

# PIP: FORM PIP 2, ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIPTORS

Durham  
County Council



This factsheet looks at how your entitlement to PIP is assessed and gives tips on completing the PIP 2 form. For general information about PIP and how to claim it, see factsheet F28: Personal Independence Payment.

After you make your claim to PIP you will need to be assessed to see if you qualify. The DWP decide if you qualify for PIP by using a points-based assessment. This assessment contains a number of activities covering physical, mental and intellectual tasks.

Each activity contains several descriptors. These are descriptions of different levels of difficulty that you might have with the activity in question. The more difficulty you have, the more points you score.

There are ten different activities that are counted towards your entitlement to the daily living component of PIP. You get one score, ranging from 0 points for the lowest descriptor to between 6–12 points for the highest one, in each activity.

The points you score in these activities are then added together. If your total is 12 or more, you will be entitled to the enhanced rate daily living component. If your total score is between 8 and 11 points you will be entitled to the standard rate daily living component. If you score less than 8 points in total you will not be entitled to the daily living component at all.

The mobility component of PIP works in a similar way, except that there are only two activities that count towards it. You get one score, ranging from 0 points for the lowest descriptor up to 12 points for the highest one, in each activity.

The points you score across these two activities are added together. If your total is 12 or more, you will be entitled to the enhanced rate mobility component. If your total score is between 8 and 11 points you will be entitled to the standard rate mobility component. If you score less than 8 points you will not be entitled to the mobility component at all.

To work out how many points you should score, the DWP will usually ask you to complete a questionnaire called a PIP 2 form. This form will be posted to you, and must be completed and returned within a month. After you have returned the form you will usually be asked to attend a consultation with a health care professional who will ask you questions and complete a report giving their opinion about your abilities in the different activities. The decision maker will then look at all this evidence and decide how many points you should score.



Welfare Rights Service  
Revenues and Benefits  
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If you are terminally ill you will not have to complete a PIP 2 or attend a consultation in order to get the daily living component: you should automatically qualify for the enhanced rate of this component. However, if you think you should also get the mobility component you may have to complete the PIP 2 and attend a consultation to show your entitlement to this component.

The PIP 2 asks you to select the descriptor in each activity that most closely matches how difficult you find it to perform the activity in question, but it sometimes has a simplified or cutdown version of the descriptors compared to the full legal test.

**The full legal test is contained in this factsheet on pages 4 to 8.** When you complete the PIP 2 questionnaire it might be handy to have a copy of this in front of you, so when you complete the PIP 2 you will be able to see exactly what information the DWP is looking for. If you think the wording on the form doesn't properly describe your difficulties with the activity in question, make sure you put all the details of the difficulties you face in the additional space provided that the end of each question.

## Advice on completing the form

Try to do the following when you complete the form:

- Be honest about the extent of your disability or ill health. You should not exaggerate, but neither should you underestimate your problems.
- If your condition is variable this should be explained in your own words, with examples of how variations in your health affect your ability to perform the activities. Usually a descriptor will only apply to you if it applies most days of the week—i.e. the majority of the time.
- The test takes into account your abilities when using any aid or appliance you would normally use, or could reasonably be expected to use, e.g. glasses, walking stick, unless the activity specifies otherwise.
- In all the descriptors, you only count as being able to perform an activity if you can complete it 'safely, reliably, repeatedly and in a timely manner.' (Timely means 'less than twice the time it would take for an individual without any impairment.') So if you can only do something once, or very slowly, make sure you mention this. And if performing an activity would pose a risk to your health or safety, enough to put a reasonable person off doing it, it may be that you cannot reasonably be expected to perform that activity.
- If a doctor has told you to avoid certain activities, make this clear.



- If a particular task gives you pain or discomfort this should be recorded, in detail, on the PIP 2.
- Give any extra relevant information in the additional space provided.

After you have completed the form and have attended the usual consultation with the health care professional, the decision maker should review the professional's report and the PIP 2 you completed, assign your scores, and send you a decision on your claim.

## Decision

The decision should tell you what component(s) you are entitled to and at what rate, and also how many points you scored.

If you are not happy with this, you can ask for a reconsideration of the decision within one month of its date. You can do this over the telephone or in writing, but if you do so over the phone it might be wise to follow up with a letter. Send any evidence you think might support your claim as soon as possible.

When you receive a new decision following reconsideration, if you are not happy with the outcome of the reconsideration you can appeal the new decision to an independent tribunal. You must appeal in writing within one month of the date on the new decision letter. See factsheet F04: Disputing a Decision for more details on how to appeal.

The one month deadline from the date on the decision letter can only be extended in exceptional circumstances. If you live in County Durham, the Welfare Rights Service can advise you about appeals and we may also be able to represent you at a tribunal hearing.

On the next few pages you will find details of the activities used in the assessment, what the descriptors say, and how many points can be scored on each.



## THE PIP ASSESSMENT—DAILY LIVING ACTIVITIES

# Activity and Descriptors Points

1 Preparing food		
a	Can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided.	0
b	Needs to use an aid or appliance to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
c	Cannot cook a simple meal using a conventional cooker but can do so using a microwave.	2
d	Needs prompting to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
e	Needs supervision or assistance to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	4
f	Cannot prepare and cook food.	8

2 Taking nutrition		
a	Can take nutrition unaided.	0
b	Needs – (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or (ii) supervision to be able to take nutrition; or (iii) assistance to be able to cut up food.	2
c	Needs a therapeutic source to be able to take nutrition.	2
d	Needs prompting to be able take nutrition.	4
e	Needs assistance to be able to manage a therapeutic source to take nutrition.	6
f	Cannot convey food and drink to their mouth and needs another person to do so.	10



<b>3 Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition</b>		
a	Either – (i) Does not receive medication or therapy or need to monitor a health condition; or (ii) can manage medication or therapy or monitor a health condition unaided.	0
b	b. Needs any one or more of the following – (i) to use any aid or appliance to be able to manage medication; (ii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication; (iii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to monitor a health condition.	1
c	Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes no more than 3.5 hours a week.	2
d	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
e	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
f	Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 14 hours a week.	8

<b>4 Washing and bathing</b>		
a	Can wash and bathe unaided.	0
b	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to wash or bathe.	2
c	Needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe.	2
d	Needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist.	2
e	Needs assistance to be able to get in or out of a bath or shower.	3
f	Needs assistance to be able to wash their body between the shoulders and waist.	4
g	Cannot wash and bathe at all and needs another person to wash their entire body.	8



<b>5 Managing toilet needs or incontinence</b>		
a	Can manage toilet needs or incontinence unaided.	0
b	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage toilet needs or incontinence.	2
c	Needs supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs.	2
d	Needs assistance to be able to manage toilet needs.	4
e	Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of either bladder or bowel.	6
f	Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of both bladder and bowel.	8

<b>6 Dressing and undressing</b>		
a	Can dress and undress unaided.	0
b	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able [to] dress or undress.	2
c	Needs either - (i) prompting to be able to dress, undress or determine appropriate circumstances for remaining clothed; or (ii) prompting or assistance to be able to select appropriate clothing.	2
d	Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their lower body.	2
e	Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their upper body.	4
f	Cannot dress or undress at all.	8

<b>7 Communicating verbally</b>		
a	Can express and understand verbal information unaided.	0
b	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to speak or hear.	2
c	Needs communication support to be able to express or understand complex verbal information.	4
d	Needs communication support to be able to express or understand basic verbal information.	8
e	Cannot express or understand verbal information at all even with communication support.	12



<b>8 Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words</b>		
a	Can read and understand basic and complex written information either unaided or using spectacles or contact lenses.	0
b	Needs to use an aid or appliance, other than spectacles or contact lenses, to be able to read or understand either basic or complex information.	2
c	Needs prompting to be able to read or understand complex written information.	2
d	Needs prompting to be able to read or understand basic written information.	4
e	Cannot read or understand signs, symbols and words at all.	8

<b>9 Engaging with other people face to face</b>		
a	Can engage with other people unaided.	0
b	Needs prompting to be able to engage with other people.	2
c	Needs social support to be able to engage with other people.	4
d	d. Cannot engage with other people due to such engagement causing either – (i) overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant; or (ii) the claimant to exhibit behaviour which would result in a substantial risk of harm to the claimant or another person.	8

<b>10 Making budgeting decisions</b>		
a	Can manage complex budgeting decisions unaided.	0
b	Needs prompting to be able to make complex budgeting decisions.	2
c	Needs prompting to be able to make simple budgeting decisions.	4
d	Cannot make any budgeting decisions at all.	6



## THE PIP ASSESSMENT—MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

### # Activity and Descriptors

### Points

<b>11 Planning and following a journey</b>		
a	Can plan and follow the route of a journey unaided.	0
b	Needs prompting to be able to undertake any journey to avoid overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant.	4
c	Cannot plan the route of a journey.	8
d	Cannot follow the route of an unfamiliar journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid.	10
e	Cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant.	10
f	Cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, an assistance dog or an orientation aid.	12

<b>12 Moving around</b>		
a	Can stand and then move more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided.	0
b	Can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided.	4
c	Can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	8
d	Can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres	10
e	Can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres, either aided or unaided.	12
f	Cannot, either aided or unaided – (i) stand; or (ii) move more than 1 metre.	12





## Definitions used in the assessment

Some of the words used in the assessment have special meanings that are defined in the regulations. When you are assessed it is these definitions that decide what the descriptors mean in practice.

For example, what does 'cooking a simple meal' mean in Activity 1? Does it mean preparing, peeling or cleaning fresh vegetables and meat and cooking a dish using a traditional cooker from these raw ingredients?

The definition of 'cook' in the regulations says that "'cook' means heat food at or above waist height'. The definition of 'simple meal' says that "'simple meal' means a cooked one-course meal for one using fresh ingredients'. So, arguably, the definition means that using a microwave counts as cooking, but the ingredients would have to be fresh to start off with (rather than being a pre-cooked ready meal that is simply reheated).

It's therefore important when considering your responses to the questions in the PIP 2 and the consultation with the health professional to know what these terms mean as they are defined in law.

Here is the full list of definitions contained in the regulations:

- "aided" means with –
  - (a) the use of an aid or appliance; or
  - (b) supervision, prompting or assistance
- "assistance" means physical intervention by another person and does not include speech

- "assistance dog" means a dog trained to guide or assist a person with a sensory impairment
- "basic verbal information" means information in C's native language conveyed verbally in a simple sentence
- "basic written information" means signs, symbols and dates written or printed standard size text in C's native language
- "bathe" includes get into or out of an unadapted bath or shower
- "communication support" means support from a person trained or experienced in communicating with people with specific communication needs, including interpreting verbal information into a non-verbal form and vice versa
- "complex budgeting decisions" means decisions involving
  - (a) calculating household and personal budgets
  - (b) managing and paying bills; and
  - (c) planning future purchases
- "complex verbal information" means information in C's native language conveyed verbally in either more than one sentence or one complicated sentence
- "complex written information" means more than one sentence of written or printed standard size text in C's native language
- "cook" means heat food at or above waist height
- "dress and undress" includes put on and take off socks and shoes
- "engage socially" means –
  - (a) interact with others in a contextually and socially appropriate manner
  - (b) understand body language; and
  - (c) establish relationships



- “manage incontinence” means manage involuntary evacuation of the bowel or bladder, including use a collecting device or self-catheterisation, and clean oneself afterwards
- “manage medication” means take medication, where a failure to do so is likely to result in a deterioration in C’s health
- “manage therapy” means undertake therapy, where a failure to do so is likely to result in a deterioration in C’s health
- “medication” means medication to be taken at home which is prescribed or recommended by a registered –
  - (a) doctor;
  - (b) nurse; or
  - (c) pharmacist;
- “monitor health” means –
  - (a) detect significant changes in C’s health condition which are likely to lead to a deterioration in C’s health; and
  - (b) take action advised by a –
    - (i) registered doctor
    - (ii) registered nurse; or
    - (iii) health professional who is regulated by the Health Professions Council, without which C’s health is likely to deteriorate
- “orientation aid” means a specialist aid designed to assist disabled people to follow a route safely
- “prepare”, in the context of food, means make food ready for cooking or eating

- “prompting” means reminding, encouraging or explaining by another person
- “psychological distress” means distress related to an enduring mental health condition or an intellectual or cognitive impairment
- “read” includes read signs, symbols and words but does not include read Braille
- “simple budgeting decisions” means decisions involving –
  - (a) calculating the cost of goods; and
  - (b) calculating change required after a purchase
- “simple meal” means a cooked one-course meal for one using fresh ingredients
- “social support” means support from a person trained or experienced in assisting people to engage in social situations
- “stand” means stand upright with at least one biological foot on the ground
- “supervision” means the continuous presence of another person for the purpose of ensuring C’s safety
- “take nutrition” means –
  - (a) cut food into pieces, convey food and drink to one’s mouth and chew and swallow food and drink; or
  - (b) take nutrition by using a therapeutic source
- “therapeutic source” means parenteral or enteral tube feeding, using a rate-limiting device such as a delivery system or feed pump



- “therapy” means therapy to be undertaken at home which is prescribed or recommended by a—
  - (a) registered –
    - (i) doctor;
    - (ii) nurse; or
    - (iii) pharmacist; or
  - (b) health professional regulated by the Health Professions Council
 but does not include taking or applying, or otherwise receiving or administering, medication (whether orally, topically or by any other means), or any action which, in C’s case, falls within the definition of “monitor a health condition”
- “toilet needs” means –
  - (a) getting on and off an unadapted toilet
  - (b) evacuating the bladder and bowel; and
  - (c) cleaning oneself afterwards; and
- “unaided” means without –
  - (a) the use of an aid or appliance; or
  - (b) supervision, prompting or assistance.

## Further information and advice

If you want more information on PIP in general, please read factsheet F28: Personal Independence Payment.

If you are unhappy with a decision and want information on how to challenge it, see our factsheet F04: Disputing a Decision.

If you need advice on your benefit claim or dispute and you are a resident of County Durham, you can contact us for free and confidential advice by any of the methods given below. ■



## Need more advice? CONTACT WELFARE RIGHTS:

### By telephone:

Advice Line  
03000 268 968  
9 am – 12 noon

### By email:

welfare.rights@durham.gov.uk

### By post:

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All information correct at time of writing

