

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

This booklet has two aims:

1. To help you navigate the application process for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) by providing information and advice.
2. To let you know how you can tell us about your experience of applying for PIP, whether it be positive or negative.

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Tell us about your experience

We have heard from lots of people about the difficulties they have faced during the PIP application process. Because of this we wanted to make it easier for applicants to let us know about their experience by creating an online survey. By filling in the survey at each point of your application, we hope to gain a more accurate representation of the application process, understanding what works and what doesn't. Any information you provide will be used anonymously to help us campaign for improvements to PIP for people with mental health problems. The survey is separate to, and will not affect, your application.

Where to find the survey

You can find the survey online at:

www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

When to fill in the survey

You can let us know about your experience of the application process at the following stages:

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

1. Beginning your application before the face-to-face assessment
2. When you have had a face-to-face assessment but have not yet been told the outcome
3. When you have had a face-to-face assessment and have been told the outcome
4. If you have been granted the benefit without having a face-to-face assessment

What is PIP?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is intended to help people who face additional barriers or costs in trying to live an independent life, because of a long-term illness or disability. If you have a mental health problem which makes it difficult to live independently, we would recommend you consider applying for PIP.

The benefit is available to people who are aged between 16 and 64. Payments range from £21.55 to £138.05 a week, depending on how much your illness or disability is judged to impact on your day to day life.

You may have already been invited to claim PIP if you previously claimed DLA. However, due to delays in the process this may not be the case. To check when you will be invited to change to PIP you can use the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) PIP Checker tool at www.gov.uk/pip-checker. You can also use this checker to see if you are eligible to claim PIP if you haven't previously claimed DLA.

More information about PIP

You can find more information about PIP on the Gov.uk website.

Where you can find help with the application and assessment process

Your Local Mind may be able to offer you guidance with your application and assessment. You can find your Local Mind at www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds/. The Citizens Advice Bureau can also offer advice and support, and Turn2us offer a lot of really useful online benefits advice. Their details can be found at the back of this booklet.

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

Mind also runs an Infoline (0300 123 3393 open 9am – 6pm, Monday – Friday) which can help to signpost you to support in your local area. More details of the Infoline are in the Useful Contacts section of this booklet.

How to Apply

If you want to begin a new claim you should call the claims line on 0800 917 2222 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm). The calls to this line are free from landlines and most mobile phones. Before calling you may want to check whether you are eligible to claim PIP at www.gov.uk/pip-checker.

When making the call make sure you have the below information with you:

- Your name
- National Insurance number
- Date of birth
- Full address and postcode
- Daytime contact number
- Nationality

- Information about time spent abroad in the last three years
- Information about time spent in a care home or hospital now or previously
- Details of any pension or benefits you or your family receive from another country
- If you are working in any other country
- GP or other health professionals' details (this is very important)
- Bank or building society account details.

The initial phone call for a new claim can be made by someone else (e.g. a family member or mental health professional), but they will need to be with you and pass a quick identity check. You can also ask someone such as a family member to help complete the PIP2 form (the form where you tell the DWP about your disability/illness) that is sent to you.

Completing your PIP2 form

After you have made the initial phone call the DWP will send a form called the PIP2 form. The form asks for the details of your condition and how it affects you on a day-to-day basis. The DWP will

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

provide guidance on how to complete this form and include a freepost envelope for you to return it in.

It is important to include any medical evidence or other information you have about your situation here. The more relevant information the DWP have, the easier it will be for them to make a decision.

The information could include:

- A diary of your day-to-day activity
- Prescription lists
- Care plans
- Reports of information from professionals who help you such as a:
 - GP
 - Hospital doctor
 - Specialist nurse
 - Community psychiatric nurse
 - Occupational therapist
 - Social worker
 - Counsellor
 - Support worker

Any evidence should be as recent as possible, preferably from within the last 6 months. Ideally, evidence should relate to your ability to carry out day-to-day activities such as those listed on pg.12 of this booklet. It is not recommended that you pay for evidence, and the assessment providers are expected to try to collect additional evidence from the healthcare professionals you name in your form if they feel it would be helpful.

What happens after you have sent your application?

For most people, the next step in the process will be that you will be asked to attend a face-to-face assessment (although some people may receive a decision without this assessment). This should usually happen within a few weeks although there can be a delay in this (for some more extreme cases up to 9 months). You can find some information and advice about the assessment on the next page.

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

What you can expect from your assessment

If you are asked to attend a face-to-face assessment you will be put in touch with one of two companies - Atos or Capita - depending on where you live.

Most assessments for Atos will take place at assessment centres - these should be a maximum of 90 minutes travel from your home.

If you would like someone to accompany you to the assessment or need any other form of support you can include this on your PIP2 form. Your needs will also be assessed for if a home visit is needed, rather than making you travel for an assessment. However, this is at the discretion of Atos or Capita.

For example you should explain if:

- You can't get up and down stairs
- You have difficulty traveling or using public transport
- You have communication needs
- You need an accessible toilet

The assessment will be conducted by healthcare professionals. They will ask how your condition affects you on a day-to-day basis performing daily activities. These include:

- Preparing food
- Eating and drinking
- Managing your treatments
- Washing and bathing
- Managing your toilet needs
- Dressing and undressing
- Communicating
- Reading
- Mixing with other people
- Making decisions about money
- Planning and following journeys
- Moving around

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

Your application form, additional evidence and the information the healthcare professional hears from you at the face-to-face assessment all inform the outcome of the assessment. More information about the assessment can be found in the DWP PIP handbook. The link to this document can be found on the Useful Links page of this booklet.

You are allowed to take someone with you to the assessment for support, something which lots of people find really helpful. This person can also take an active part in the discussion if necessary.

It is important to be honest with the assessor. Whilst it may be difficult to tell a stranger some of the difficulties you have, the assessor needs to understand your situation so they can reach a fair decision.

What you can do to prepare for the assessment

If you were not able to submit additional evidence with your application form, you can bring extra evidence along to the assessment. This evidence should be the same as that described on pg.9 and pg.10.

Before the assessment you should think about these daily activities and where you feel your condition has an impact on them. It is also important to highlight to the professional if your condition fluctuates and how this changes how you perform different tasks or undertake daily activities.

For each activity the assessor will award you a number of points depending on what “descriptor” you most closely relate to. A descriptor is basically a task that shows how well you perform an activity. For example, if you ‘can engage with other people unaided’ you will score low, but if you ‘cannot engage with other people due to such engagement causing... overwhelming psychological distress’ you will score higher. You can find a full list of these descriptors at www.mind.org.uk/pipdescriptors.

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

What happens after your face-to-face assessment?

Now that you have had your face-to-face assessment, the DWP will decide whether or not you are eligible for PIP. You can find some information and advice about the next steps below.

How long will you have to wait?

You should receive a decision about whether you are eligible for PIP within about a month of your face-to-face assessment. You will be notified by letter but you will also receive a telephone call to explain the decision and tell you about what the next steps will be. These may include:

- PIP being awarded
- A request for more evidence
- PIP not being awarded

Complaining about your assessment

If you are unhappy about how your assessment was conducted then you have the right to complain to Atos or Capita (depending on who assessed you) about the assessment.

To complain to Atos:

- Email PIP-customerservice@atos.net

To complain to Capita:

- Email complaints@capita-pip.co.uk
- Write to: **PIP Complaints, PO Box 325, Darlington, DL1 9PH**

After you have received the decision on your claim

Now that you have your decision, there are a number of options available to you, these are explained below. If you decide to dispute your decision, please do let us know how things go for

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

you by emailing action@mind.org.uk or by using the online survey.

If you are unhappy with your decision

The DWP states that you should contact them as soon as possible if you think they have overlooked something or your situation has changed. However, the DWP will try and contact unsuccessful applicants to explain any negative outcomes, and let them know what their options are. If you want your decision to be looked at again then you should ask for a 'mandatory reconsideration'.

Mandatory reconsideration

You can formally ask the DWP to review their decision by phoning or writing to DWP and asking for a mandatory reconsideration. This has to be requested within 1 month of the date on your decision letter. When asking for mandatory reconsideration you can also support your case with further evidence (just as before with your PIP2 form).

The DWP will look again at the evidence about you, including any extra evidence or information you have provided and make a new decision on whether you should get PIP.

Appealing

If you are still unhappy with the DWP's decision, you can appeal by completing the SSCS1 form (a link to this is at the back of this booklet or you could ask your benefits adviser if you have one) and sending it to the stated address. You will need to have a copy of your mandatory reconsideration letter before you appeal as you must go through this process first.

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

Remember to let us know about your experience

Once your application has been completed, let us know about your overall experience by returning to the online survey.

Should you have any further problems or difficulties contact your Local Mind who may be able to offer you guidance. You can find your Local Mind at www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds. The Citizens Advice Bureau can also offer advice and support, and Turn2us offer a lot of really useful online benefits advice. Their details can be found at the back of this booklet.

Useful Links

Beginning your application

To see whether you are eligible for PIP, use the Government's PIP checker:

<https://www.gov.uk/pip-checker>

You can also find information about PIP from the DWP here: <https://www.gov.uk/pip/overview>

To help guide you through your application

The DWP have published two booklets that provide detailed advice on the application process from start to finish.

Personal Independence Payment handbook

Detailed guidance about PIP:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-fact-sheets>

Information Booklet

This booklet will help you to fill in the application form. In the booklet the DWP:

- Explain the questions they ask,
- Tells you how to answer the questions,
- Give you examples of other things you can tell us, and

Remember to let us know about your application experience at www.mind.org.uk/pipmonitor

- Tells you what you need to do next
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-your-disability-affects-you-pip-information-booklet>

Assessment provider information

Atos

www.atoshealthcare.com/pip

Capita

www.capita-pip.co.uk

Appealing the outcome of your application

The SSCS1 form that you can use to appeal can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-of-appeal-against-a-decision-of-the-department-for-work-and-pensions-sscs1>

An Example PIP2 form

You may want to look at the PIP2 application form prior to applying to understand what will be asked of you on the form:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-your-disability-affects-you>

Useful contacts

Local Minds

Your Local Mind may be able to support you with your claim. To find your Local Mind, enter your postcode at this address:

www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds/

Mind Infoline

Our team provides information on a range of topics including:

- Types of mental health problem
- Where to get help
- Medication and alternative treatments
- Advocacy

The team will also look for details of help and support in your own area.

Telephone: 0300 123 2292

Email: info@mind.org.uk

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Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau offer a range of self-help advice with a detailed section on benefits:

Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk/england.htm

Telephone: 08444 111 444 (England)

08444 77 20 20 (Wales)

Turn2us

Provide information and advice about the benefits system and what might be available to you, depending on your personal situation:

Website: www.Turn2us.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 802 2000

(9am-8pm Monday-Friday)

Mind

We're Mind, the mental health charity for England and Wales. We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We're here for you. Today. Now. We're on your doorstep, on the end of a phone or online. Whether you're stressed, depressed or in crisis. We'll listen, give you advice, support and fight your corner. And we'll push for a better deal and respect for everyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Mind Policy and Campaigns team:

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