



# Rethink Carers Lancashire

**Newsletter  
February 2018**

**PIP  
SPECIAL  
see pages  
3 & 4**

**PLEASE NOTE NEW FORWARDING ADDRESS:**

**c/o Rethink Mental Illness, Paul's House, Tower Street,  
Taunton TA1 4BH**

**07534 369889 [rethinklancs@yahoo.com](mailto:rethinklancs@yahoo.com)**

**Meetings coming up – save the dates!**



**Wednesday February 28, 10.30 -1.30 to  
include lunch**

**Dr. Tony Roach, Consultant**

**Clinical Psychologist** makes a return visit to our group to give an update on services, outline the new 'Moving Forward' programme for people with psychosis which is giving good feedback, and answer our questions.

**At Brindle Community Hall**

**Water Street, Brindle, Nr Chorley, PR6 8NH**

**Thursday May 17, 10.30 – 3 pm**

**MORNING: Doug Feery, Barrister** will shed light on the thorny question of **mental capacity**, focusing on the problems it gives carers, and how we can ensure that professionals' assessments of capacity are robust and lawful.

**AFTERNOON: 'Message in a bottle'** arts project run by Sue Flowers. Come along and contribute an SOS message (anonymised) about your experience of mental health care today, for a 'Whittingham Lives' booklet.

Brindle meetings are for all carers (Lancashire-wide) who care for someone with a mental illness. Most of these meetings are open to anyone, with a small fee for professionals, non-carers and people living outside Lancashire. **MAKE SURE YOU BOOK YOUR PLACE (AND LUNCH) EARLY!**

**Rethink Carers East Lancs** meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Elmfield Hall, Gatty Park, Accrington, 6 – 8 pm. Upcoming meetings:

**Wednesday February 14** Lorraine McDonald Johnson, East Lancs Care Group Manager, will tell us about the new crisis house to be opened in Padiham on April 1. **Our first birthday**, come along for some cake!

**Wednesday March 14** Problem-solving session; possible speaker to be confirmed

**Wednesday April 11** Talk from Advocacy Focus; find out what they offer and have your questions answered.

**LOCAL GROUP  
MEETINGS,  
EVENINGS, EVERY  
MONTH**

**Fylde Family Support Group** meets on the second Tuesday of every month at Sainsbury's in Blackpool, 7 -9 pm. Next meeting Tuesday February 13 to discuss with a representative from Public Health progress on the 2015-19 Mental Health Action Plan. Phone 07999 332804. FyldeFamily [SupportGroup@rethink.org](mailto:SupportGroup@rethink.org) [www.Facebook.com/groups/FyldeFamilySupport](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/FyldeFamilySupport)

**HAVE YOU TAKEN OUT A POWER OF ATTORNEY?** If you signed up for this between April 2013 and March 2017 you're due up to £54 for each Power of Attorney registered. This is because when you register a Power of Attorney, you're charged an application fee, set by the Ministry of Justice and paid to the Office of the Public Guardian. Between 2013 and 2017, the operating costs of the Office of the Public Guardian decreased, but the application fee stayed the same, at £110. As the fee is simply supposed to cover operating costs, the Government's now repaying the difference between what applicants paid and what they should have paid, plus interest. To apply, you can [claim a refund online](#) or phone the Office of the Public Guardian's helpline on 0300 456 0300 and select option six. For more information go to [https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/family/2018/02/100000s-owed-refund-of-power-of-attorney-fees?utm\\_source=MSE\\_Newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=06-Feb-18-7694&utm\\_campaign=nt-oneliners-one&utm\\_content=15](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/family/2018/02/100000s-owed-refund-of-power-of-attorney-fees?utm_source=MSE_Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=06-Feb-18-7694&utm_campaign=nt-oneliners-one&utm_content=15)

Or contact this group for printed information

Read on for important information about PIP.

In the last couple of weeks, two of our group members have had a PIP appeal tribunal for their relative. These have been pending for a long time and have caused great anxiety, to the point where one carer became very ill and had to go to hospital. The good news is that – after the December court decision - each of these tribunals lasted only a few seconds and reversed the original PIP decision

**WANTED: PERSONAL  
ASSISTANT IN THE  
FYLDE AREA.**

If you know of someone interested in mental health support work for a few hours a week, please get in touch. Experience not always necessary for the right person.



# PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

We've seen some potentially huge changes to who receives Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in the last few days. If you're not sure what PIP is or you're confused about what this new direction from the Government means for you, then have a look at our PIP FAQs below.

## What is PIP?

- PIP has two different components, the daily living component and the mobility component. The changes affect the mobility component of PIP.
- When you apply for PIP, the DWP assesses you and you are given points.
- If you get fewer than 8 points for the mobility component you will not get the mobility component.
- If you get between 8 and 11 points you get the standard rate of £22 per week.
- If you get 12 points or more you will get the enhanced rate of £58 per week.

## What happened back in March 2017?

- A December 2016 court verdict would have made it easier for people with mental illness to score 12 points in the mobility component of PIP.
- In March 2017, the Government changed the rules to prevent this verdict coming into force. The new PIP rules meant people who struggle to "plan and follow a journey" because of psychological distress could only receive a maximum of 10 points. This made it impossible for people with a mental illness to score 12 points for the enhanced mobility component of PIP unless they also had physical health problems.
- It also made it harder to get the standard mobility component of PIP.

## What does the court case in December 2017 mean?

- In December 2017 the high court decided that these new rules were 'blatantly discriminatory' to people with a mental illness. They decided that the rules should be changed to reflect the December 2016 verdict, and allow more people with mental illness to get the enhanced rate.
- The Government could have decided to appeal and ask the courts to keep the rules the same. But they announced in January 2018 that they will not appeal. You can read their [written statement](#) about this.
- This means it will be much easier for people with a mental illness to qualify for the 'enhanced rate' of the PIP mobility component.
- If it causes someone 'overwhelming psychological distress to follow the route of a familiar journey without another person', that person will score 12 points. This means they will get an enhanced rate of £58 per week.

**I have a current claim – could this affect me?** Yes, all new claims will be assessed on the new rules once these are introduced. If your assessment finds that you experience 'overwhelming psychological distress to follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, the court ruling applies to previous claims as well as new claims. This means some people will be owed backdated payments of PIP. It is not clear when this will apply from, but the earliest date could be 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## How will I find out if I am eligible for a back payment?

The Government has said it will contact those affected. It will review the claims made by *everyone* on PIP – this will take several years and cost billions. They have said people whose claim is being reviewed will not have to go through a face to face assessment. Unfortunately there is no indication that PIP assessments for those still on DLA will be put on hold whilst this review is being done.

**As we get more information we will let everyone know. If you need individual help, contact the Rethink Advice and Information Service ([advice@rethink.org](mailto:advice@rethink.org) 0300 5000 927)**



MPs on the Work and Pensions Select Committee have said a “substantial minority” of long-term disability benefit claimants are being failed by an assessment system that is too often undermined by basic errors, insensitivity and ignorance about people’s conditions. **The MPs will this week publish the full findings of their investigation into the personal independence payment (Pip) and employment support allowance (ESA) systems.**

The committee, chaired by the Labour MP Frank Field, said it was “so impressed and moved” by the 4,000-plus individual submissions it received after asking for people’s experiences of the system – a record number for a select committee inquiry – that it decided to publish a separate report highlighting this evidence, which can be found at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmworpen/355/35502.htm> The claimant experiences it contains are not surprising to us but truly shocking.

Let us know if you’d like a hard copy of this report

The report highlighted four main areas in which the worst mistakes were made: factual errors about people’s situations, problems caused by an assessor’s lack of knowledge, issues with completing the Pip and ESA forms, and the difficulty of challenging decisions.

**LOOK OUT FOR THE FULL INVESTIGATION REPORT  
DUE TO BE PUBLISHED THIS WEEK.**

**WE’LL KEEP YOU POSTED!**

*MP’s conclusion: “The PIP and ESA assessment processes function satisfactorily for the majority of claimants, but they are failing a substantial minority. The response to our inquiry from claimants was striking and unprecedented. This report—featuring just a fraction of the evidence we received—is a tribute to their efforts and bravery in submitting evidence and a reflection of the importance of recognising the human consequences of policy shortcomings.”*

