

Advokit: 3 PIP Rejections, Then Success – Why Appealing Matters

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Okay, so today we're here to talk about disability benefits, focusing on expectations and awareness

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of PIP. We plan to publish these conversations on a website to help applicants, families

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and friends. We've heard government websites can be hard to use and people rely on friends

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and family or advisors, for example, people here from aphasia reconnect. Cool. So yeah,

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we're recording. Yeah. Anyway, so tell us a little bit about yourself. When did you

0:00:35.800,0:00:51.720

have your stroke? You never forget that. 2012, the third of November. Third of November.

0:00:51.720,0:01:03.000

Yeah, third of November. So it's been, what, 13 years? Yeah. It's a long time. Yeah. And

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when you had your stroke, did you immediately have aphasia or was it something that you

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only learned about later? It gradually came on throughout the day. By the end of the day,

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my speech was gone. So you had your stroke and then you were having issues with your

0:01:30.000,0:01:34.200

speech. And then did someone, when did someone tell you you had aphasia?

0:01:34.200,0:01:49.880

Was it in the hospital? Yeah. But it wasn't the doctors. It was my sister. Your sister figured

0:01:49.880,0:01:58.600

out you had aphasia. Yeah. Cause she knew, cause she knew about it before. Yeah. My dad had it

0:01:58.600,0:02:08.320

before. Okay. So it ran in the family. Yeah. And outside of aphasia and all these sorts of things,

0:02:08.320,0:02:18.760

what do you enjoy doing now? What's a hobby of yours? Football? I like watching it. Yeah.

0:02:18.760,0:02:25.440

Watching football. Yeah. I'm watching movies. Movies. Yeah. Do you have a favourite recent

0:02:25.440,0:02:34.600

film? I watched Tron. Tron. Any good? Yeah. It's, well, it's different to what the, everything

0:02:34.600,0:02:43.800

happens in the last one. Everybody's trying to, to, to normally they will do what happened in the

0:02:43.800,0:02:51.600

first one and they jazz it up a bit. But this one was a totally different story altogether. Yeah.

0:02:51.680,0:02:59.320

Interesting. Yeah. I've heard it's been a bit controversial Tron. It's got Jared Leto in it.

0:02:59.320,0:03:09.000

And some people aren't a fan of him. Jared Leto. Yeah. You know, the, he's the main bad guy in the

0:03:09.000,0:03:16.800

Tron movie I've heard. Isn't that, didn't he do that thing with the vampires? Yeah. I think so.

0:03:16.960,0:03:24.880

I find him, it's okay. Cool. So we'll now move towards our topic of conversation. Yeah. Do

0:03:24.880,0:03:32.520

you remember when you first heard about PIP or personal independence payments? Yeah. When was

0:03:32.520,0:03:47.400

that? The first time I did it was about 2000, yeah, 2013. 2013. So about a year or so after you had

0:03:47.400,0:03:53.480

your stroke or a few months maybe. Yeah. Yeah. Well, you definitely, yeah. And did someone tell

0:03:53.480,0:03:59.120

you to try and apply for PIP or how did it work? Yeah. Somebody said you should, you should apply

0:03:59.120,0:04:08.800

for PIP. And the first thing and they said, all right, I'll apply. I thought it's going to be a

0:04:08.800,0:04:22.400

simple little, little, you know, little couple of things to fill in. That's all. But no. Oh dear. So

0:04:23.280,0:04:29.680

someone told you to apply and you thought it would be simple. Yeah. And it, what was your

0:04:29.680,0:04:36.800

motivation for applying? Why did you even consider applying? I was finding it hard.

0:04:37.760,0:04:46.720

Just money? Yeah, I was finding it hard. I, I really had not been able to cope.

0:04:46.720,0:04:56.720

So it was mainly came from a place of, you know, you, you just needed more income each month. Yeah.

0:04:57.760,0:05:07.600

And you thought that PIP would be an avenue to that. Yeah, I thought it would have helped me

0:05:07.600,0:05:19.280

and far from it. So what happened? So you began your first application in 2013. How did that go?

0:05:20.480,0:05:33.520

First, when the, when, when the, when the, the application dropped through the little box,

0:05:34.480,0:05:40.640

I said, I'm not going to be able to fill that out. Is it a long application?

0:05:44.560,0:05:53.520

I've got one from the last time I'll bring it in. And from my previous applications,

0:05:54.800,0:06:02.560

yeah, it's impossible for me. It was impossible. So it was impossible for you to fill out this

0:06:02.720,0:06:10.320

massively long and lengthy booklet. Who, how did you go about filling it in then? Did someone help?

0:06:10.960,0:06:16.720

Yeah, my sister. Your sister helped? Yeah. So she filled in parts of your form for you?

0:06:17.360,0:06:24.800

Most, all of it. All of it? Yeah. The only thing I filled in was my name. Okay. Yeah, my name,

0:06:24.800,0:06:30.720

I put my name on it and said, that's it. I can't do no more. So she was a massive help for you then?

0:06:30.880,0:06:39.760

Oh, big help. Okay. And yeah, then what happened next? So you sent it off. How long did it take her

0:06:39.760,0:06:47.920

to fill it in? A month or a week or? No, we did it in a couple of days. Couple of days. Yeah. Okay.

0:06:47.920,0:06:52.240

And did she find any bits of the form really hard or did she do a good job?

0:06:52.800,0:07:03.200

As far as I know, she did a good job, but then to get rejected and saying,

0:07:05.040,0:07:12.160

So you got rejected? Yeah. After you've submitted this form? Yeah. Okay. And what,

0:07:12.160,0:07:17.040

how did they tell you were rejected? Did they send you a letter? Yeah. And said, I didn't,

0:07:17.120,0:07:25.040

I didn't fit into the categories. You didn't fit into the categories? Yeah. Okay. And you

0:07:25.040,0:07:29.040

had, you'd not crude probably enough points or something like that. Yeah. Yeah. That's,

0:07:29.040,0:07:35.360

that's what I'm saying. The categories, like you get so many points for not being able to

0:07:35.360,0:07:48.560

cook food. Not if I was, I was able to cook food, wash, do everything basically, but slowly.

0:07:49.600,0:07:58.000

And then what did you do after that? Did you give up or did you appeal? No, I gave up. You gave up?

0:07:58.000,0:08:04.960

Yeah. I gave up. People said appeal, but I was for appeal. And that means

0:08:05.520,0:08:13.120

a big going in front of a judge. And I just said, no, I can't, no. So you, so you decided,

0:08:13.120,0:08:18.960

you decided not to appeal. Yeah. And then what happened next in this story?

0:08:18.960,0:08:27.440

Okay. I, a couple of years up past and then I applied again. You applied again. Yeah. So

0:08:28.160,0:08:33.440

how on earth did you manage to make do without PIP in the years? You just struggled along.

0:08:34.000,0:08:45.840

Yeah. I really struggled. Yeah. I applied again. My sister helped me to fill out the form again.

0:08:46.560,0:08:55.440

Okay. Sent it off. Got back an answer. Failed again. Failed again. So for a second time,

0:08:55.440,0:09:01.120

and this was around 2015. Yeah. This was a few years later. Yeah. And then I was just like,

0:09:01.920,0:09:08.000

And you decided, so you didn't appeal again. No. So you just accepted the rejection. Yeah.

0:09:08.800,0:09:15.120

What spurred you to apply and try again? Was it just, you figured why not after a few years or?

0:09:15.600,0:09:24.720

Did somebody encourage you? I, I was just like, my friends were telling me you need to get PIP.

0:09:24.720,0:09:33.680

Everybody was saying to me that I, I need your juice. You can get PIP. Yeah. So your friends

0:09:33.680,0:09:44.160

were really encouraging you. Yeah. Okay. Great. And then what happened after that rejection,

0:09:44.160,0:09:52.800

how many more years went past until you tried again? I, I, um, I, last time I didn't appeal

0:09:52.800,0:10:03.040

again in 2022. So you, in 2022, did you appeal or did you try again? No, I, I sent off for the form

0:10:03.040,0:10:14.800

again. Got it filled out. Who filled it out this time? Um, uh, uh, citizen, citizens advice bureau.

0:10:14.800,0:10:21.600

Okay. So the CAB filled it out. And, and Sally. And Sally. Yeah. Sally at aphasia reconnect. So

0:10:21.600,0:10:28.000

you've got them to help you on this third attempt. Yeah. Do the forms for you. Yeah. And then

0:10:28.640,0:10:32.080

what happened then? So you sent it off and you're expecting rejection.

0:10:32.080,0:10:43.760

And I got rejected. Again. Yeah. For the third time. For the third time. And then I was speaking

0:10:43.760,0:10:54.720

to my advocate at the citizen advice. Yep. And he was asking me, do I have adaptations in my house?

0:10:55.280,0:11:04.800

Mm hmm. I said, yes, he could, but they didn't take that on into account.

0:11:06.240,0:11:16.800

They didn't take the adaptations into account. And then, um, when he said, now we need to appeal

0:11:16.800,0:11:28.880

this. He said, all right, I appeal it and took to 2024. So you then appealed the rejection.
From

0:11:28.880,0:11:35.040

22. From 22. Waited two years for a court date. Yeah. And then what happened at your appeal?

0:11:35.040,0:11:49.520

Well, it wasn't, it wasn't nothing how, what you were expecting. You don't feel pressured or

0:11:49.520,0:11:59.440

anything. And you're talking to people that you feel comfortable with. There was a doctor.

0:12:00.160,0:12:09.120

Mm hmm. There was a disabled person and plus the magistrate. Okay. And you say it was quite a

0:12:09.120,0:12:17.280

comfortable experience. Yes. Yeah. And before it, were you quite nervous? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I was

0:12:18.640,0:12:23.120

thinking that it's going to be in a proper courthouse and everything like that.

0:12:24.080,0:12:34.960

Where was it actually? Um, in a, in a, uh, was it like a school? No, um, like an office block.

0:12:34.960,0:12:40.160

Just in an office block. Yeah. And then the office block, you had all, you got onto the floor

0:12:40.160,0:12:45.360

and then they had guards there and they said, oh yeah, you come to see and said,

0:12:45.360,0:12:56.400

they've got, they've got appeal. Yeah. And that was it. It was approved quicker than I thought.

0:12:56.400,0:13:07.600

How long was it? Um, I went in, said what I had to say, said, oh, you need to, we're going to have

0:13:07.600,0:13:17.360

a discussion about this and then call you back in. As soon as I left the room, went and sat down

0:13:18.720,0:13:26.320

and then called me back in. Yep. Yeah. And approved you. Yeah. Oh, great. So it was relief.

0:13:26.320,0:13:32.560

Yeah. Oh, a lot of relief. And then I was told that, um,

0:13:33.520,0:13:40.560

um, some people say, no, I, I should get that the time winner. I applied

0:13:41.360,0:13:46.640

from the last time I applied. And then some people say, no, you won't. You've only got

0:13:46.640,0:13:56.080

enough two weeks worth of up. I was surprised. So they backdated your payments is what you're

0:13:56.080,0:14:05.280

saying until 2022. Yeah. Okay. So you've got a good resolution. Yeah. Did the DWP come to this?

0:14:05.280,0:14:13.440

No, no, they didn't show up. They, they never, nobody showed up from the DWP.

0:14:15.680,0:14:22.560

Yeah. Well, that's cool. And so, okay. So now we're going to move on to some

0:14:23.440,0:14:29.280

slightly different questions where we're going to ask you to reflect on your experience. Um,

0:14:29.280,0:14:35.920

because I think what your story shows, it shows that you really persevered and you kept trying

0:14:36.560,0:14:44.000

and you eventually got advised to appeal. And you also used the CAB and Sally who are quite

0:14:44.000,0:14:51.440

experienced with helping people through PEP. And being told, nobody tells you

0:14:52.560,0:15:02.000

how the form works. It's on how you feel on your worst day. So on your worst day is key. Yeah. I

0:15:02.000,0:15:07.600

was just feeling, uh, how do I feel going through, how do I feel walking up to this bus stop? I just

0:15:07.600,0:15:15.200

thought it was normal. But on my worst day, I think it will be hard. I will have to stop,

0:15:16.560,0:15:26.000

catch my breath. I would be brave enough to leave it, walk up the road, put it down,

0:15:26.000,0:15:34.320

then go back for my rest of my shopping. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So you, you sold yourself short in

0:15:34.320,0:15:40.880

your applications originally. Yeah. Yeah. I think a lot of people do that. So I think that's a very

0:15:40.880,0:15:50.560

good lesson. Um, so on the reflective questions, um, what would you, what is the best advice you

0:15:50.560,0:15:55.840

could give to someone who's just had a stroke and doesn't know about disability benefits?

0:15:56.320,0:16:05.680

It's a hard question. Yeah. Um, I wish I knew when I first had my stroke,

0:16:07.440,0:16:15.360

find out, find out what, what, what you're, what's available to you. I either get

0:16:16.080,0:16:22.480

asked a family or friend to get to find out what benefits are available.

0:16:23.040,0:16:29.280

Okay. And what's your biggest piece and best piece of advice for applying for PIP?

0:16:30.640,0:16:38.320

Is it to appeal or is it to appeal? Appeal, appeal, appeal, appeal. Okay. Yeah. Um,

0:16:39.120,0:16:44.480

and what was the biggest barrier to PIP? Was it the, your issues with being confident,

0:16:44.480,0:16:49.280

your writing skills, the 40 page form or the strict deadlines?

0:16:49.280,0:17:02.000

Yeah. Cause you've got a deadline to return the, the form on all. So yeah, that was the pressure.

0:17:02.000,0:17:08.400

It's the pressure. Yeah. And also the, uh, confidence. So you were too scared to appeal.

0:17:09.040,0:17:16.000

Yeah. I thought, yeah, they turned me down. Okay. Thinking that they know better.

0:17:16.640,0:17:22.560

Okay. So then I've got some slightly different questions here that, um, have been given to me.

0:17:23.280,0:17:27.440

What would you tell people who are afraid to acknowledge that, you know,

0:17:27.440,0:17:37.680

they might have a disability and need PIP? Yeah. You, you, you, everybody goes through that,

0:17:38.320,0:17:46.640

having a label put on them as a disabled person from being a non-disabled person to a disabled

0:17:46.640,0:17:58.240

person. You're, you're, you've got your guard up. Yeah. You've got your guard up. First,

0:17:58.240,0:18:06.800

when somebody called me disabled, I said, wait, hold on. I'm not disabled, but,

0:18:08.560,0:18:16.240

but I will say accepted. Acceptance. Yeah. Okay. No matter what accepted.

0:18:18.160,0:18:23.200

Um, and what would you say now that as someone with PIP, how, how has it,

0:18:23.200,0:18:26.320

how has it changed your life?

0:18:29.200,0:18:41.200

I'm, I'm not, not, um, thinking of what, oh, should I eat or should I put heating on?

0:18:42.800,0:18:52.080

Should I, um, um, go without food today or things like that.

0:18:52.800,0:19:02.480

So it's a massive relief. Oh, big, big relief. Big, big relief. Okay. Um,

0:19:02.480,0:19:09.920

here's another hard question with you. There's a lot of stigma about having benefits or depending

0:19:09.920,0:19:15.520

on the government. What would you say to people who have stigmas towards that?

0:19:15.920,0:19:22.880

Try living with the, the disability. Um, before I worked seven days a week, not on benefits,

0:19:24.880,0:19:30.880

because I can't do that no more. Yeah. Can't do that no more.

0:19:31.520,0:19:38.880

No, I agree. You did it. You did it.

0:19:38.880,0:19:47.760

I can't do that no more. Yeah. Can't do that no more. No, I agree. You did your time. Yeah.

0:19:49.360,0:19:55.360

No, I think that's good. Um, yeah. What would you say to someone who's

0:19:55.360,0:19:58.000

starting their PIP today and feeling very nervous?

0:19:58.000,0:20:11.360

Don't, don't, don't, don't, don't feel nervous. Just wait on the result. That's all you can do.

0:20:12.000,0:20:18.080

Yeah. Just, just go through the process. Yeah. And if they come back as a no appeal,

0:20:18.560,0:20:36.080

Mm hmm. If you're finding it harder to appeal by yourself, go to the CAB. They, someone who has

0:20:37.680,0:20:44.560

been through it before with and helped a lot of people. Yeah.

0:20:45.520,0:20:52.160

And yeah, I guess one final thing that could be interesting is if you had to say anything to the

0:20:52.160,0:20:58.160

DWP and the PIP process, you know, if you could say something to them or change something, what

0:20:58.160,0:21:11.840

would you do? Do you think it's too dependent on writing and you think that's not very accessible

0:21:11.840,0:21:23.840

for aphasia? Everything. Cause one note that I had to do a telephone, telephone conversation

0:21:23.840,0:21:33.520

with one of the doctors. He couldn't understand me. So was this for your PIP or for something

0:21:33.520,0:21:40.960

entirely different? Yeah. One of the, one of the assessments. Yeah. Ah, God, I forgot to talk about

0:21:40.960,0:21:53.360

that. So you did your assessment over the phone. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. And he got me to get someone,

0:21:55.280,0:22:02.080

a family friend to speak on my behalf. Okay. And he assessed you over the phone. How was your

0:22:02.160,0:22:10.560

assessment? Crap. Cause he, we arranged everything and he didn't call back.

0:22:11.920,0:22:19.440

Ah, was this for your third time trying it PIP? Yeah. Okay. So this was more recently. Yeah. So

0:22:19.440,0:22:23.520

you, yeah, I had to do your assessment over the phone. And then what happened?

0:22:24.480,0:22:30.560

Uh, yeah, I waited and I thought, hold on, that's on a Sunday.

0:22:32.800,0:22:39.840

Guy's working on Sunday. Yeah. Okay. So I arranged to go around my sisters, waited,

0:22:40.800,0:22:49.440

waited. No answer. Didn't, didn't ring. And then, so how did you get your assessment done in the end?

0:22:49.440,0:23:01.120

I didn't. They just approved you. No, I, when, when I got my, when I did my appeal

0:23:02.240,0:23:10.320

that asked me certain questions, how like, um, do I need to take a,

0:23:12.000,0:23:19.280

if I had to walk from one bus stop to the other, how many stops would I make? Ah, okay.

0:23:19.280,0:23:24.320

So you, they did your, your assessment sort of at your appeal after you've been rejected.

0:23:24.320,0:23:30.720

So you got rejected after your appeal, sorry, after your assessment. Yeah. Ah, understood.

0:23:31.360,0:23:36.080

So yeah. So, so your form got accepted then the third time and then you did your assessment and

0:23:36.080,0:23:45.680

then got rejected. Then I appealed it. Yeah. And then I got approved. Okay. Nice.

0:23:46.240,0:23:53.840

So you would advise to other applicants out there to persevere like you did and keep going.

0:23:54.800,0:24:03.600

Oh yeah. Appeal, appeal, appeal. I, I remember hearing that so many times, but I was afraid to

0:24:03.600,0:24:11.920

appeal, but no appeal. Okay, good. Yeah. And, and don't go for a phone assessment. It sounds like,

0:24:12.880,0:24:20.320

Oh, if you, if you have aphasia and then trying to go through a phone

0:24:22.880,0:24:34.880

is no good. No good. No, cause they don't, don't understand you. Yeah. And they're in a rush. So

0:24:34.880,0:24:46.800

how, how long it takes you to, to, to answer a phone, a question, one of their questions,

0:24:46.800,0:24:55.200

they're saying, ah, it's taking too long. Okay. So yeah, make sure that you go for in-person if

0:24:55.200,0:25:00.320

you struggle with over the phone. Yeah. Yeah. That's another really good tip, I think. Yeah.

0:25:00.960,0:25:11.360

And bring a family member with you. Yeah. Oh yeah. Wherever you can. Yeah. I, I, I, I've, I've,

0:25:11.360,0:25:21.520

I've tried to go through by myself and it wasn't good. Yeah. Oh, it got turned down. Yeah.

0:25:22.240,0:25:29.440

Cause they watch you. I've been told they watched you from you entered the building. Yeah. They've

0:25:29.440,0:25:36.480

got cameras in the, in the reception area watching you. Yeah. So it's to take a family member with

0:25:36.480,0:25:45.600

you to, to, to look after you in those circumstances. Yeah. They can answer the questions.

0:25:48.320,0:25:55.680

You can't get out. Yeah. Cool. Well, I think you've given me more than enough info and I think

0:25:55.680,0:26:01.920

you've helped a lot in clearing up the pit process, what it was like for you, your tips,

0:26:02.880,0:26:08.560

your advice. Is there anything else that you reckon you need to add or are you all good?

0:26:09.840,0:26:19.280

Yeah. I'd say from they turn you down, just appeal. Don't worry how long it takes. Just appeal.

0:26:19.280,0:26:24.880

Okay. Just appeal. Yeah. Awesome. Great.