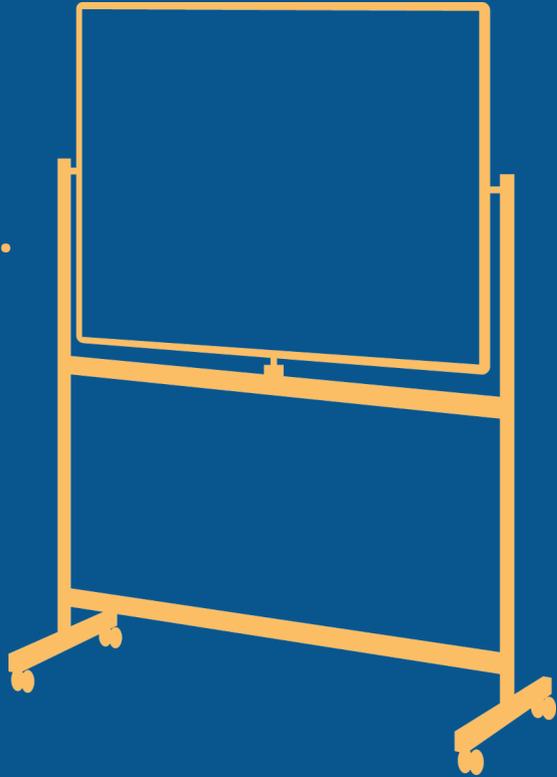


Caught in the benefits trap?

I am suffering from a rare long-term disease resulting in muscle weakness. I'm often in pain and my mobility is severely affected.



**citizens
advice**

Mole Valley

Client's story

My long-term auto-immune disease results in muscle weakness. I'm often in pain and my mobility is affected. My husband works full time and is paid the minimum wage. When he is not working he is caring for me as we have no family nearby to help out.

Following a reassessment of my disability, my benefits were downgraded from the highest rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to the standard rate of the new Personal Independence Payments (PIP). I was also found to be no longer eligible for any help with my mobility. This resulted in a reduction in income intended to help me participate in everyday life and get around.

We went to our local Citizens Advice as this downgrading was making us anxious and becoming stressful. We were worried about the impact my health condition was having on my husband's ability to work full time and provide care.

How we were able to help the client

Our benefits adviser was able to assist the couple to appeal the decision made by the Department of Work and Pensions. This involved explaining the process to the client; helping her complete the Notice of Appeal and 'How your disability affects you' form; and gathering the relevant supporting evidence from her clinical specialists.

The appeal was successful and the client was awarded the Enhanced Rate Care element Personal Independence Payments with Standard rate Mobility.

As a result the couple now have additional funds to meet their increased costs which enable this client to be mobile and participate more fully in everyday life.

