

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.

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/undressing, communicating, reading, 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.

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.

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 per cent 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 per cent 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.





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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.

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 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 up 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, 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 an EHC Plan 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. Most importantly, never send your original documents, such as EHC Plans or doctor's reports.





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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.

Ask about

- **Blue Badge** – if you get eight points or more under the 'moving around' section of the mobility component of PIP, 10 points under planning and following a journey because you are unable to undertake any journey due to overwhelming psychological distress, or if you are severely sight-impaired you will be entitled to a 'Blue Badge', which allows the holder to park in disabled bays. To find out more email: blue.badges@westsussex.gov.uk or go to: www.westsussex.gov.uk, or contact: **01243 777653**, . You can also apply for an on-street disabled parking bay outside your home through the above website.
- **Citizen's Advice Bureau** – can help with benefits claims, including DLA. There are offices across the county. Tel: **0344 477 1171** or go to: www.advicewestsussex.org.uk.
- **Motability** – if you receive the enhanced rate of mobility for PIP, you may be able to use that part of the award to lease a car or scooter via the Motability scheme. Call: **0300 456 4566** or visit: www.motability.co.uk.
- **Social care** – your child's social worker may be able to help you to fill out the PIP form. For under 18s call the MASH, tel: **01403 229 900**, email: MASH@westsussex.gov.uk. for over 18s, contact the Adults' CarePoint call: **01243 642121**, or email: socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk. If you don't have a social worker, your health visitor (via your GP surgery) may also be able to help you.
- **West Sussex County Council's Benefit Advisor** – information and support for families of disabled children applying for benefits, including PIP. Tel: **0330 222 2569 / 07850 240874** or email: robert.hayes@westsussex.gov.uk.

Further information and useful links

- **Making Sense of Adult Life** – Reaching Families' handbook for parent carers of young people with SEND aged 14+ will guide you through involving your son or daughter in decisions, as well as providing essential information on PIP, further and higher education, social lives, money matters, social care, health, employment and travel. Go to: www.reachingfamilies.org.uk.
- **Fact Sheets** – further PIP fact sheets: *What is PIP*; *PIP Face-to-Face Assessments*; and *Reconsiderations and Appeals* can be downloaded from our website: www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/factsheets.html.
- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** – for an overview go to: www.gov.uk/PIP/overview or to make a new claim call: **0800 917 2222**. For general help and advice call the PIP enquiry line on: **0800 121 4433**.
- **Disability Rights UK** – has a helpful guide to making a PIP claim: *Personal Independence Payment - a guide to making a claim*, which includes the scoring system for the 12 activities. For more go to: www.disabilityrightsuk.org.
- **West Sussex Local Offer** – go to <https://westsussex.local-offer.org>.

