocate status based on probabilities rather than appointees
- Use Video chat for people who communicate by way of BSL
- Use web chat to lodge claims
- Use E Mail
- There needs to be a greater link up between GPs and advice agencies to support claimants

At NAWRA sadly we are not alone with our frustrating experiences.

Our friends at The Alliance have seen rising numbers of people with disabilities being refused their benefits at assessments as these are carried out over the phone because of COVID-19, according to support workers.

Community links practitioners in GP practices in Glasgow's most deprived communities advise people who are most at-risk of COVID-19 have been hitting "bureaucratic walls" because of a lack of flexibility on the part of the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) [\(4\)](#)

The New normal I hear you say?

To deal with everyday life it is sometimes not appreciated as the new normal will continue to be “normal” not the new normal. My favourite author writes “death ends a life, not a relationship” and I see real similarities with disability and COVID-19.

The hurdles disabled people face, as prescribed in social modeling, will be increased during COVID-19. Even attending a loved one’s funeral, a person may be unable to fully participate due to their wheelchair not being able to fit in the car with the family, not being afforded the same opportunities due to many stays in hospital, missed school targets, missing work opportunities to name a few. Whatever the situation, it is clear to see that COVID-19 has exacerbated these issues.

The consequences of prioritising delivery of, and increases to, Universal Credit rather than benefits for disabled people has seen the community bridges of support being lost. Figures produced by Scottish Government in their equality assessment shows a reduction or loss to over 50% of people receiving a care package [\(5\)](#)

These bridges cannot be underestimated and often this is the only weekly contact people have and now they are gone leaving all of us empty but especially disabled people who have not only being unable to claim PIP but also now are dealing with increasing loneliness and increasing problems with mental health.

At NAWRA we are also being made aware of problems that are recorded with telephone assessments. When a claim is finally made, benefit is frequently refused after a telephone assessment so the difficulties with claims continue to rise exponentially at each stage.

As we have shown earlier in our paper, an inability to claim PIP has resulted in a deterioration in mental health. Naturally, without the correct investment in third sector support, this will add to what is the already the highest new

claim award category under PIP - Psychiatric disorders, which includes depression and anxiety.

“Almost 80% say Poorer mental health when not possible to claim PIP.”

Deterioration in mental health was evident not only in our findings, but also from our friends at Inclusion Scotland [\(6\)](#) plus The Alliance. NAWRA was not alone in hearing that claiming PIP was proving to be problematic and causing distress and poorer mental health.

In our survey poorer mental health recorded at 76.92% when it wasn't possible to make a claim for PIP. We also see loneliness and isolation increasing at just under 70%.

We know the vital role that a Carer can make and in Scotland we can see an additional supplement being awarded. However, if disabled people are limited in making a claim to PIP then this has a knock-on negative impact on the number of people being paid any amount for being a Carer let alone a supplement.

If investment was made across the UK to claim PIP then clearly the monies from Local Welfare schemes, that are overwhelmed with requests to supplement Housing Benefit and Universal credit, would be able to be utilised elsewhere, for example, reducing damages made by the benefit cap to some of the 150,000 households across UK, and paying the Carer supplement in Scotland.

Clearly support packages should be respected. However, sadly we are told by not only NAWRA members but also from Scottish Government that time with care has reduced at this vital time. In addition, time provided by a carer is taken up with trying to claim PIP rather than the package of care.

Our survey reported 54.10% of PIP claims were taking up to 30 minutes, 30 – 60 minutes 29.51% and above 60 minutes 16.39%.

Time that is part of the care package should not be used to call limited staff at DWP to claim PIP, but to carry out caring responsibilities held within support plans and packages across UK.

Take up

“Almost 90% have never seen a take up advert for PIP”

Our magic members were asked if they had ever seen an advert for PIP and it is no surprise that that over 80% and almost 90% tell us that whilst they provide expert advice every day on matters like PIP they have no memory of seeing a take up or promotion of PIP. Additionally, when asked if social landlords should do more, over 60% said yes.

We know families and disabled people face additional barriers in dealing with every day matters. From our members survey we are told that over 40% felt some barriers in society were reduced when PIP was awarded so it makes sense, if we have an ambition to balance society, investment is required.

Even with PIP being awarded to 2.5 million people, everyday barriers still exist like educational attainment or even small scale working. I ask the next time you go to work please look for barriers and help bring down those barriers.

Without investment to claim PIP, there will be a knock-on effect on rejected budget payments, like Carers Supplement in Scotland, as these will not be paid due to low take up of PIP. As a result there is a risk things will stagnate as many welfare schemes do when discretionary housing payment is not claimed by the end of the financial year in March.

Also, targets within national educational outcomes will not be met for poorest areas, or indeed future targets held within fuel poverty (legislation 2019 in Scotland) [\(8\)](#) will be difficult for families dealing with disability. If one of the consequences of not being able to claim PIP is non-payment of fuel then this is going to be problematic but also deterioration in mental health and increased isolation will be areas of increasing concern as well as debt recovery.

Our friends at Enable (Scotland) ⁽⁹⁾ tell us that, of children with disabilities leaving high school, only 41% discuss their future. From the group of students who get to enjoy further education, only 9% then find their way into work and more than likely may find new obstacles to deal with there.

Naturally, the additional costs that PIP covers help, but if PIP is not paid then this becomes a double negative as there will be a need to pay, not only disability/impairment-related costs, but also employment costs (which may have been forced upon them by UK Government and Welfare conditionality).

We can see from the Welfare Conditionality research, ⁽¹⁰⁾ punitive measures were reconfigured after the 2010 recession and, given UK's return to recession, then the red flags are beginning to show more risk of sanction activity. Even before COVID-19, the harshness of conditionality has been palpable and toxic. ⁽¹³⁾

In England, the exclusion of working class and disabled students is higher than other European countries. (Cole et al 2019). Data held in Cole 2019 which covered UK, as has our questionnaire, suggests that in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and to a lesser extent in Wales, a practice that avoids school exclusions has persisted more than it does in England. ⁽¹⁴⁾

We are told in 'A fairer Scotland for Disabled People' published December 2019 ⁽¹⁵⁾ that 25% of people with disabilities have low or no qualifications at SCQF Level 4 and this compares to 10% for people with no disability or impairment. Even with being more proactive the equilibrium or societal balance is still to be found. Indeed, the additional costs that disability brings and lack of access to money lends to this imbalance.

Our survey results show that with not being able to claim PIP there was an increase in food bank activity (46.15%), or an inability to pay basic bills like gas or electricity which is recorded at 23.08%. This leads to an exponential rise in being unable to enjoy the same opportunities as others do. Therefore, when we see funding or social contracts being written these should provide routes for take up especially for PIP.

Claiming PIP

“Over 80% felt an online claim would lead to an increase in claims”

At NAWRA we advocate kindness and wellbeing. Looking further into the impact of coronavirus, we can see within *Recession Britain* by The Economic and Social Research Council (who provide research on issues of importance to business, the public sector and Government) that the increase of Psychological disorders is likely.

On a human level kindness is most important, but providing routes and community bridges of support, or at least not withdrawing, them will make a palpable difference, but it will be difficult to currently have a sanguine mood.

Mel Bartley, director of the ESRC’s International Centre for Life course Studies in Society and Health, has surveyed the research evidence on the adverse effect of recession and unemployment on overall health. ⁽¹⁶⁾ She notes that during the 1980s, many studies of unemployment and health indicated that unemployment increases the risk of psychological disorders such as depression and one should note that Psychological disorders continue to be the largest group of recipients for PIP.

It was asked if an online claim process was possible do you think it would see an increase of PIP claims and it was felt by 83.33% that it would lead to an increase in the take up of PIP and over 90% felt that when an e version was requested it should be allowed rather than the random sampling that currently exists with the e mail version of the PIP2.

When asked on 3rd September 2020 if it would be possible to complete PIP assessment forms online during COVID-19 Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health answered by telling us they have an ambition of streamlining the process and are committed to providing a digital channel “PIP apply” on how to make a claim.



If this approach is married to an online approach to completing the PIP questionnaire then this would be what NAWRA recommend but these matters should be expedited and guaranteed.

Ignorance still prevails when making the initial claim by telephone, which is before the questionnaire on how disability affects you is requested, so the staff training and knowledge when making the claim or questionnaire needs improving so to avoid further damage during COVID-19, and further inequality. [\(32\)](#)

Social and community Investment

“Over 85% said communities need more investment”

We asked if more investment should be made in local communities to help with claiming PIP and the answer was emphatic and returned a figure of 86.11% telling us that investment should be made with helping the process of claiming PIP.

“Delays in claiming PIP increased isolation and poorer mental health”

In July 2019, Scotland's Wellbeing - Measuring the National Outcomes for Disabled People reported Disability Employment Gap Data in Scotland in 2018 [\(19\)](#)

Taken from this, the employment rate for those aged 16-64 who were disabled was 45.6%, compared to 81.1% for those who were not disabled. The gap between the employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people was 35.5 percentage points. If the employment gap is to be addressed and reduced by half by 2038 (A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People December 2018) then investment in adequate incomes, inclusive of PIP, needs resourcing.

On 9th March 2020, UK Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Justin Tomlinson) told the house in questions [\(30\)](#) that UK Government have a target of 1 million more people in work between 2017 to 2027 however this will take more investment not less.

Disability News Service on 10th September 2020 report staff from specialist roles, such as specialist disability employment advisers, being moved into mainstream roles again further reducing support to disabled people during COVID-19. [\(29\)](#)

Our survey comprehensively shows local communities need investment, in particular this would certainly assist more claims for PIP.

At a time when many local shops and businesses are going out of business or indeed gone out of business this income would invariably be spent, at least partially, in local communities adding to local economies and job creation.

Another positive would be in removing a barrier to work, as PIP could help cover the additional costs disabled people unfairly have. This is especially important as UK government have announced that we have officially returned to recession.

If our previous experiences of public cuts during recession, which was on the back of the working poor or people with disabilities, then it is appropriate to quote Bruce Springsteen from My Hometown “these jobs are going, Boy and they ain’t coming back” so investment in local communities will be vital for community wealth and health.

Any balanced community performs better and is better educated together so any barriers need to be removed otherwise the community wealth will continue to diminish rapidly.

The benefits of financial security, before deciding if work is appropriate, cannot be under-estimated. Physically and psychologically the benefits can be seen of enjoying various parts of society like men in sheds, social clubs, keeping fit, or taking part in sport that sometimes has a fee to pay.

Many disabled people reside in traditional working class areas and here there is a higher prevalence of reliance and staying in social housing so again choices are limited. Due to lack of availability of social housing, disabled people are forced into unsecure private accommodation.

When disabled people have been stuck in quick sand most of their lives due to lack of funding or opportunity, then naturally reliance on housing within poorer areas is inevitable. Sadly, social house building does not necessarily consider whether it will be appropriate for those with a disability, so even at home disabled people face challenges that may be socio economic or physical.

In many of these traditional areas, where sports clubs and football clubs play a big part in community wealth and wellbeing, investment is key to providing healthy lives, reducing disability poverty and increasing work and physical activity. With investment in claiming PIP we can see that the additional benefits are endless as our ambitions should be for all the community.

Many football clubs play a vital bridge and certainly have during COVID-19 acting as local hubs of hope, in their community and, looking forward, could be a foundation to claiming PIP. Increased accessibility to PIP could lead to helping with additional disability costs, reduced housing costs, increased potential to work and increased health and happiness by being able to afford the enjoyment of sport.

When we see full integration and parity for disabled people, clearly the understanding and empathy will be greater in our societies.

Social and community investment will create a more balanced society but also a happier society. Money cannot heal everything but can certainly bring some comfort. Investment to help claim disability benefits will naturally also yield the recognised improvements in health and happiness to disabled people and communities.

Many conditions will naturally be long term but there can be gains with both physical and mental health issues. We need to start to open up to the benefits of community based organisations. We can see benefits from volunteering to full time paid employees, or being role models to others and becoming community leaders.

Given the prevalence of psychiatric disorders under PIP awards then the investment in helping people to claim PIP cannot be ignored. The rewards undoubtedly are beneficial especially when the study by Scottish Football Association to 1,000 people identified a financial positive of £8.5 million. [\(20\)](#)

Our challenges remain, but gaps will also remain unless we use different avenues for innovation, investment, integration, as in the examples above,

and stop disabled people being disproportionately affected or being denied the basic human right of social security or self-determination and independent living.

Within communities we need benefit checks on a par with any other element of financial advice, especially at points of contact.

Engagement with the financial sector including local banks and businesses needs to be explored to help with costs relating to employment that are higher for disabled people. Creating these links will be important in letting disabled peoples' voices be heard in relation to disability, banking and work. Why not have a benefit check incorporated into banking or local shops like ATM's?

In existence we see many charities offering pantry's for a small subscription, to make life easier with shopping and budgeting, so why not have a placement for an advisor to carry out checks and to increase income. This could remove another hurdle that exists for disabled people claiming PIP, or for other groups like single parents who may be looking after a disabled child. [\(31\)](#)

Unfortunately, funding is limited so it needs all sectors to come onboard and contribute. It would be good to see banking products, business, local and national government getting involved and supporting funding and innovation.

NAWRA strongly argues that the voices of disable people must be heard, and any policy relating to disability should be written by the pens and knowledge of disabled people. Across the UK a rights based approach must be applied.

Conclusion

I write this article as NAWRA's representative in Scotland and someone who has not only represented many at tribunal, including myself, but spent much of my childhood in hospital missing too much education and opportunity. Not just me, but also my family, have also missed out along the way, but we have learned many lessons together.

We are lucky we have each other, but many don't and I am fully aware every single day.

As we read in our mission statement, we always thrive to help policy writers and most importantly our kind and loyal members.

Our members have shone through the darkness of all that is COVID-19 and provided us ways to improve operations when claiming PIP. Often, when we can't always feel the best as many have worked every day since lockdown, NAWRA continues to shine including with help in writing this report which includes my friends, Our Deputy Chair Daphne (Rightsnet) and Richard (The Advice Shop, Edinburgh).

Watching the impact it has had on my family and all around our communities has always been difficult so, when I see many people struggle during COVID-19, it reminds me of the love I received from nurses and medical staff but now also my NAWRA colleagues and how we work even harder to try and reduce inequality during COVID-19. The love and kindness fills my well.

When my colleagues and I at NAWRA see disparity of freedoms getting wider we just needed to act and respond to the reduction in PIP claims.

Disabled people across the UK have been missing out for many years and, after COVID-19, not even the social care and personal care that was in place has been maintained allowing the gap of inequality to get wider with many metaphorical boats taking on too much water.

Until we see reforms with social care or disability payments then we are left with increasing poverty as highlighted by Joseph Rowntree. With claims for PIP being so low, then this impacts negatively on health, income, housing and happiness.

What we have found, or rather confirmed, is that - without investment or funding to help with claiming PIP - debt is likely to rise, housing will lack security, and health will deteriorate mental health worsens and isolation increases.

We all become poorer if we stand by and do nothing.

As always, we look to improve matters and whilst acknowledging and accepting the introduction of the electronic PIP2 has been a much needed positive, it has only been on a pilot basis so far. At NAWRA our recommendation is that this electronic format should be the default position unless inappropriate or not requested by a service user.

The benefits of an electronic format are bilateral with reduced costs to DWP and increased potential for completion by disabled people and their representatives, so it should stay, and electronic formats need to be more readily available and not just a lucky dip.

The infrastructure is already in existence with electronic PIP2 in the pilot, or indeed an AR1 for reviews as these can be provided electronically due to reasonable adjustments, so why not allow electronic forms for all?

The reliance for many with social housing and social care is clear to see. Also, what is clear to see is that many agencies, whilst helping some, have also failed thousands of people in their hour of need as sadly the information held by these agencies, including RSL's, could yield more assistance with PIP as housing and care applications already hold data that could be used, subject to the claimant consenting.

Housing staff play a key role in stabilising many lives especially when we see the high percentage that migrate from being homeless, so the community knowledge is vast, so it is worrying when we see from a recent survey that almost 80% of RSL staff are satisfied with working from home leaving people and communities without this knowledge and support. (27)

If we don't act on our recommendations then in a time when people are looking for security then sadly, security becomes insecurity, and vulnerable situations are created due to poorer mental health and loneliness. Safeguards need to be built into our systems and narratives need to be rewritten with positive outcomes at every opportunity when toes are dipped into social security and social housing.

In Scotland, NAWRA are active members with Scottish Government feeding into Social Renewal Policy [\(28\)](#) via Take up stakeholder groups and Financial Security Policy Circle whereby we are all proactively thinking big with social renewal and fighting pre-existing inequalities as well as COVID-19. Thinking big and being proactive is a given but listening to ideas and funding will be vital otherwise damage already done by COVID-19 and consequences of COVID-19 will continue and in some instances, such as mental health and isolation, will be irreversible.

Previously, when NAWRA visited Salford, Greater Manchester, Mayor Paul Dennett referred to welfare rights workers as being the 5th emergency service. Without investment we will see risks and burnout from advice workers. We know what it means to have a privileged vocation and provide people with positive outcomes, often financial but also to provide a listening ear. We know what it means to help people and what it means to be trusted by people.

In the Scottish Government's Programme for Government - Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland - we can see the increasing risk to mental health and without investment in helping disabled people to claim PIP the risks with suicide will have a higher risk and prevalence.

Our findings from our experiences when not being able to claim PIP during COVID-19 showed 76.92% of respondents had witnessed poorer mental when claiming PIP was not possible. If we are proactive, we will naturally reduce the amount of people presenting with distress especially connected to mental health so when we hear of test and trace, why not test and trace better financial outcomes for disabled people as well as COVID-19.



Naturally, being proactive brings great community rewards and we see our friends at The Spartans Community Football Academy providing 83,134 Acts of Kindness. [\(26\)](#) However, what we see is the other side whereby due to isolation and not getting to see family or community workers we hear from one son to his mother “please don’t die during lockdown” and heartbreakingly this is not isolated in the world of welfare rights.

We now have recommendations based on our members feedback and as we move forward, we can start to think differently in terms of where our work has an anchor or impact.

In the meantime, we can continue to be kind and look after each other and, whilst reports tend to focus on the negative, let us all consider why applications should be made and what kind of community we all want to thrive in?

Kindly, Craig Samuel

Scotland Representative NAWRA

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welfare rights advisers

Ambitions for Scottish Government



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NAWRA Recommends

Gold

- **Adapt an offer to all with Electronic PIP2**
 - **Take up of PIP campaign**
- **Co-Production to be default with Policy Team**
 - **Use existing evidence (Q4 Journey)**
 - **Trust external professionals with claims**
 - **Use Web chat & Use Video chat to claim**

Silver

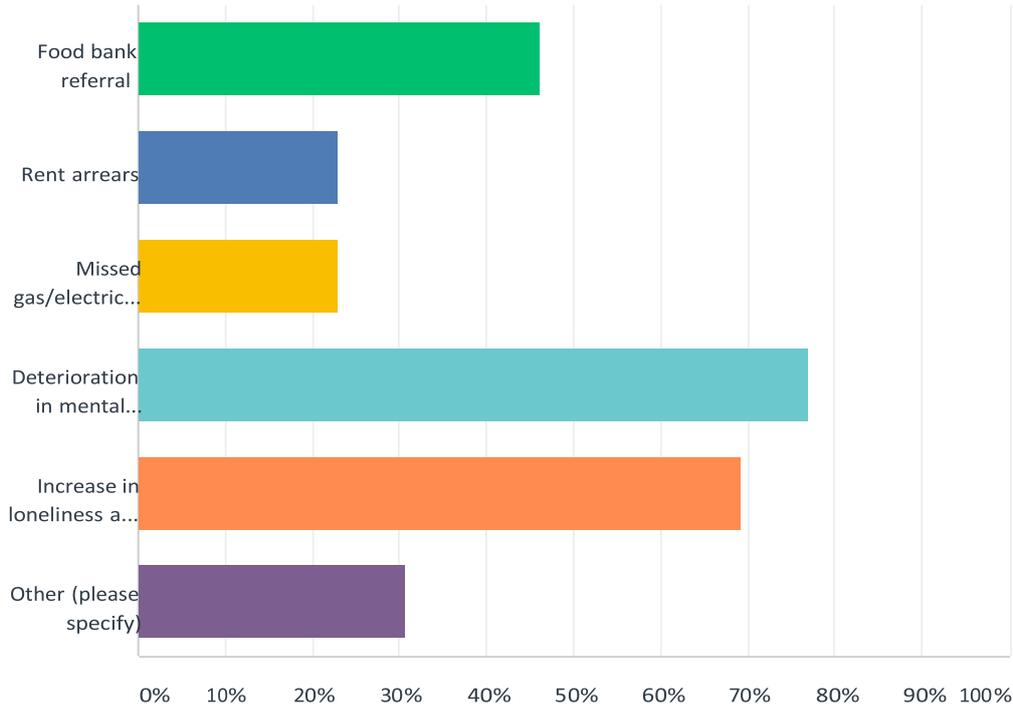
- **Increase Disability Awareness**
- **Increase Further Education for Disabled people**
 - **Increase Disability Employment Advisers**
 - **Local Engagement with Health and Social care**
- **Social Contracts should include Disability and Disabled People**
 - **Community Based Promotion including RSL's**

Bronze

- **Improve SERCO experience**
 - **Improve 3rd party engagement**
- **Use all appropriate methods of communication**
- **Support Mental Health by promotion and experience of kindness**

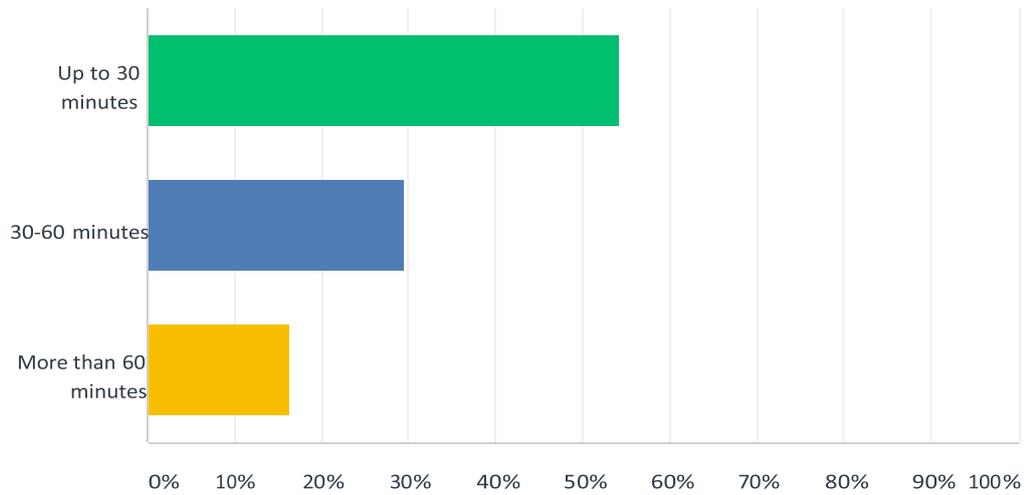
Here are our Survey findings and what we found with claiming PIP during COVID 19.

What were the consequences of not being able to claim PIP?



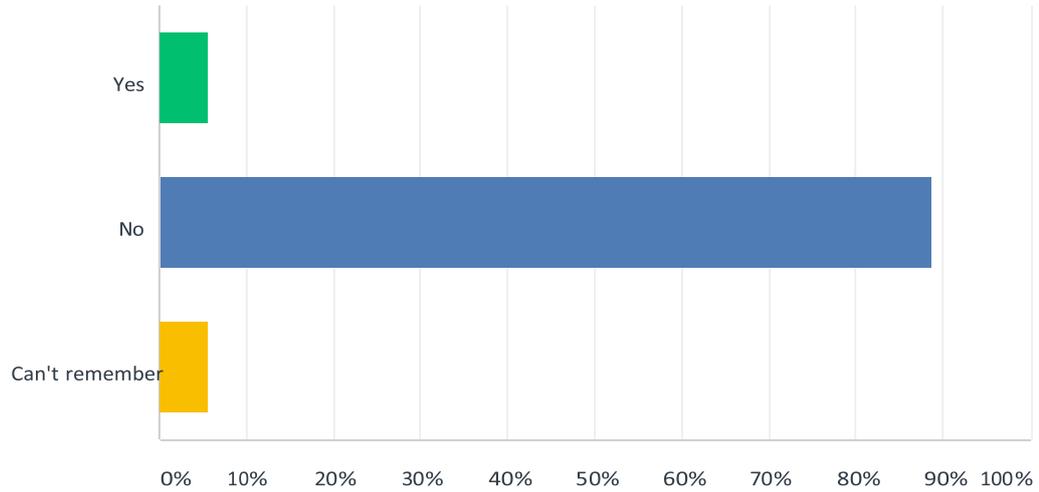
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Food bank referral	46.15%
Rent arrears	23.08%
Missed gas/electricity payments	23.08%
Deterioration in mental health	76.92%
Increase in loneliness and isolation	69.23%
Other (please specify)	30.77%

Recently, how long have you waited to make a new claim for PIP on behalf of a client?



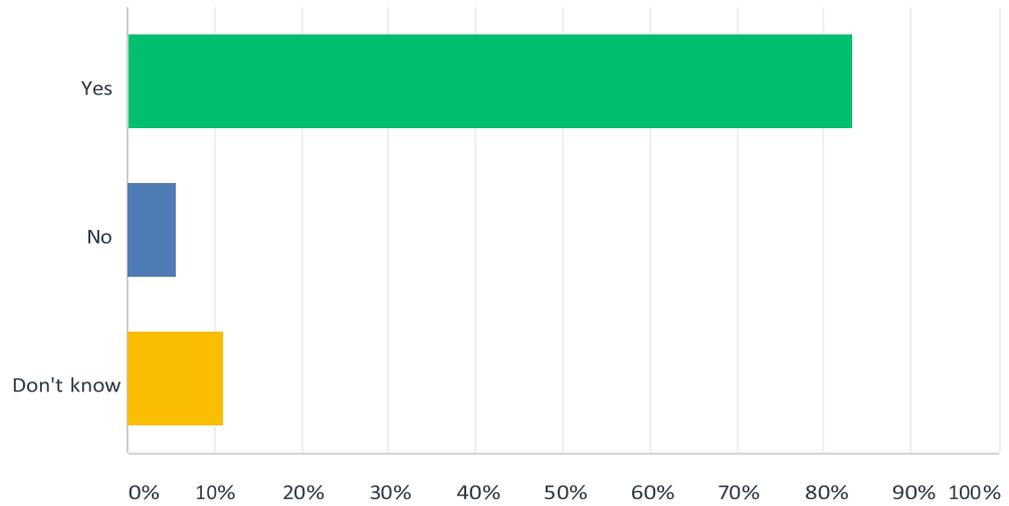
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Up to 30 minutes	54.10%
30-60 minutes	29.51%
More than 60 minutes	16.39%

Have you ever seen an advert for PIP or any promotion?



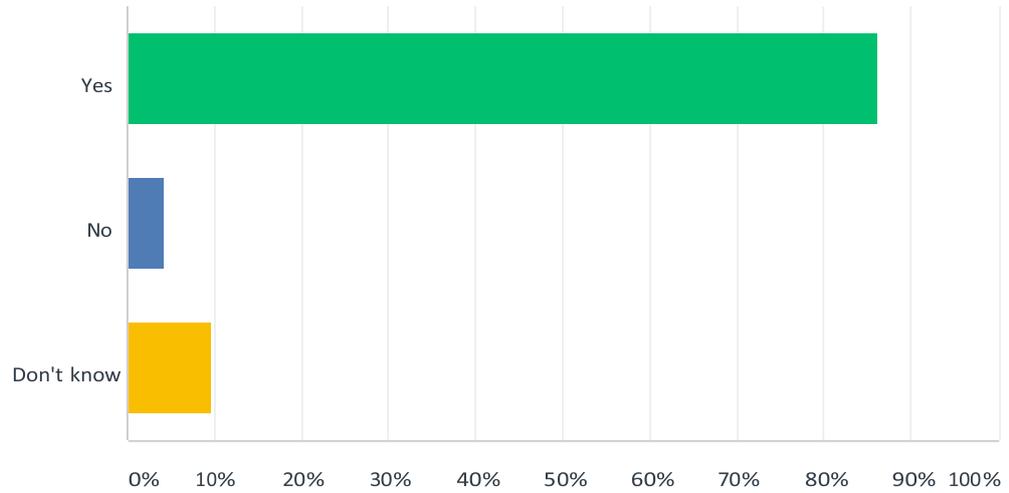
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	5.66%
No	88.68%
Can't remember	5.66%

Would an online application process increase PIP take up?



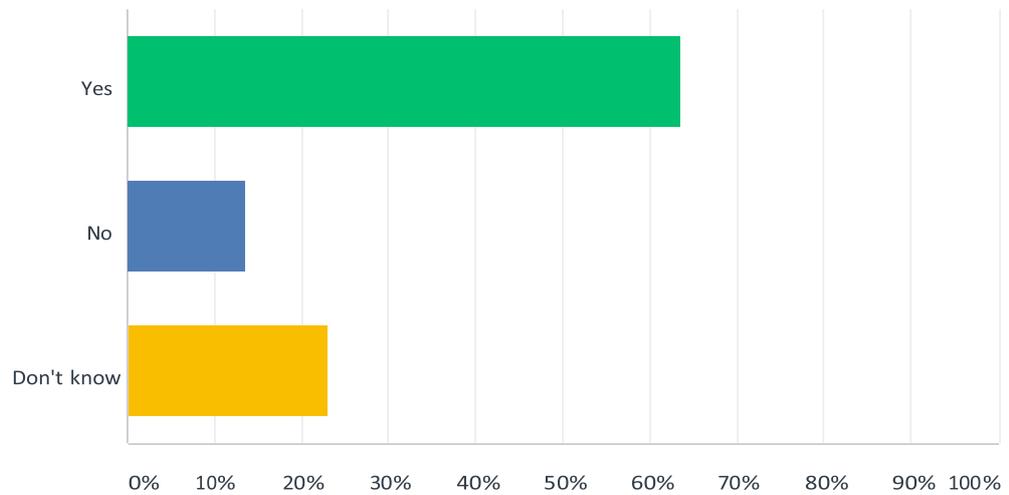
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	83.33%
No	5.56%
Don't know	11.11%

Do you think communities should receive more investment to help people claim PIP?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	86.11%
No	4.17%
Don't know	9.72%

Do you think social landlords should do more to help people claim PIP?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	63.51%
No	13.51%
Don't know	22.97%

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