

Amaze FACT SHEET updated Nov 2019

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, you need 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 claimant'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 you have good and bad days, it's really helpful to explain this. Describing what you can do two days out of seven versus what you 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 have 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, care or health plans, risk assessments, medical, mental health or therapy assessments, ask the local authority or health practitioner for another.

Keep a diary for a week or two before you claim. You'll probably be surprised how much extra support you need. 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 involved in making the claim. Even if you cannot fill in the claim pack yourself, you know best how your illness or disability affects you. Plus, talking about what to write on a PIP claim is a good opportunity to practise what you might say at a face-to-face interview.

Keep copies of all reports and assessments in a safe place. The next time your PIP is reviewed, evidence of your needs and abilities may be harder to come by. You may need to rely on these reports and assessments again.

Don't ignore letters about PIP, otherwise you risk losing your DLA and having a gap in payments until a decision about PIP is made.

How to complete the form

Timescales are short but you can ask for extra time if you need it. Don't be rushed. Ring DWP and let them know if you are waiting for help.

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 the prompting or help you 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 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. Say if you are on a waiting list, or paying for therapy yourself because this isn'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 had one in the past, 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 Care Plan hasn't been amended for years, that this is because everything on it is still relevant. Add 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 claimants are 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

- **SENDIASS** - If you are under 25, Amaze provides the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service** for East Sussex. We provide help around health, education, benefits and social care issues for families with children and young people with SEN and disabilities. Our helpline workers can give you advice around making PIP claims, and let you know where you can go to get further help. Please note, we cannot offer one-to-one help with filling out PIP forms. Call Amaze on **01273 772289** or email sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk
- **Welfare Benefits Project** - If you live in Eastbourne, Hailsham, Seaford, Hastings and Rother you can get advice and help from the Welfare Benefits Project on **0333 344 0681**
- **Newhaven Advice Hub and Information Centre** - If you live in the Lewes district you can contact the Newhaven Advice Hub and Information Centre for benefits advice on **01273 517375**
- **Possability People** - Possability People (formerly The Fed Centre for Independent Living) can give disabled adults and parent carers advice and information around making claims for disability benefits. Call **01424 234460**
- **General benefits and financial advice** - Citizen's Advice Bureau can give help with benefits claims. Call **03444 111 444** or visit www.citizensadviceeastsussex.org.uk/. Money Advice Plus can offer advice and support with debt and benefits. Call **01323 635 999** or visit www.moneyadviceplus.org.uk
- **PIP enquiry line** - **0800 1221 4433** for general help and advice on PIP
- **Getting support from your social worker, support worker or shared lives carer** - They may be able to help you complete the form
- **Help with transport** - You may be able to get a Blue Badge or a disabled parking bay outside your house. Contact the **Blue Badge helpline** on **01323 464244**, or to enquire about disabled parking bays call the **Highways team** on **0345 60 80 193**. 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 companion Amaze fact sheets at <https://amazesussex.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets>
- **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

