

Filling in a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) form when you have a neurological condition

Advice before you make your claim

We recommend looking at a PIP score sheet before you make your claim. It will help you to see the questions and understand how many points each answer is worth.

Remember to be honest about your current situation. The form is made to help you better explain how your condition affects you. Focus on how things really are for you, even if it's hard to talk about. This will help to get you the right support.

How PIP scoring works

For PIP, it's important to show how your condition affects you more than half the time. It doesn't mean every single day, but it must be regularly enough to have a significant impact. Give a full picture of what you're doing to manage your condition.

You can get PIP even if you only score points in one area. For example, you could get 8 points in one activity and 0 in all the others, and still qualify.

- 8 points = Standard PIP
- 12 points = Enhanced PIP

How to complete a PIP form

Health conditions

Start by listing all your health conditions. Include the dates you were diagnosed and when your symptoms began. (Even if you didn't get diagnosed straight away, mention when you first started having issues.) This helps show how long you've been dealing with everything.

Medications

List all the medications you're taking. If you find it easier, you can attach a copy of your prescription instead. Just pop a note in the box saying, "see prescription list attached."

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Treatment

If you are taking any medications, or if you know you will, include those. Include things like physiotherapy, occupational therapy, counselling or even seeing a psychologist.

Health professionals

In the next section you'll need to list all the health professionals involved in your care. It can include:

- Your GP
- A physiotherapist you see regularly
- A neurologist, if you have one
- Any nurses you see often
- A counsellor or therapist

You will need to provide their:

- Name
- Address
- Profession
- Contact information
- The last time you saw them

The DWP may contact your healthcare professionals directly, but usually it is enough for you to provide a letter from them. These can include letters of diagnosis, treatment plans, referral letters to other professionals and care plans.

In the letter from your healthcare professionals, ask them to explain how your condition affects you on a day-to-day basis. The DWP don't want to see your appointment letters, they're looking to see the impact your condition has on your life. If your doctor has written a report about your condition, that's excellent to include.

In some cases, your GP might write a letter to support your PIP claim. If it's possible, ask them to explain how your condition affects you and to include any limitations in your daily life.

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Daily living PIP questions

Preparing food

The preparing food section allows you to get a maximum of 8 points. The more help you need, the more points you get. Remember to be honest, it's not about what you are able to do on your best days.

For the DWP, 'preparing a meal' means being able to peel and chop vegetables, cook a piece of meat or fish, and boil potatoes or pasta. If you can't do that without help, make sure to explain why.

1. Can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal. **2 points.**
3. Cannot cook a simple meal using a conventional cooker but is able to do so using a microwave. **2 points**
4. Needs prompting to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal. **2 points.**
5. Needs supervision or assistance to either prepare or cook a simple meal. **4 points.**
6. Cannot prepare and cook food. **8 points.**

Using aids

If you need to sit down to prepare food, use a bigger knife, or buy pre-chopped veg because you can't chop it yourself, that counts as using an aid.

Using a microwave Instead of the hob

If you feel it's not safe to use the oven or hob, but you can manage with a microwave, you can still get points.

For example, if you have epilepsy and worry about seizures, explain why you choose not to use the hob.

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Needing a prompt to cook

If you wouldn't cook at all without someone reminding or encouraging, you (if depression makes it hard to get started) that's worth **2 points**.

Even if you need prompting for lots of things, it's **2 points** in this area.

Needing supervision

If you need someone to watch over you because of the risk of accidents, like spilling hot water due to a seizure or difficulty lifting heavy pans, you could score **4 points**.

Unable to cook

If you can't prepare or cook food at all, maybe because of a severe disability or because you're bedbound, that's **8 points**.

Eating and drinking

This section is all about getting food into your body safely and being able to eat properly. Be honest about any challenges you face.

1. Can take nutrition unaided. **0 points**.
2. Needs –
 - to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or
 - supervision to be able to take nutrition; or
 - assistance to be able to cut up food. **2 points**.
3. Needs a therapeutic source to be able to take nutrition. **2 points**.
4. Needs prompting to be able to take nutrition. **4 points**.
5. Needs assistance to be able to manage a therapeutic source to take nutrition. **6 points**.
6. Cannot convey food and drink to their mouth and needs another person to do so. **10 points**.

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Using aids or specialised equipment

If you use things like an anti-spill cup, special cutlery, or plates with lips to help with shaking or poor grip, that counts as using an aid. This could be because of conditions like Parkinson's, where you need these items to eat safely. Using these kinds of aids scores 2 points.

Choking risks

If you have trouble swallowing due to a condition like dystonia and need someone around to help, it is important to mention. You might not be able to eat safely without assistance.

Support during meals

If you need reminders or encouragement to eat, that's 4 points for needing prompting and supervision.

If you're drinking special drinks or shakes to keep your weight up because you can't absorb nutrients from food properly, and you need someone to help you manage this, you could get 6 points.

Unable to eat on your own

If you can't get food or drink into your mouth at all and need someone to feed you or use a feeding tube, that's 10 points.

Weight changes

Losing or gaining a lot of weight because you have problems eating, should be included. It's evidence of how your condition affects your nutrition.

Managing treatments

This is about whether you need help to manage your treatments and appointments. For example, if you have severe memory problems and need someone to remind you to go to an appointment even take you there, this counts. If you can't be left alone because you might forget what to do, that also counts.

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1. Either –
 - does not receive medication or therapy or need to monitor a health condition; or
 - can manage medication or therapy or monitor a health condition unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs any one or more of the following –
 - to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage medication;
 - supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication.
 - supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to monitor a health condition. **1 point.**
3. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes no more than 3.5 hours a week. **2 points.**
4. 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 points.**
5. 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 points.**
6. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 14 hours a week. **8 points.**

Monitoring health conditions

This applies if you find it hard to keep track of how your health is doing. For example, people with severe depression or personality disorders might not realise when their health is getting worse.

They might do things that aren't usual for them and family members might have to step in and take them to see a doctor. This can also happen with memory problems (forgetting to keep a diary of headaches if you're supposed to track them).

Managing medication

Do you need alarms or reminders, to take your medication, or does someone help you organise your pills?

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If you've got cognitive difficulties and often take the wrong dose or forget completely, this is relevant too.

For example, if forgetting your epilepsy medication for a few days causes seizures to return, this should be mentioned.

Washing and bathing

This section is to identify how much help you need to wash yourself or if you need another person to help you.

1. Can wash and bathe unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to wash or bathe. **2 points.**
3. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe. **2 points.**
4. Needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist. **2 points.**
5. Needs assistance to be able to get in or out of a bath or shower. **3 points.**
6. Needs assistance to be able to wash their body between the shoulders and waist. **4 points.**
7. Cannot wash and bathe at all and needs another person to wash their entire body. **8 points.**

The DWP understands not everyone can take a full shower or bath every day. Missing a few days each week is okay. But if you can only wash at the sink most of the time and can't wash properly, it's not considered 'to a reasonable standard.'

So, if you're relying on baby wipes or a quick wash at the sink most of the time, make sure to include those details.

Remember, it's about explaining what your regular week is like and what kind of help you need to stay clean and safe.

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Using aids

If you need to use equipment like a shower stool, or a long-handled sponge to help you wash. It helps the DWP understand if you can't wash safely or comfortably without help.

Needing supervision or prompting

If you need someone to remind or encourage you to wash because of severe depression or other mental health issues, make sure to include this. It also means if you need supervision for safety reasons, like if you're prone to seizures in the shower. (The person doesn't need to be in the bathroom with you, but they should be nearby in case you need help.)

Needing help to wash parts of your body

If you need help to wash your hair or parts of your body below the waist, you should include it. This means someone needs to physically assist you.

Getting in or out of the bath and shower

If you need help to get in or out of the bath or shower because of mobility issues, this is also relevant. You don't need to need help with both; just one counts.

Needing full assistance

If you can't wash or bathe yourself at all and need someone to wash your whole body, this should be clearly stated.

Managing toilet needs or incontinence

This section covers issues like urinary and bowel incontinence. For example, if you leak or can't control when you need to go, that counts. If you have trouble getting to the toilet in time because of sudden urgency, this is also covered.

1. Can manage toilet needs or incontinence unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage toilet needs or incontinence. **2 points.**
3. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs. **2 points.**

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4. Needs assistance to be able to manage toilet needs. **4 points.**
5. Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of either bladder or bowel. **6 points.**
6. Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of both bladder and bowel. **8 points.**

If you carry extra clothes, pads, or other items with you all the time (just in case), include this information. It's also useful to mention if you plan your outings around accessible toilets or if you've had to buy a radar key to access disabled toilets in public places.

These are things that people without your condition wouldn't have to think about, and it helps to show how your condition affects your daily life.

But if it's only about mobility issues, like physically getting to the toilet, that's not covered here.

Using aids

If you're using incontinence pads or special toiletry equipment, or you need to make adjustments for your comfort, this shows you need help managing your needs.

Supervision or prompting

If you need someone to remind you to go to the toilet, this could be due to your condition affecting your awareness. If someone needs to prompt you because you forget or don't realise when you need to go, make sure to include this too.

Physical assistance

If you need someone to physically help you get on or off the toilet, this is a significant level of support. This includes situations where you need help standing up or sitting down.

Managing incontinence

If you find you're regularly soiling yourself and need help changing clothes or cleaning up, that's important to mention.

This can be for bladder or bowel incontinence, or both. Be clear if this happens regularly and you need direct assistance.

Dressing and undressing

This section is about how much help you need to get dressed or undressed. Be honest about the support you need and any challenges you face.

1. Can dress and undress unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to dress or undress. **2 points.**
3. Needs either –
 - prompting to be able to dress, undress or determine appropriate circumstances for remaining clothed; or
 - prompting or assistance to be able to select appropriate clothing. **2 points.**
4. Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their lower body. **2 points.**
5. Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their upper body. **4 points.**
6. Cannot dress or undress at all. **8 points.**

It's helpful to mention how long it can take you to get dressed. If you need to take a break or it takes a long time getting dressed or undressed because it's tiring or painful, include this information in the description. This shows even though you can dress yourself, it's not done within the reasonable standards.

Using aids

If you need to use things like pull over bras, front fastening bras, slip on shoes or even a shoehorn to help you get dressed, those things count as requiring aids. If you used to wear jeans but you can't now because of fabrics or buttons and have switched to leggings or sweatpants, then this is an adaptation. If you need to sit down to get dressed, this won't count on its own. But, if you then struggle to get back up again without an aid, that could count. and you can't get back up unaided, that also counts. It may also count if you sit down but then it still takes twice as long to dress as it would someone without a disability. It's important to elaborate as much as you can if you cite the need to sit down to dress in your application.



Prompting to dress or undress

If you need to have someone remind you to get dressed or help choosing the right clothes, make sure you its included. This can be caused by many conditions like a learning disability, anxiety or depression (it's too overwhelming to deal with alone).

Physical assistance

If you need help from someone else to help put your clothes on, include that information.

Unable to dress yourself

If you're not able to dress or undress yourself at all and you need help from someone else, make sure you explain this. This is for people who need full assistance dressing or undressing.

Communicating verbally

This section is about the physical ability to speak and hear, not about social interaction or issues like depression or anxiety. It focuses on whether you can get your words out and understand what's being said to you.

1. Can express and understand verbal information unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to speak or hear. **2 points.**
3. Needs communication support to be able to express or understand complex verbal information. **4 points.**
4. Needs communication support to be able to express or understand basic verbal information. **8 points.**
5. Cannot express or understand verbal information at all even with communication support. **12 points.**

Speaking and listening support

If you need help to speak or hear, like a hearing aid or a voice app, it shows you need some support. This might be because of conditions like aphasia, stroke, or other issues that affect your ability to communicate physically.

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Complex communication support

If you're struggling to understand or express complicated information, like decision-making or in-depth conversations this counts as needing support. An example is having someone to speak on your behalf or to help you follow along with a conversation.

Basic communication support

If you need someone else to help you communicate basic things like asking for help, or saying "stop", or you must use communication aids to communicate, for example if you are autistic or have motor neurone disease, this means you need support to get across basic information.

Unable to communicate verbal information

If you cannot speak or understand any verbal information, even with aids, this shows the highest level of need.

Things to consider

Some people think issues like brain fog, which affects our memory and processing will be included in this section. This section is just about the physical ability to speak and hear.

Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words

This section is about any help you need to read and understand written information. It's not just about struggling to focus—it's about needing extra support to read or understand what's written.

1. Can read and understand basic and complex written information either unaided or using spectacles or contact lenses. **0 points.**
2. 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 points.**
3. Needs prompting to be able to read or understand complex written information. **2 points.**
4. Needs prompting to be able to read or understand basic written information. **4 points.**
5. Cannot read or understand signs, symbols or words at all. **8 points.**

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It's important to talk about any aids or support you use to help you read. Include things like changing the colour of your paper. Explain clearly what support you need to read and to understand information.

Using aids

If you need to use glasses with special lenses (tinted), coloured paper or other adaptations to help you read, this shows you need support. Normal glasses don't count, but special adjustments like a different coloured background or using larger text do. This is common in dyslexia and ADHD.

If you use software like text-to-speech or have workplace adaptations (for example, through Access to Work) to help you process written information, include it.

Help with complex information

If you need someone to help you read and to understand complex information, like a detailed medical report, this means you need support. It might involve someone sitting with you to go through things slowly and explain what's written.

Help with basic information

If you need help to read and understand simple things, like an appointment card or a short letter, this means you need more support.

Unable to read or understand at all

If you can't read or understand any written information because of a cognitive disability or condition, like early onset dementia, make sure you include this. It shows you need the highest level of support.

Engaging with other people face to face

This section looks at if you need help to engage with others in a meaningful way. It's about more than just saying hello to your neighbour, it's about being able to have meaningful and real interactions, like going to appointments or meeting up with friends.

It is important you are clear about your own situation. If you have mental health problems, anxiety or are autistic, talk about how this may affect your ability to engage with others. It is very personal and depends on your specific challenges.

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1. Can engage with other people unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs prompting to be able to engage with other people. **2 points.**
3. Needs social support to be able to engage with other people. **4 points.**
4. Cannot engage with other people due to such engagement causing either –
 - overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant; or
 - the claimant to exhibit behaviour which would result in a substantial risk of harm to the claimant or another person. **8 points.**

Can you engage without help?

Think about if you're able to go to a new appointment without someone needing to tell you, or if you can go and meet and friend on your own. If you need someone to remind you or to encourage you to engage with other, it shows you need some support.

Prompting to engage

If you need someone to prompt or encourage you over the phone, or if you need someone available in case you feel overwhelmed, this shows you need support. This is common with conditions like anxiety or depression.

Social support

If you need someone with you during an entire interaction to help you engage safely, include this information. It doesn't have to be a professional, family members count too. Remember, it's not about preferring to have someone with you, it's about needing them to be there to make sure you can actually engage.

Be clear about why you need support. For example, if you wouldn't go to a new person without help, explain what's stopping you. It could be anxiety, fear of social situations or difficulty understanding what's happening. Describe how the person supporting you help to overcome this barrier and what would happen if they weren't there.

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Severe difficulty engaging

If engaging with others causes you overwhelming psychological distress, this means you need more support. Conditions like autism, PTSD, or agoraphobia might make it impossible to engage with people you don't know, or even let someone into your home. It isn't about the physical act of going out to see people, it's about whether the interaction themselves are too distressing to manage.

Risk of harm

In some cases, if your behaviour could put yourself or other at risk, it is important to mention. This can include severe learning disabilities or brain injuries where there's a lack of understanding how to behave. An example would be touching people inappropriately without understanding societal norms or if you have an alcohol dependency and it causes you to exhibit risky behaviours. These are both examples of situations that could harm.

Focus on how your condition affects your ability to engage with people and explain the type of support you need to do this safely and comfortably.

Making budgeting decisions

This section is about how much help you need with managing money. It's not about being bad with money, it needs to be linked to a condition like a learning disability, ADHD, brain injury, or a manic depressive episode.

You'll need medical evidence to back up your claims.

1. Can manage complex budgeting decisions unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make complex budgeting decisions. **2 points.**

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3. Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make simple budgeting decisions. **4 points.**
4. Cannot make any budgeting decisions at all. **6 points.**

You will need to show how your condition specifically affects your ability to manage money. For example, ADHD might make it hard to focus on finances, or a brain injury could affect how you understand money related decisions. Just saying you struggle with money isn't enough, you need to have medical evidence to support this.

Even if your difficulty with money isn't a daily occurrence, you should still mention, if the consequences are serious when it does. For example, if you experience manic episodes every few months and forget to pay your rent or make financial mistakes, this still affects you. These situations show that even infrequent issues can have a big impact.

Prompting for complex budget decisions

If you need help making financial decisions, like setting up a direct debit, working out how much you're sending on rent and groceries, this counts as needing assistance. If someone else must manage your money because you can't, this is an example of needing help with complex budgeting.

Help with simple budgeting decisions

If you need help with simpler money tasks, like figuring out how much money you need to buy something or knowing 50p won't be enough to buy a carton of milk, this shows you need a higher level of support. If you need someone to guide you through basic spending decision, include this information.

Unable to make any budgeting decisions

If you can't manage any aspect of your finances on your own, mention this. This might be the case if someone else is fully managing your money because you can't do it at all.

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Mobility PIP questions

Planning and following journeys

This section focuses on the cognitive aspect of managing a journey. It is about your mental ability to plan, navigate and stay safe when you're going out, not just physical limitations.

Even though this section is mostly about how you mentally handle your journeys, it can also cover physical conditions like epilepsy, which affect your cognitive ability.

1. Can plan and follow the route of a journey unaided. **0 points.**
2. Needs prompting to be able to undertake any journey to avoid overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant. **4 points.**
3. Cannot plan the route of a journey. **8 points.**
4. Cannot follow the route of an unfamiliar journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid. **10 points.**
5. Cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant. **10 points.**
6. Cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, an assistance dog or an orientation aid. **12 points.**

Memory and safety issues

If you have memory problems, you might get lost easily, even on your regular routes. This question looks at your ability to handle the unknown and unexpected while you're travelling. It's about being able to anticipate dangers and be able to keep yourself safe. Tools like using a sat-nav or Google Maps aren't considered aids in this context, so don't rely on those when you're explaining your needs.

Needing prompts to start a journey

If you need encouragement or someone to prompt you before every journey to avoid overwhelming psychological distress include this. It could be that someone must sit with you before you go out and explain a route, even if it's just for leaving the house.



Unable to plan a journey

If you can't plan a journey, even a regular or familiar one, but can follow instructions if they're given to you step-by-step, include this information.

Needing help with unfamiliar journeys

If you can't follow the route of an unfamiliar journey on your own and you need another person, an assistance dog or a tool (like a speaking cane) include this information. If you need to print out the instructions, or detailed directions to feel safe, that should be included too.

Overwhelming psychological distress

If you can't undertake a journey at all, even with someone's help or prompts, because it causes you overwhelming distress - make sure you explain this. Be specific with the physical symptoms that come up for you when considering overwhelming. Do you physically shake or feel nauseous? Do you sweat or become dizzy? Do you feel irritable or uncontrollably upset? Do you start a journey, only to then abandon it before you reach your destination? Conditions like agoraphobia fall into this category, where even with help, the journey is too difficult to manage.

Needing help with familiar journeys

If you can't follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, assistance or an orientation aid, be sure to mention this as it shows the highest level of need when it comes to travel.

Moving around

This section focuses on the physical ability to stand up and move around. It's about how far you can walk and if you need help.

1. Can stand and then move more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided. **0 points.**
2. Can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided. **4 points.**

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3. Can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. **8 points.**
4. Can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. **10 points.**
5. Can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres, either aided or unaided. **12 points.**
6. Cannot, either aided or unaided, –
 - stand; or
 - move more than 1 metre. **12 points.**

If you can only move between 50 and 200 metres with difficulty, or between 20 and 50 metres with or without aids like a walking stick, this indicates a need for support.

Significant mobility issues arise if you can only move between 1 and 20 metres, and if you cannot move more than 1 metre, even with help or aids, this shows a high level of need.

Be honest about how pain, fatigue, and any aids impact your ability to move around daily.

Other questions about PIP

Are PIP payments taxable?

PIP is tax-free. The amount you get does not change if you have savings or income. Let the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) know right away if your situation changes or if your condition affects you differently.

Can PIP be backdated?

Your PIP will be backdated to the date you first applied. This means you will likely get a lump sum payment.

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