

Applying for Pip

Making a strong claim

Before you start a PIP claim, it's really important to understand how it works. It is not like DLA. PIP uses an entirely new set of criteria, a points-based system to decide whether someone qualifies for the benefit, and if they do at what rate they will be paid. To make a successful claim for PIP, a person needs to score 8 points to qualify for the standard rate of the daily living or mobility component; 12 points or more qualifies them for the enhanced rates.

The PIP assessment focuses on a person's ability to carry out 12 everyday activities: cooking, eating, managing therapies, washing and grooming, toilet needs, dressing, communicating, mixing with other people, handling money, planning and following a journey and moving around.

Some activities attract more points: for example, eating, communicating and planning a journey carry more weight than activities like making financial decisions and bathing.

Understanding descriptors and points

You score points when you are not able to complete an activity 'reliably'; and 'reliably' means safely, to an acceptable standard, repeatedly and in a reasonable time.

Each of the 12 activities has a set of 'descriptors' that carry different scores. For example, in the dressing activity, you will score 0 points if you can dress and undress unaided, 2 points if you need prompting, 4 points if you need assistance to dress your upper body and 8 points if you cannot dress or undress at all. The higher the level of difficulty you describe, the higher the score. You can only be awarded points for one descriptor in each activity, so it's worth giving as clear a picture as you can.

To get any points for an activity, you need to satisfy at least one of the descriptors for at least 50 percent of days. If a claimant has good and bad days, it's really helpful to explain this. Describing what they can do two days out of seven versus what they can manage on the other five, helps the assessor work out which descriptor (and so how many points) best reflects a claimant's abilities. Points will be awarded for the descriptor that best fits 50 percent of the time.

Prepare well

- Make the PIP form a top priority.
- Gather evidence that supports what you are going to say on the form and keep them safe.
- Keep a diary for a week or two before you claim. You'll probably be surprised how much extra support you still need. It's always useful to record recent examples.
- Don't tackle it alone. Call in a favour, ask a friend to help or seek advice from professionals.

- Keep copies of all reports and assessments in a safe place.
- Act quickly and stick to DWP deadlines, otherwise you risk losing your PIP and having a gap in payments until a decision about PIP is made.

How to complete the form

- Tell it how it is. Go into detail and be forensic: remember the more help you need, the more points you will score. But, even if you just need a bit of help, it's worth writing this down.
- Give examples to show what goes wrong when you don't get promoted or assisted. Remember you score points when you can't complete an activity reliably, i.e. safely, to an acceptable standard, repeatedly and in a reasonable time. If you've kept a diary, send a copy of it in.
- Where there is plenty to say, fill up the text boxes. If you run out of space, add extra pages. The clearer picture you are able to give on paper about your needs, the more likely it is the assessor will be able to reach a decision without a face to face interview. If there's a lot to say, it's worth typing it out as a Word document and attaching this to the PIP claim form.
- Write about waiting lists or cuts or reorganisations to services you need and cannot access. For example, say if you are paying for therapeutic interventions because these aren't available locally.
- Send supplementary evidence that supports what you say: up to date assessments, care plans, medical reports or psychiatric reviews etc. The more evidence you send, the less likely it is you will be asked to a face to face assessment.
- Explain if evidence seems out of date, this is because everything on it is still relevant. Add annual review notes to support this.

Afterwards

- Make photocopies of everything you send: as far as we are aware you aren't sent back any paperwork before a face to face interview and you'll want to refer to this. Never send original documents.
- Think about returning your claim by Special Delivery. It protects you from the claim getting lost in the post, or the DWP saying they haven't received it. You get a receipt for Special Delivery items and the DWP has to sign to say they've received it.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – table of activities, descriptors and points

Daily Living Activities


Activity	Descriptors	Points
1. Preparing food	a. Can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
	c. Cannot cook a simple meal using a conventional cooker but is able to do so using a microwave.	2
	d. Needs prompting to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
	e. Needs supervision or assistance to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	4
	f. Cannot prepare and cook food.	8

Space for notes



Activity	Descriptors	Points
2. Taking nutrition	a. Can take nutrition unaided.	0
	b. Needs – (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or (ii) supervision to be able to take nutrition; or (iii) assistance to be able to cut up food.	2
	c. Needs a therapeutic source to be able to take nutrition.	2
	d. Needs prompting to be able to take nutrition.	4
	e. Needs assistance to be able to manage a therapeutic source to take nutrition.	6
	f. Cannot convey food and drink to their mouth and needs another person to do so.	10

Space for notes

Activity	Descriptors	Points
3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition 	a. Either – (i) does not receive medication or therapy or need to monitor a health condition; or (ii) can manage medication or therapy or monitor a health condition unaided.	0
	b. Needs either – (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage medication; or (ii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication or monitor a health condition.	1
	c. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes no more than 3.5 hours a week.	2
	d. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 3.5 but no more than 7 hours a week.	4
	e. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 7 but no more than 14 hours a week.	6
	f. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 14 hours a week.	8

Space for notes

Activity	Descriptors	Points
4. Washing and bathing	a. Can wash and bathe unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to wash or bathe.	2
	c. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe.	2
	d. Needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist.	2
	e. Needs assistance to be able to get in or out of a bath or shower.	3
	f. Needs assistance to be able to wash their body between the shoulders and waist.	4
	g. Cannot wash and bathe at all and needs another person to wash their entire body.	8

Space for notes



Activity	Descriptors	Points
5. Managing toilet needs or incontinence	a. Can manage toilet needs or incontinence unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage toilet needs or incontinence.	2
	c. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs.	2
	d. Needs assistance to be able to manage toilet needs.	4
	e. Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of either bladder or bowel.	6
	f. Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of both bladder and bowel.	8

Space for notes

Activity	Descriptors	Points
6. Dressing and undressing	a. Can dress and undress unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to dress or undress.	2
	c. Needs either - (i) prompting to be able to dress, undress or determine appropriate circumstances for remaining clothed; or (ii) prompting or assistance to be able to select appropriate clothing.	2
	d. Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their lower body.	2
	e. Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their upper body.	4
	f. Cannot dress or undress at all.	8

Space for notes



Activity	Descriptors	Points
7. Communicating verbally	a. Can express and understand verbal information unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to speak or hear.	2
	c. Needs communication support to be able to express or understand complex verbal information.	4
	d. Needs communication support to be able to express or understand basic verbal information.	8
	e. Cannot express or understand verbal information at all even with communication support.	12

Space for notes

Activity	Descriptors	Points
8. Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words	a. Can read and understand basic and complex written information either unaided or using spectacles or contact lenses.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance, other than spectacles or contact lenses, to be able to read or understand either basic or complex written information.	2
	c. Needs prompting to be able to read or understand complex written information.	2
	d. Needs prompting to be able to read or understand basic written information.	4
	e. Cannot read or understand signs, symbols or words at all.	8

Space for notes



Activity	Descriptors	Points
9. Engaging with other people face to face	a. Can engage with other people unaided.	0
	b. Needs prompting to be able to engage with other people.	2
	c. Needs social support to be able to engage with other people.	4
	d. Cannot engage with other people due to such engagement causing either – (i) overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant; or (ii) the claimant to exhibit behaviour which would result in a substantial risk of harm to the claimant or another person.	8

Space for notes

Activity	Descriptors	Points
10. Making budgeting decisions	a. Can manage complex budgeting decisions unaided.	0
	b. Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make complex budgeting decisions.	2
	c. Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make simple budgeting decisions.	4
	d. Cannot make any budgeting decisions at all.	6


Space for notes



Mobility Activities

Activity	Descriptors	Points
1. Planning and following journeys	a. Can plan and follow the route of a journey unaided.	0
	b. Needs prompting to be able to undertake any journey to avoid overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant.	4
	c. Cannot plan the route of a journey.	8
	d. Cannot follow the route of an unfamiliar journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid.	10
	e. Cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant.	10
	f. Cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, an assistance dog or an orientation aid.	12

Space for notes

Activity	Descriptors	Points
2. Moving around 	a. Can stand and then move more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided.	0
	b. Can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided	4
	c. Can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	8
	d. Can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	10
	e. Can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres, either aided or unaided.	12
	f. Cannot, either aided or unaided, – (i) stand; or (ii) move more than 1 metre.	12

Space for notes

Day of the week:			
Daily living activity	Times of day or How long	Any aid or appliance	Details: how easy was the activity; how long did it take; did you have any problems or pain; how did you end up feeling?
Preparing food			
Eating and drinking	Breakfast Lunch Dinner/tea		
Managing treatments			
Washing and bathing			
Managing toilet needs			
Dressing and undressing			
Communicating			
Reading			
Mixing with other people			
Making decisions about money.			

Day of the week:			
Mobility Activity	Times of day or how long it took	Aids or appliances used	Details: how easy was the activity; how long did it take; did you have any problems or pain; how did you end up feeling?
<p>Going out Did you need prompting?</p> <p>Did you need someone to go with you or take you?</p> <p>Were you unable to go out anywhere at all?</p>			
<p>Moving around How far did you walk in one attempt?</p> <p>How many times or how often did you need to stop and rest?</p> <p>Did you need to use a walking stick, frame or wheelchair pushed by someone else?</p>			
Anything else: for example, was this one of your better days, an average day or a worse than usual day?			