

Press release: Unnecessary disability reassessments for disabled pensioners to be phased out



The first step in scrapping unnecessary reassessments for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for pensioners starts on Friday (31 May).

Work and Pensions Secretary of State Amber Rudd announced in March that people receiving PIP who have reached State Pension age will no longer have their awards regularly reviewed, instead moving to a light touch review at 10 years. Nearly 290,000 people of State Pension age are in receipt of PIP.

From Friday, new claimants to PIP whose review would have been scheduled after they had reached State Pension age will receive an ongoing award with a light touch review at 10 years.

Work and Pensions Secretary of State Amber Rudd said:

I have set out a number of initiatives to improve the quality of life for disabled people; to level the terrain and smooth their path.

Stopping unnecessary PIP reviews for people over State Pension age is a positive change. It applies a common-sense approach to treating those whose conditions are unlikely to change, and we want to introduce it as quickly as possible for those who will benefit from it.

Minister for Disabled People Justin Tomlinson said:

We are determined to improve our support for disabled people, and stopping needless PIP reviews for pensioners is the right thing to do.

This step means new claimants to PIP who reach State Pension age before their review is due won't have one unless they tell us their needs have changed, and the next step is to bring this in for all pensioners.

Applying this change to new claimants is the first step and it will be extended to existing PIP claimants above State Pension age in the coming months.

This change was part of a wider package of measures announced by Amber Rudd, signalling a shift in the government's support for disabled people.

Other improvements include combining the separate assessment processes for PIP, Employment Support Allowance and Universal Credit into one integrated service from 2021.

The integrated service will simplify the assessment process for millions of people claiming health related benefits, reducing the need to submit information multiple times and for some people reducing the number of face-to-face assessments.

A small-scale test to explore the viability of a single assessment for Work Capability Assessments and PIP assessments will also be undertaken.

The government will also work with stakeholders to understand how to help people submit the right evidence with their claim at the outset so that fewer people have to take their case to Tribunal.

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[News story: Migration Advisory Committee recommends adding to shortage occupation list](#)

Today the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has published its [review of the shortage occupation list \(SOL\)](#). Alongside some occupations which have been added to the list – veterinarians, web designers and architects – many have been expanded to include all roles within that occupation.

This means the SOL will cover around 9% of jobs in the labour market, compared to one per cent under the previous list.

The committee has recommended broadening the SOL to include all roles in occupations such as medical practitioners, nurses, programmers and software development professionals. This recognises the increasing difficulty in filling such roles.

The MAC was asked to consider the addition of Northern Irish and Welsh SOLs to the existing UK list and Scotland-only SOL. In principle, the MAC agrees that devolved SOLs should be created.

The MAC also recommends a review of what role the SOL would play in a future immigration system.

MAC Chair Professor Alan Manning said:

Today's labour market is very different to the one we reviewed when the last SOL was published in 2013. Unemployment is lower and employers in various industries are facing difficulties in finding skilled people to fill their vacancies.

That is why we have recommended expanding the SOL to cover a range of occupations in health, information and engineering fields.

However, our recommendations are clearly only applicable under the current immigration system, while EU free movement remains. We are recommending a full review of the SOL once there is a clearer picture of what the future immigration system will look like.

The review's other recommendations include:

- a consideration of medium-skilled occupations which may become eligible for the SOL in the future system
- the inclusion of Gaelic teachers in the Scotland-only SOL
- pilots to expand the evidence-base on what might work in migration policy for remote communities
- removing the restriction on chef visas, which currently excludes those

offering a takeaway service. This is in recognition of the changing nature of the hospitality sector and with the aim of future-proofing the list

[News story: Regulatory Excellence Awards finalists announced](#)

Organised by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), the Awards recognise regulatory organisations, individuals, businesses and trade associations that have achieved positive outcomes through good practice.

OPSS Chief Executive Graham Russell said: “All the entries show the immense hard work being put in by regulatory teams across the UK, and our judges faced a considerable challenge in deciding which ones demonstrated that extra bit of spark or innovation to put them through to the final.

“The finalists range from small Trading Standards teams to National Regulators to large and small businesses, and getting to this stage is a mark of merit in itself. Our external judging panel will have quite a task in choosing those finalists that are outstanding.”

The finalists are:

Better Business for All

- Health and Safety Executive
- Cornwall Council
- Leicester and Leicestershire BBfA Partnership
- West of England BBfA partnership
- BBfA Humber Partnership
- Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre of Excellence
- New Anglia Compliance Partnership

Innovation and Technical

- Credas
- Antrim and Newtonabbey Food Safety Team
- SA Brain & Company Ltd
- Dr Chris Robertson / Dr Paul Goodman of RINA
- Paul Owen / West Midlands Fire Service Engineering Team
- Shield Safety Group
- Food Standards Agency Strategic Surveillance Team
- Board Intelligence
- Edinburgh Trading Standards

Primary Authority

- Business Advice and Support Partnership
- SA Brain & Company Ltd
- Wine & Spirit Trade Association /Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre of Excellence
- Peterborough City Council Regulatory Services
- Wakefield Council and Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc
- Kent County Council Trading Standards Business Advice Services / Independent British Vape Trade Association

Product Safety

- Leicestershire Trading Standards
- Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards/ Solution EU Ltd
- Hillingdon Ports Team
- The Ladder Association
- Jerry Burnie, Wendy Phillips and Eric Edmonds – British Toy and Hobby Ass.
- Amazon UK
- Electrical Safety First
- Environmental Health Consumer Protection (EHNI CP) Subgroup
- City of Wolverhampton
- Hertfordshire Trading Standards
- British Standards Institution

The winners will be announced on June 20, at the offices of Gowling WLG in London. For updates, search on Twitter #RegEx19 and follow @OfficeforSandS.

[News story: Regulators launch consultation on professional driver conduct guidance](#)

The Senior Traffic Commissioner for Great Britain has today (29 May 2019) called on professional drivers, commercial vehicle operators, legal representatives and road safety stakeholders to take part in a review of guidance on the conduct of drivers.

The [consultation](#) looks at the Commissioner's existing statutory document for vocational licence holders and proposes a number of changes.

- the starting points for taking action against professional drivers
- cases involving Armed Service Personnel
- case examples of how drivers will be dealt with

The purpose of the driver conduct process is to ensure lorry, bus and coach drivers are fit to drive large commercial vehicles.

Traffic commissioners are responsible for regulating these drivers and can take action against them for failing to meet the relevant standards.

The statutory document helps traffic commissioners to be consistent in their decision-making and contains useful information for drivers and those who employ them.

Senior Traffic Commissioner for Great Britain, Richard Turfitt, said:

“Our aim is to provide clear guidance and continue to improve transparency in the way we come to our decisions. Without a framework, we would not be in a position to ensure consistent and fair regulation of the transport industry or to continue to modernise the licensing regime.

“I encourage professional drivers and their employees, as well as our other key stakeholders, to review our proposals and give us feedback on the intended changes.”

The consultation runs until 23 July 2019.

Press release: Diamond trader banned for falsifying sales invoices

Jan Maarten Asscher (56), of Roosendaal, Holland, signed a disqualification undertaking and is banned from running limited companies for 11 years.

He is joined by his fellow director, Mark Timothy Walker (57), of Ware, who is banned for 9 years after he allowed the company to produce the false sales documents.

With over 70 years' diamond-trading experience between them, the pair are banned from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Clarity Diamonds was incorporated in February 2014 to trade in wholesale diamonds. The company, however, entered into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation (CVL) in June 2017, after it could not pay debts worth more than £1.2 million.

An investigation was launched into the conduct of the directors and established Jan Asscher had caused the company to falsify invoices relating to bespoke, diamond jewellery. The value stated on the invoices came to US\$1.75 million in total.

The documents, which Jan Asscher referred to as 'holding invoices', were generated with names and addresses that reflected neither the ultimate recipient nor the full value of the order. This meant liquidators could not even trace the pieces to recover them for the benefit of creditors.

Enquiries also revealed that Mark Walker had allowed the inaccurate documents to be produced.

Marc Symons, Deputy Head of Insolvent Investigations, said:

Directors have a duty to maintain accurate records. In this case, the false invoices have resulted in outstanding debts to creditors of more than £1.1 million.

These experienced diamond dealers have received substantial bans, and this should serve as a warning to others who are remiss in their director's responsibilities.

Jan Maarten Asscher is of Roosendaal, Netherlands and his date of birth is September 1962. His disqualification is effective from 5 April 2019.

Mark Walker is of Ware, Hertfordshire and his date of birth is June 1961. His disqualification is effective from 9 May 2019.

Clarity Diamonds Ltd (Company number: 08893689).

A disqualification undertaking/order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on: