

Committee: Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 06 November 2018

Wards: ALL

Subject: Personal Independent Payments Process

Lead member: Councillor Peter McCabe, Chair of the Healthier Communities and Older People overview and scrutiny panel.

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Recommendations:

- A. That the Panel comment on the actions by Department for Work and Pensions and the Independent Assessment Service to improve the Personal Independent Payment assessment process for Merton residents.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The attached report provides an update from the Department for Work and Pensions and its contractor the Independent Assessment Service on their response to the action plan they agreed with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Panel and local community organisations at a meeting on the 22nd May. A full update from the meeting was presented at this Panel on the 25th June 2018.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. This Panel has taken an active interest in addressing concerns about the roll-out of PIP. The Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a benefit that helps with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability for people aged 16 to 64. It's gradually replacing Disability Living Allowance
- 2.2. After evidence from a range of sources including Merton Centre for Independent Living, Merton and Lambeth Citizens Advice and Adults First, a carers organisation The key issues raised included:
- 2.3. Inaccessible assessment centres - This includes centres which are physically inaccessible, or those located far away from the claimants home. There are no assessment centres located within Merton.
- 2.4. Overbooking of assessment centres - This leads to last minute cancellations or excessively long waits at assessment centres.
- 2.5. Inaccurate Assessments - Many people are wrongly being found ineligible for PIP at assessment stage and are being forced to go to tribunal
- 2.6. Many people found the application form difficult to complete and some aspects of the assessment process were daunting especially for people with mental health problems.

A full discussion of these concerns took place on the 22nd May and as a result an improvement action was agreed. The DWP response to the action plan is attached.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

Cabinet is constitutionally required to receive, consider and respond to scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them at a meeting.

- 3.1. Cabinet is not, however, required to agree and implement recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny. Cabinet could agree to implement some, or none, of the recommendations made in the scrutiny review final report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Panel will be consulted at the meeting

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The Panel will consider important items as they arise as part of their work programme for 2018/19

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None relating to this covering report

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None relating to this covering report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory implications of the topic being scrutinised.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engaging with local partners in scrutiny reviews. Furthermore, the outcomes of reviews are intended to benefit all sections of the local community.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None relating to this covering report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the crime and disorder implications of the topic being scrutinised.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None relating to this covering report

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

12 NOTE

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS