Advocacy in Action

The Value of Advice in PIP Appeals

June 2026

citizens advice Hart

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This report sets out the scale, complexity and impact of Personal Independence Payment appeal work at Citizens Advice Hart. It draws on local casework data, national statistics and anonymised client stories to show why specialist advice is essential for securing correct entitlement, reducing financial hardship and improving client wellbeing.

Executive Summary

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) appeals are among the most time-intensive and complex areas of casework undertaken by our service. They require significant adviser input to help clients navigate a challenging and often prolonged system, and to secure fair outcomes where initial decisions do not reflect people's circumstances.

There are 3.9 million people in the UK entitled to PIP (as at October 2025), and almost **3,000 individuals in Hart claimed PIP in January 2026**. Nationally, 45% of PIP applications result in no award being made, and many applicants go on to request Mandatory Reconsiderations or appeals, which are often successful (see Context and Background and associated references). However, this process can be lengthy, complex and stressful for claimants.

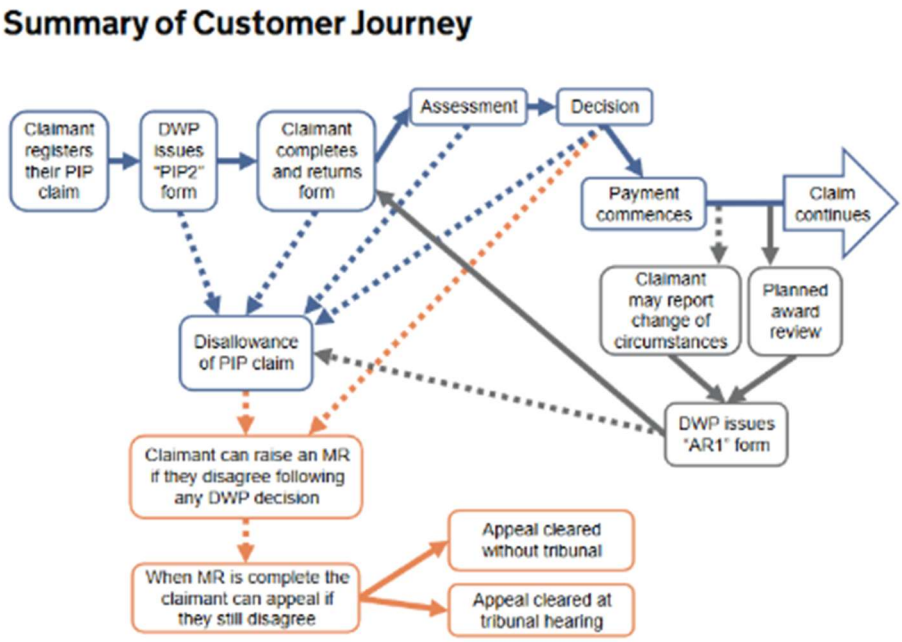
PIP is one of the most common issues seen at Citizens Advice Hart, and **we helped twice as many people with PIP appeals in 2025 as we did in 2021**. Appointments related to PIP issues accounted for 23% of all booked appointments in 2025/2026 and accounted for a minimum of 52 full days of adviser time over the year. It is estimated that each appointment also requires at least one hour of post-appointment write-up time, increasing the **total time spent on PIP work to 26 weeks of adviser time over a year** (see Volume of Work).

At Citizens Advice Hart, we have a highly experienced team with extensive knowledge of the PIP process, from initial queries and applications through to Mandatory Reconsiderations and appeals. Since 2022, we have recorded an **85% success rate** at appeal and achieved income gains averaging **£7,562 per client** (including backdated payments - see Outcomes and Impact). We also have evidence that clients who come to us for help with Benefits & Tax Credits issues more generally find our advice very effective, with **86% saying they would recommend our service**. Furthermore, **86% of clients with Benefits & Tax Credits issues said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of our help, and that their physical health had also improved.**

Together, the research, statistics and client case studies demonstrate both the scale of the issues faced by our clients and the significant impact of specialist advice. They show that PIP appeals are not only a technical benefits issue, but also a matter of financial security, wellbeing and independence for the people we support.

Context and Background

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a benefit that provides extra money to help with everyday life if you have an illness, disability or mental health condition. It can be claimed on top of Employment and Support Allowance or other benefits. Eligibility for PIP is not affected by income, savings or employment status. **In Hart, in January 2026, there were 2,833 people claiming PIP**. PIP assessments look at the amount of help needed with specific activities such as preparing food, managing treatments, hygiene, communication and mobility. Help can be provided by other people, aids such as a walking stick or guide dog, or home or car adaptations. PIP is made up of two parts, called components. The daily living component is for the extra help needed with everyday tasks, such as preparing food, washing, getting dressed or communicating with other people. The mobility component is for the extra help needed to get around, such as moving, planning a journey or following a route. Each component can be paid at either a standard or enhanced rate.



The above chart shows an individual's journey through the PIP process. The main steps are:

- Claimant registers their claim for PIP.
- DWP issues the "How your disability affects you" (PIP2) form.
- Claimant completes the PIP2 form, which is either disallowed based on the information provided or referred on to the Assessment Provider (AP) for assessment.
- The claim is assessed based on the PIP2 form, or via a telephone, video or face-to-face assessment conducted by the AP.
- DWP makes a decision to award or disallow PIP.

- If a claimant disagrees with a decision, either not to award PIP or with the level of the award, they can ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR).
- If the claimant still disagrees after the MR has been completed, they can lodge an appeal with His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).
- Appeals can be cleared before a hearing if the appeal is withdrawn by the claimant, struck out by the tribunal, or lapsed, which is where DWP changes the decision in the claimant's favour.
- At tribunal, the DWP decision is either upheld or overturned in favour of the claimant.

Official statistics show that, of the 3.4 million decisions following PIP assessment, 55% resulted in an award. 20% of these initial decisions resulted in a MR being registered and 19% of MRs resulted in a change to the award. 33% of completed MRs went on to lodge an appeal. Of these, 21% were lapsed (the DWP changed the decision in the claimant's favour prior to the hearing) and 66% of the DWP decisions cleared at the tribunal hearing were overturned in favour of the claimant[1].

These statistics clearly show that **a large proportion of claimants who put in either an MR or an appeal for PIP are successful; however, the journey through this process is complex and lengthy**. Tables produced by HMCTS covering October to December 2025 show that there are currently over 61,000 PIP appeals waiting to be heard, almost four times as many as the 16,500 on the waiting list at the same point in 2021. **The average time taken for an appeal to be heard (October to December 2025) was 37 weeks (8.5 months), an increase from 30 weeks in October to December 2024.**

Why This Matters for Health: The Wider Determinants

Income and disability benefits are recognised as one of the wider determinants of health — the social and economic conditions that shape health outcomes as much as clinical care does. When a PIP claim is wrongly refused, a person loses income intended to offset the cost and impact of their condition, often for well over a year while a Mandatory Reconsideration and appeal are resolved.

This prolonged financial insecurity is not a side effect of the process — it is itself a health harm. Among the clients Citizens Advice Hart supports with PIP issues, 81% already have a disability, health condition or access need, and 68% of those report multiple impairments. Mental health conditions are the second most common issue we see. For this group,

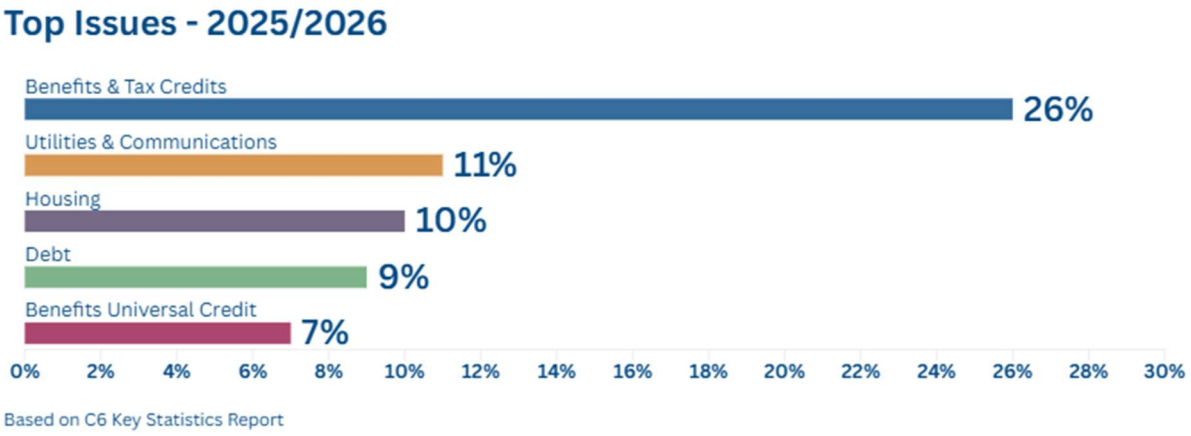
1 Personal Independence Payment statistics to July 2025 - GOV.UK

extended financial hardship compounds existing conditions rather than sitting alongside them.

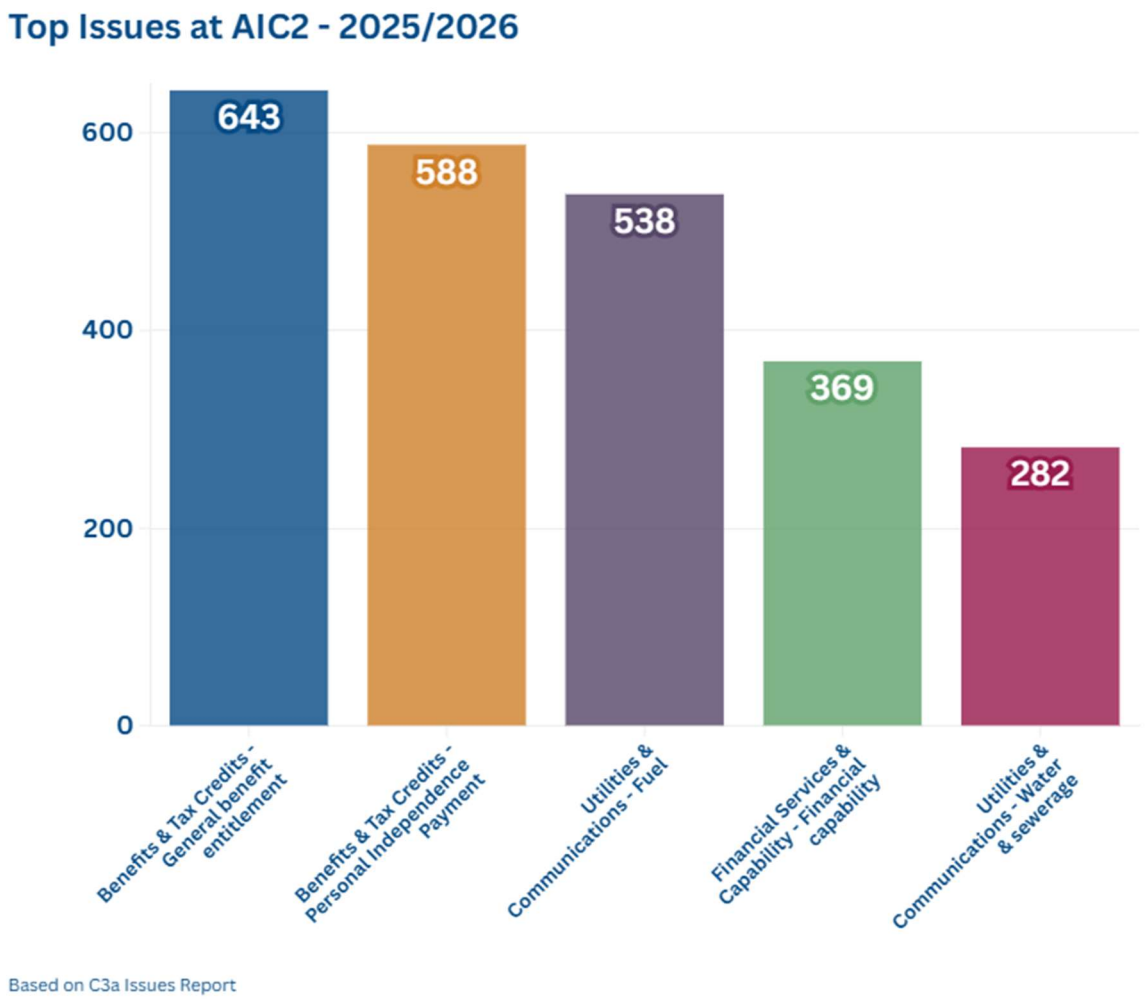
The impact of resolving these cases is measurable in health terms, not just financial ones. Among clients with Benefits & Tax Credits issues, 86% told us they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of our help, and that their physical health had also improved. Timely, expert advice on PIP appeals should therefore be understood as a health intervention as much as a welfare one: it can reduce avoidable strain on primary care, mental health services and crisis support, as well as on the individuals affected.

Volume of Work

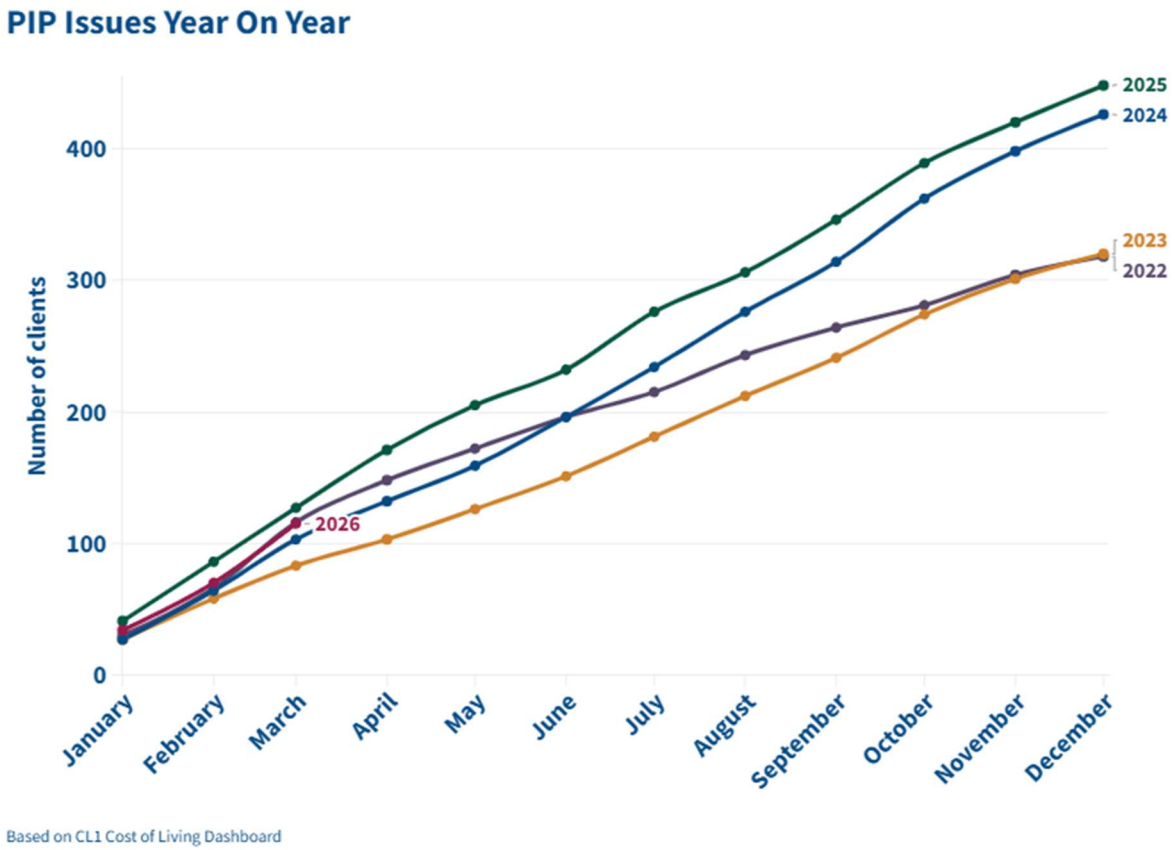
At Citizens Advice, we capture information on the issues that people come to us with using Advice Issue Codes (AIC). These codes have three levels: the level one issue is the broad topic area, such as benefits and tax credits, housing or employment; level two identifies the specific issue; and level three records the more detailed sub-issue. For example: Benefits & Tax Credits (AIC1), Personal Independence Payment (AIC2), Appeals (AIC3). The most common issue seen at Citizens Advice Hart is Benefits & Tax Credits, which accounted for 26% of all issues seen in 2025/2026.



Personal Independence Payment issues are the second most common issue within Benefits & Tax Credits and account for 25% of all Benefits & Tax Credits issues. When we consider all AIC2 issues, the second most common issue is Personal Independence Payment, which accounts for 7% of all issues seen in 2025/2026.

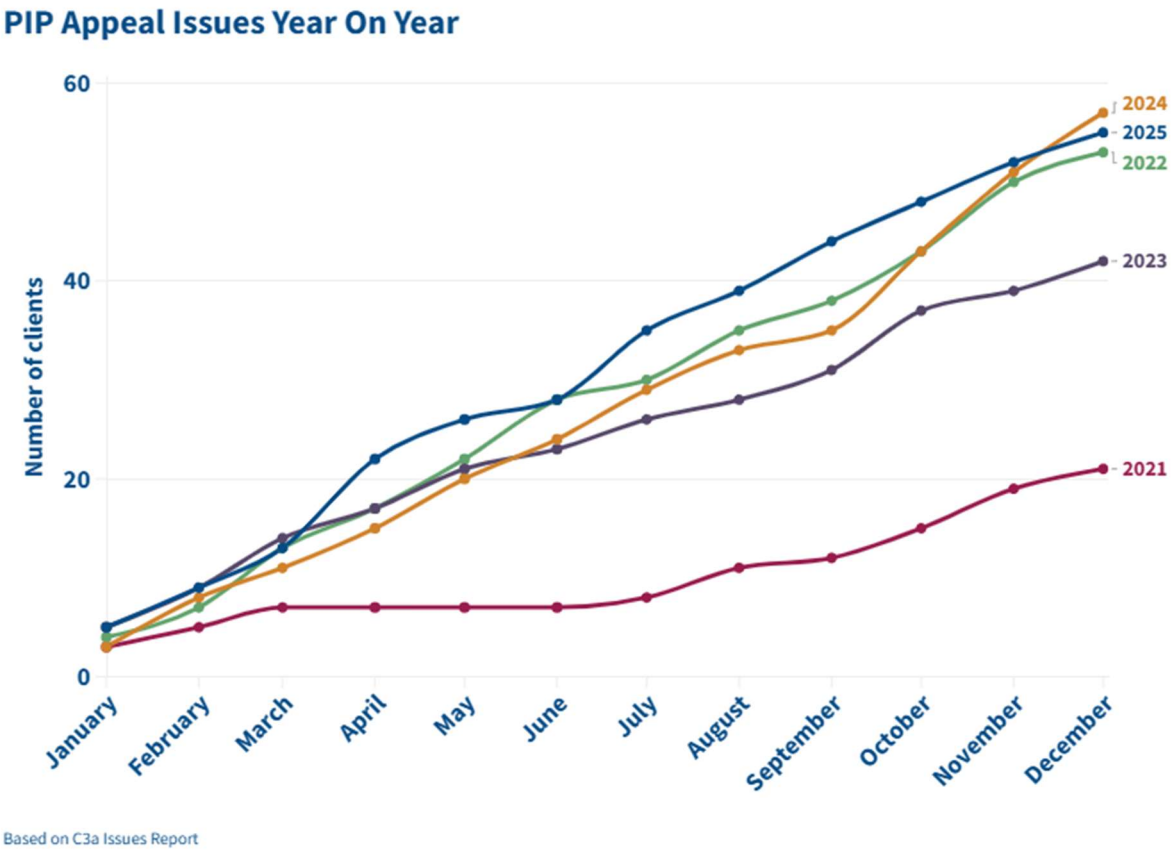


At Citizens Advice Hart, we are seeing increasing numbers of clients coming to us with issues relating to PIP. **In 2025 we saw 5% more clients with PIP-related issues** (448 clients) than in 2024 and 40% more than in 2023.



Of those clients who come to us with PIP issues, the majority (27%) needed help with making and managing a claim. The second most common issue was queries regarding eligibility, at 18%. **Clients coming to us with issues relating to PIP appeals accounted for 7% of all PIP clients.**

The graph below shows the cumulative figures for PIP appeal issues. **In 2025, we saw 55 clients for issues relating to PIP appeals, more than twice as many as in 2021.**



We are also able to look at the number of booked appointments at our offices or over the telephone over the past year. In 2025/2026, there were 1,331 appointments held at Citizens Advice Hart and 45% of these were for Benefits & Tax Credits issues. When an appointment is booked, a topic is also recorded. **PIP was the most common topic recorded against appointments, accounting for 23% of all appointments in 2025/2026.** Each appointment lasts approximately one hour, so the 310 appointments for PIP would account for **52 full days of appointments for one adviser**, based on a six-hour working day. Because we hold appointments over four days a week at Citizens Advice Hart, this means a single adviser would spend 13 weeks of the year dealing just with PIP appointments. It is estimated that each appointment also requires at least one hour of post-appointment write-up time, which increases the total time required for PIP work to **26 weeks of adviser time over a year**.

Demographics of PIP Clients

Citizens Advice collects information on every person who comes to us for help, and we collate this data within a national case recording database called Casebook. When gathering this information, we capture personal demographics including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, household type, housing tenure, occupational status, income profile and more. In practice, not every client is asked every demographic question, and response rates for some protected characteristics are sometimes too low to be statistically significant, so these will not be considered in this report.

Due to the number of clients with PIP appeal issues, to analyse the demographics of this group we will consider the demographics of all clients who come to us with PIP issues. In 2025/26, **the majority of clients who came to us with PIP issues were female (56%) and aged between 50 and 59 (27%).** With regard to ethnicity, clients closely match our general client profile and local population, with 90% of clients from a white ethnic group. As would be expected, the majority of clients who came to us with PIP issues had a disability, health condition or access need – 81%. Of these clients, 68% reported having multiple impairments, which reflects the complexity of cases presenting to us. The second most common condition was mental health issues, at 14%.

Although the majority of the clients we saw with PIP issues in 2025/26 identified themselves as permanently sick or disabled (41%), 28% were employed in some capacity, with 12% employed for over 30 hours a week.

Note: all demographics exclude unknown, prefer not to say, and not recorded responses; percentages are based on known values.

Outcomes and Impact

Since January 2022, we have recorded **56 outcomes against PIP appeal issues for 38 clients**. Of these, 44 outcomes, for 28 clients, relate to income gain through new awards, revision of awards and backdated payments. The total income gained for our clients over this period has been £211,741.95, **an average of £7,562 per client**. We have also recorded outcomes of improved health and capacity to manage for 10 clients. These health outcomes are not incidental. Clients frequently describe the appeal wait itself — typically eight months in our casework, consistent with the 8.5-month national average — as a period in which existing conditions worsened under the strain of reduced income, debt and uncertainty. Resolving a case in a client's favour does not only restore income; it removes a prolonged source of stress that has an independent, negative effect on health. In the 2025/2026 financial year, we recorded **12 outcomes relating to PIP appeals**, with a total financial value of just over **£22k**.

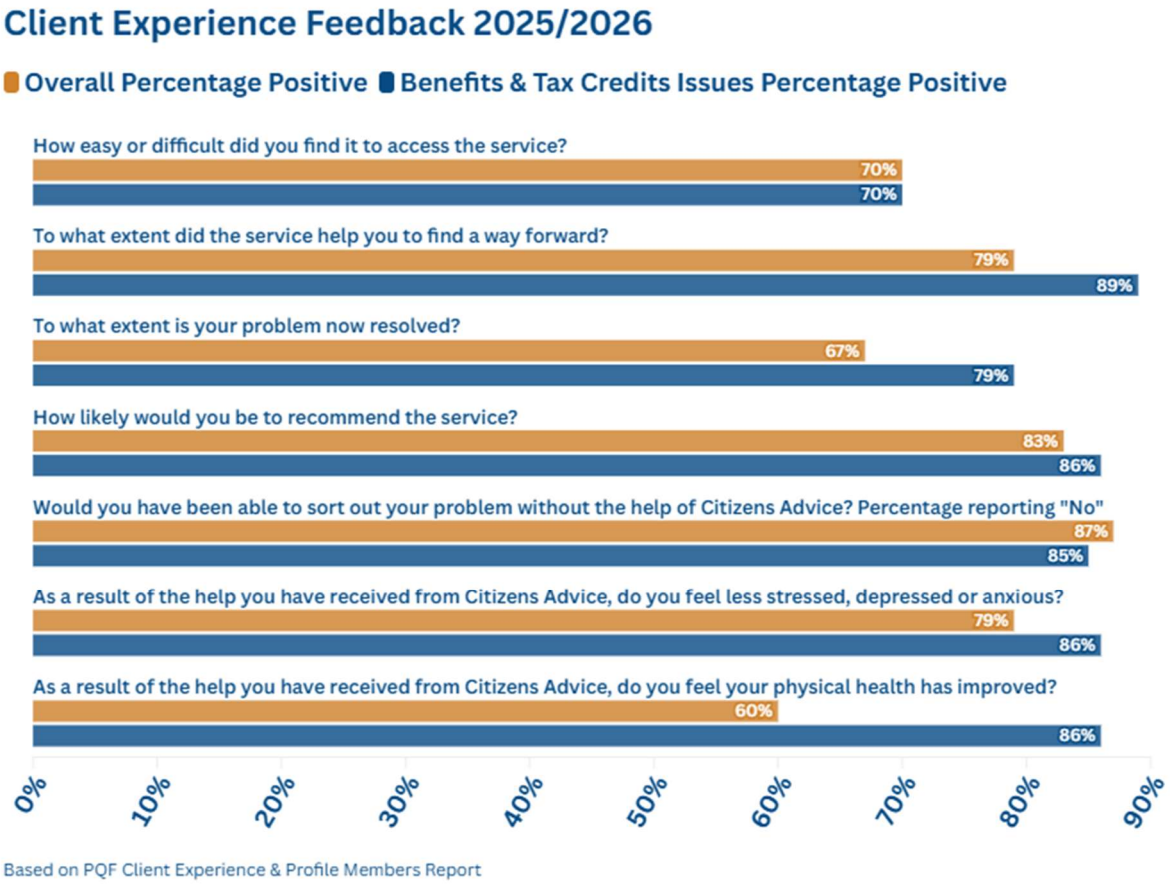
Our main PIP appeal adviser has kept records of all cases he has been involved in over the same period and has tracked their progress. He has recorded 34 PIP appeals since January 2022; six are relatively recent and are still outstanding, and one case was withdrawn by the client. Of the remaining 27 cases, 23 were successful at tribunal (**an 85% success rate**). **The average length of time recorded between appeal submission and appeal date has been eight months**, which corresponds directly to the average national wait time of 8.5 months.

Looking at outcomes relating to PIP more broadly, in 2025/2026 we recorded 202 outcomes relating to PIP issues. Of these, 112 related to a benefit gain from a new award or increase, with a total of over £500k gained by our clients. We also recorded 54 cases of improved health or capacity to manage as a result of our help.

Following contact with Citizens Advice Hart, clients are asked if they are happy to be contacted to provide feedback on our services and their experiences. If a client says they are happy to be contacted by SMS or email, a proportion will be contacted to ask about:

- ease of access
- whether they found a way forward
- problem resolution
- whether they would recommend the service
- the state of their problem when they contacted Citizens Advice
- whether the client's health or wellbeing improved as a result of advice

We can break down this data by Advice Issue Code and consider the feedback specifically from clients who come to us with a Benefits & Tax Credits issue. Unfortunately, this data is only available to AIC level one, so we are unable to specifically isolate PIP issues.



In 2025/2026, the percentage of positive responses to most questions was higher for clients who had a Benefits & Tax Credits issue compared to the overall percentage positive, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the help received in this area. The only questions that were not higher were ease of accessing the service, which matched at 70%, and solving the problem without Citizens Advice, which was marginally lower at 85% compared to 87% overall. For helping clients find a way forward, Benefits & Tax Credits clients scored us 10% higher and 12% higher for resolving the problem. In terms of improvements in health, **86% of clients with Benefits & Tax Credits issues said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of our help, and that their physical health had also improved.**

Client Stories

To highlight the complexity of the PIP application process and the impact it can have on applicants, we have outlined some examples of the assistance we have provided to clients. Please note that client details have been anonymised.

Chloe

Chloe lives in Fleet with her partner. She is currently unable to work due to ill health and has depression, anxiety and arthritis. Chloe also has problems with her speech, which can make communication difficult.

Chloe had previously been claiming PIP and receiving the standard daily living amount, but this stopped in June 2024. She submitted a Mandatory Reconsideration but received a letter in September 2024, almost three months later, to say this had been declined and that she had one month to appeal the decision.

Citizens Advice Hart assisted Chloe with her appeal, and she was eventually awarded PIP in January 2026, after many process delays. There were 16 months between the Mandatory Reconsideration being declined and Chloe receiving the appeal outcome. She was also awarded a back payment, but DWP, as of June 2026, had still not provided this to the client, despite the client escalating the situation.

During this period, Chloe's circumstances changed, so Citizens Advice Hart supported her with a new PIP application in January 2026. This was also rejected for payment of the full PIP amount and is currently going through the appeals process.

As a result, despite deteriorating health circumstances, Chloe has not received a PIP payment since June 2024. This has caused a significant financial hardship and stress.

Chloe's arthritis and mental health conditions did not stand still during this period. Without the income PIP provides for managing daily living needs, and under sustained financial and administrative stress, her existing conditions became harder to manage — a pattern common among clients experiencing lengthy appeal delays. Her case illustrates a wider point: delays in the PIP system do not only cause financial hardship, but they can also actively worsen the health conditions the benefit exists to support.

Aiden

Aiden lives alone in Fleet. He contacted Citizens Advice Hart in October 2023, having been rejected for a PIP application a few months previously. Citizens Advice Hart made an initial assessment that, due to the client's restrictions in mobility, he may be entitled to PIP in addition to his other benefits. The team at Citizens Advice Hart assisted the client in challenging the initial PIP assessment through the Mandatory Reconsideration process and on to the tribunal stage.

Eighteen months later, the appeal was successful, and Aiden was awarded Enhanced Daily Living and Enhanced Mobility from June 2023 to June 2028.

In financial terms, this means an ongoing weekly payment throughout 2024/2025 of £108 for Daily Living and £75.25 for Mobility. As the award is backdated, he would also be due £16,320.43 in backdated payments. This award will make a significant difference to Aiden going forward.

However, the delay in the award being made meant Aiden took on additional debt to cover living expenses. This increased debt could have been avoided if he had been awarded PIP at the initial application stage. The stress of managing debt and reduced mobility without the support PIP is designed to provide is a recognised risk factor for declining mental and physical health — underlining that the eighteen-month delay in Aiden's case carried a health cost as well as a financial one. The financial issues for Aiden were severe, and during this period Citizens Advice Hart also supported him with foodbank and Household Support Fund applications to assist him with his daily needs.

Conclusion

The findings in this report demonstrate the continued value of specialist PIP appeals support at Citizens Advice Hart. Success rates and client outcomes show that many individuals do not receive the correct entitlement until they access expert advice and representation. Beyond the financial gains achieved, the evidence and client experiences highlight the wider benefits of successful appeals, including improved wellbeing, reduced stress and greater independence.

The report also shows that PIP appeal work is complex, lengthy and resource-intensive, with demand continuing to increase. Sustaining and developing this specialist service will be vital to ensuring that people affected by ill health, disability and financial hardship can access the benefits to which they are entitled.

Glossary

AIC (Advice Issue Code)	The coding system Citizens Advice uses to categorise the topic of a client's query, e.g. Benefits & Tax Credits (level 1), Personal Independence Payment (level 2), Appeals (level 3).
MR (Mandatory Reconsideration)	A request for the DWP to review its own decision before a claimant can appeal to a tribunal.
HMCTS	His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service — the body that hears PIP appeals.
AP (Assessment Provider)	The organisation contracted by DWP to carry out PIP assessments.
Casebook	Citizens Advice's national case recording database, used to log client details, issues and outcomes.

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