

TIPS FOR CLAIMING PIP

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers



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 young 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 young 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.

Disability Rights UK has a really useful guide to help you understand how points are awarded. You can download this at www.disabilityrightsuk.org/personal-independence-payment-pip and we would advise you do this.

Prepare well

Make the PIP form a top priority. Don't assume that because you or your child has always been awarded DLA, you will get PIP. The bar is set higher. You have a lot to lose if the claim is refused. Put as much time and effort into this as you did with a DLA claim.

Gather evidence that supports what you are going to say on the form and keep them safe. If you've mislaid copies of, for example, your EHC plan, ask the local authority for another. If your child is 16 or over, they may have to ask for this information themselves.

Keep a diary for a week or two before you claim. You'll probably be surprised how much extra support you or your child still needs. It's always useful to record recent examples.





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Don't tackle it alone. Call in a favour, ask a friend to help or seek advice from professionals (see Ask about below for organisations that may help).

Get young people involved in making the claim. They know how their illness or disability affects them. Plus, filling in a PIP claim is a good opportunity for a young person to practise what they might say at a face to face interview.

Keep copies of all reports and assessments in a safe place. The next time this PIP is reviewed, a young person may have left school or college and evidence of needs and abilities may be harder to come by.

Act quickly and stick to DWP deadlines, otherwise you risk losing your DLA 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 your son or daughter doesn't get the prompting or assistance they need. 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 or your child's 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 and, if you have one, a Statement of SEN or an EHC Plan. 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: for example, if a Statement of SEN hasn't been amended for years, that 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.

Many young people will be asked to attend a face to face assessment. Read our companion fact sheet on PIP Face to Face Assessments. Details of where to download a copy are below.





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Ask about

- **Support from Amaze.** Amaze helpline workers can give you advice on making PIP claims. We may also be able to offer you a trained volunteer or member of staff to help you fill in your PIP form. Call Amaze on 01273 772289 or email helpline@amazebrighton.org.uk
- **Support from other disability organisations: Possability People** (formerly The Fed Centre for Independent Living) can give disabled adults and parent carers support with making claims for disability benefits. Call 01273 296747. Assert and Aspire may be able to support young people with high functioning autism and Asperger's Syndrome with making a claim. Contact Assert via www.assertbh.org.uk and Aspire via www.bh-impetus.org/projects/aspire
- **General benefits and financial advice: Citizen's Advice Bureau** can give help with benefits claims. Call 01273 223951 or visit www.brightonhovecab.org.uk. **Money Advice Plus** can offer advice and support with debt and benefits. Call 0800 988 7037 or visit www.moneyadviceplus.org.uk
- **PIP enquiry line: 0345 850 3322** for general help and advice on PIP
- **Help with transport:** You may be able to get a Blue Badge or a disabled parking bay outside your house. Contact **Parking Services** on 01273 296270. Or you may use the mobility component of your PIP or DLA award to lease a car or scooter via the **Motability** scheme. Call 0300 456 4566 or visit www.motability.co.uk

Further reading and useful links

- **What is PIP and PIP Face to Face Assessments**– Download these Amaze/Reaching Families fact sheets at www.amazebrighton.org.uk/resources/publications/fact-sheets
- **Through the Next Maze** – Amaze's handbook for parent carers of young people with SEN and disabilities (14+) has extensive information on PIP and other benefits. Request a copy via our helpline on 01273 772289.
- **Personal Independence Payment - A guide to making a claim.** Helpful guide from Disability Rights UK which includes the scoring system for the 12 activities. www.disabilityrightsuk.org
- **www.gov.uk/PIP/overview** - Personal Independence Payment info on government's website

