



The Help and Advice You Need!

WELFARE BENEFITS FACTSHEET

V1, 20/4/2020

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT—HOW TO APPLY

Normally our advice to anyone applying for PIP, whether it is for the first time, a transition from DLA or a PIP review, would be to seek expert advice and help completing your form, but at the moment Advice Agencies can only offer telephone or email advice, so people are having to fill in the forms themselves. Below are some tips on how to do this.

- Before you start to complete the form, gather together any medical evidence you have, consultant's reports, test results, discharge notes. Do not include standard hospital appointment letters, unless it is one to show that you have been referred for specialised medical treatment. Also have an up-to-date prescription list.
- Complete the form in black in and in block capital letters. When giving details of your illnesses/disabilities/conditions, write these down with the dates they started, and what medication you are taking for what illness. This is as well as the medical notes and prescription list, as these could get detached from your PIP form.
- Give details of all the people involved in your care—your GP, consultant, CPN, etc, with contact details, in case the DWP wish to contact them.

Unlike DLA, PIP is based, not on what condition you have, but on how this affects your ability to carry out very specific daily tasks. The form is generic, so for some people some of the questions may seem strange, but the information gathered in this form covers people with mental health issues, learning difficulties, sensory impairments, mobility problems, etc.

The Task Headings are:

- Preparing Food, Eating and Drinking, Taking Medication
Washing and Bathing, Managing Toilet Needs, Dressing and Undressing
Communicating, Reading, Engaging with Others
Managing Money
Planning/following a Journey, Moving Around

To be awarded the Standard Rate you need to score between 8-11 points in total for each of the two sections, and for the Enhanced Rate you need to score at least 12 points.

The first page of each task will ask you a series of questions, only tick the YES or NO box. To be awarded PIP you have to have difficulty in carrying out a task for more than 50% of the time. If you tick the "SOMETIMES" box, this is implying that sometimes you do not have difficulties.

The facing page is where you can give more detail as to how your illness affects your ability carry out this specific task. You need to give details of your problems, and mention any aids or adaptations you have been given to help with the task.

Examples of comments you could write are:

PREPARING FOOD

Because of the arthritis in my hands, I have to use lightweight pots and pans, and an electric tin opener. Due to my epilepsy, I am not safe to be in the kitchen by myself as I could suffer a seizure. I am a danger to myself and others confronted with an open flame or a saucepan of hot water. Therefore, I rely on my family to cook for me.

ENGAGING WITH OTHERS FACE TO FACE

I suffer from paranoia, and anxiety and depression. I only go out to attend medical appointments. I cannot cope with holding a conversation with anyone who is not known to me. My behaviour can become aggressive if I find myself in a crowd, so I am unable to go shopping or to social events.

MOVING AROUND

I suffer from peripheral neuropathy and am unable to weight bear. I cannot stand up, and rely on a wheelchair to move anywhere. In the house I have to drag myself around on a zimmer frame, but outside, I need someone to push the wheelchair for me. I cannot walk at all, aided or unaided.

Give as much detail as you can for each section. There is space for additional information, or for something like a statement from your social worker, carer, etc.

In the section where you are asked if you have any additional requirements for your Face to Face assessment, this is where you should mention if you need an interpreter, that you use an assistance dog, you require wheelchair access.

Everyone who is completing a PIP form should also add "I cannot travel far by public transport". The reason for this is that the DWP has stated that a person can be sent for a Face to Face assessment at a location within a 60 mile radius of their home address. By putting the above request on your form, then if your assessment venue is too far for you to reasonably get to, then you can contact AIS and ask for your appointment to be moved.

If you are concerned that you will be unable to gather together all this information and complete the PIP form in the time allowed, you can contact the DWP and ask for an extension. The extension is normally for two weeks, but in the current circumstances, they may be prepared to allow you longer. Make sure that you write the new date for the return on the form, on the front of the form itself, together with the date that you made the request to the DWP.

At the moment, no Face to Face assessments are taking place. Some people may have a decision made without the need of such an assessment. These are usually people who have a long-term or degenerative condition, eg profound deafness, cerebral palsy. Other people may find that they have to wait for some months until things get back to normal before the Face to Face assessments are reinstated. However, if you are awarded PIP it will be backdated to the time that the application form was submitted.

If at all possible, keep a photocopy of your PIP form and supporting evidence. It may be wise, in the current climate to send your form "Recorded Delivery", etc so that its receipt is signed for.

If you have to have a Face to Face assessment, it is worth waiting a couple of weeks after the assessment has taken place, and then request a copy of the Assessor's Report from the DWP. You can then look to see if you agree with what the Healthcare Professional has written. If you do not agree with the points awarded, then you can submit a Mandatory Reconsideration. DO NOT DO THIS OVER THE TELEPHONE, but use our template letter. Also, if you have any additional or new medical evidence, then submit this with the Mandatory Reconsideration.

**For more advice, contact us on 0151 662 0059
(Tuesday and Wednesday—11 am—3 pm, and Thursday, 11 am—1 pm)
or via email on enquiries@liverpoolcommunityadvice.org.uk**