

Moving from DLA to PIP

Young people receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) are reassessed for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) at 16. This guide explains why the change happens and what families need to do.

What is PIP?

PIP is a benefit for people aged 16+ who need extra support with daily living or mobility. It has two parts: Daily Living and Mobility, each paid at either a standard or enhanced rate depending on need.

Why the Change Happens

DLA is a children's benefit. When a young person approaches 16, the DWP reassesses them under adult PIP criteria, which focus on how their condition affects day-to-day functioning rather than the diagnosis alone.

When the Change Happens

The DWP usually writes before the young person's 16th birthday with an invitation to claim PIP. DLA continues during the transition if the family responds by the stated deadline.

How to Apply

1. DWP sends an invitation letter to claim PIP.
2. A phone call must be made to the number provided to start the claim.
3. The PIP2 form ('How your disability affects you') is then sent to you.
4. Many applicants are asked to take part in an assessment.
5. A decision letter follows.

The Assessment

A young person may be asked to complete an assessment, either by phone or in person. However, for the majority of individuals with Smith-Magenis syndrome who have a learning disability, the official DWP appointee can carry out the assessment on their behalf. If the young person cannot meaningfully take part, the assessor will direct questions to the parent or carer and rely on their explanations of daily needs, risks, and challenges.

If the young person has an official DWP appointee:

- The assessment is usually conducted directly with the parent or carer.
- The young person does not need to take part if they cannot understand the process or would become distressed.

If the young person is not under an appointeeship:

- The assessor will still involve the parent or carer.
- The young person may only need to be present briefly or may not need to answer questions at all.
- The assessor will rely primarily on the parent's/carers' information.

Reasonable adjustments you can request:

- For the assessment to be carried out fully with the parent or carer.
- Breaks if the young person becomes anxious or distressed.
- A slower pace or simplified questioning.
- A home assessment if attending a centre is not suitable.
- A telephone assessment if this is easier for the young person.

For many SMS families, the assessment is essentially a conversation with the parent or carer. This does not negatively affect the claim.

What to Include in the PIP2 Form

Explain support needs, safety concerns, time taken with tasks, night-time care, sleep disruption, and behavioural challenges. Provide real examples of daily difficulties. Evidence such as EHCPs, medical reports, behaviour plans, sleep assessments, or social care documents is useful.

After the Decision

When PIP is awarded, DLA stops. PIP may unlock additional support such as Carer's Allowance, Blue Badge access, or increased Universal Credit components. Families can request a mandatory reconsideration if they disagree with the outcome.

Final Note

This transition is routine for all young people receiving DLA at 16. With clear examples and strong evidence, families can provide the DWP with an accurate picture of their young person's needs.