

2. Assessment Criteria

This fact sheet covers details of the PIP assessment criteria

Introduction

PIP will be made up of two components – one to help with daily living needs and one for mobility.

Each component can be paid at a standard rate or an enhanced rate.

To determine entitlement to the two components and the level of benefit award, individuals are assessed on their ability to complete a number of key everyday activities.

The assessment will look at how well individuals can complete the activities, whether they need to use aids and appliances to do so and whether they need help from another person.

Help includes supervision, prompting or physical assistance.

Individuals will receive a point score for each activity, depending on how well they can carry them out and the help they need to do so.

The total scores will determine whether a component is payable, and if so, whether at the standard or enhanced rate.

What activities are assessed?

There are a total of 12 activities:

Daily Living Activities:

1. Preparing Food
2. Taking Nutrition
3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition
4. Washing and bathing
5. Managing toilet needs or incontinence
6. Dressing and Undressing
7. Communicating Verbally
8. Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words
9. Engaging with other people face to face
10. Making budgeting decisions

Mobility Activities

11. Planning and following journeys
12. Moving around

(See page 6 of this fact sheet for full details of each activity)

Guidance on applying the criteria

As the assessment will consider a claimant's ability to undertake the activities, inability to undertake activities must be due to the effects of a health condition or impairment and not simply a matter of preference by the claimant.

Health conditions or impairments may be physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive, or any combination of these. The

impact of all impairment types can be taken into account across the activities, where they affect a claimant's ability to complete the activity and achieve the stated outcome. For example, a claimant with a severe depressive illness may physically be able to prepare food and feed himself, but may lack the motivation to do so, to the extent of needing prompting from another person to carry out the task.

However, some activities focus on specific elements of function. For example, **Moving around** relates to the physical aspects of walking, whilst **Engaging with other people face to face** relates to the mental, cognitive or intellectual aspects of interacting with other people.

Descriptor choice

When assessing a claimant, within each activity the most appropriate descriptor to the claimant will be chosen. An activity descriptor is generally deemed to apply if the disabling effect applies, at some stage of the day, on more than 50 per cent of days. Where more than one descriptor specified in an activity applies to the claimant, the highest scoring descriptor should be chosen.

A claimant must be able to complete an activity descriptor reliably and, where indicated, using aids and appliances or with support from another person (or, for activity 11, an assistance dog). Otherwise they should be considered unable to complete the activity described at that level.

Reliability

For a descriptor to be able to apply to a claimant, the claimant must be able to reliably complete the activity as described in the descriptor. Reliably means whether they can do so:

Safely – in a fashion that is unlikely to cause harm to themselves or to another person;

To an acceptable standard – given the nature of the activity;

Repeatedly – as often as is reasonably required; and

In a timely manner – in a reasonable time period.

Time periods, fluctuations and descriptor choices

The impact of most health conditions and disabilities can fluctuate over time. Taking a view of ability over a longer period of time helps to iron out fluctuations and presents a more coherent picture of disabling effects. Therefore the descriptor choice should be based on consideration of a **12 month** period. This should correlate with the Qualifying Period and Prospective Test for the benefit – so in the **three months before** the assessment and in the **nine months after**.

A scoring descriptor can apply to claimants in an activity where their impairment(s) affects their ability to complete an activity, at some stage of the day, on more than 50 per cent of days in the 12 month period. The following rules apply:

- If one descriptor in an activity is likely to apply on more than 50 per cent of the days in the 12 month period – i.e. the activity can be completed in the way described on more than 50 per cent of days – then that descriptor should be chosen.
- If more than one descriptor in an activity is likely to apply on more than 50 per cent of the days in the period, then the descriptor chosen should be the one which is the highest scoring.
- Where one single descriptor in an activity is likely to not be satisfied on more than 50 per cent of days, but a number of different scoring descriptors in that activity together are likely to be satisfied on more than 50 per cent of days, the descriptor likely to be satisfied for the highest proportion of the time should be selected. For example, if descriptor 'B' is likely to be satisfied on 40 per cent of days and descriptor 'C' on 30 per cent of days, descriptor 'B' should be chosen.

If someone is awaiting treatment or further intervention it can be difficult to accurately predict its level of success or whether it will even occur. Descriptor choices should therefore be based on the likely continuing impact of the health condition or impairment as if any treatment or further intervention has not occurred.

Risk and Safety

When considering whether an activity can be undertaken safely it is important to consider the risk of a serious adverse event occurring. However, the risk that a serious adverse event may occur due to impairments is insufficient – the adverse event has to be likely to occur.

Support from other people

The assessment takes into account where claimants need the support of another person or persons to carry out an activity – including where that person has to carry out the activity for them in its entirety. The criteria refer to various types of support:

- **Supervision** is a need for the continuous presence of another person to avoid a serious adverse event from occurring to the claimant. The risk must be likely to occur in the absence of such supervision. To apply, supervision must be required for the full duration of the activity.
- **Prompting** is support provided by another person by reminding or encouraging a claimant to undertake or complete a task or explaining it to them but not physically helping them. To apply, this only needs to be required for part of the activity.
- **Assistance** is support that requires the presence and physical intervention of another person to help the claimant complete the

activity - including doing some but not all of the activity in question. To apply, assistance only needs to be required for part of the activity.

A number of descriptors also refer to another person being required to complete the activity in its entirety. These descriptors would apply where the claimant is unable to reliably undertake any of the activity for themselves, even with help.

Activities 7 and 9 refer to **Communication support** and **Social support**, which are defined in the notes to the activities.

The assessment does not look at the availability of help from another person but rather at the underlying need. As such claimants may be awarded descriptors for needing help even if it is not currently available to them – for example, if they currently manage in a way that is not reliable but could do so with some help.

Aids and appliances

The assessment takes into account where individuals need aids and appliances to complete activities. In this context:

- **Aids** are devices that help a performance of a function, for example, walking sticks or magnifying glasses.
- **Appliances** are devices that provide or replace a missing function, for

example artificial limbs, collecting devices (stomas) and wheelchairs.

The assessment will take into account aids and appliances that individuals normally use, and low cost, commonly available ones which someone with their impairment might reasonably be expected to use, even if they are not normally used.

This may include mainstream items used by people without an impairment, where the claimant is completely reliant on them to complete the activity. For example, this would include an electric can-opener where the claimant could not open a can without one, not simply where they prefer to use one.

Activity 11 refers specifically to 'orientation aids', which are defined as **specialist** aids designed to assist disabled people in following a route.

Claimants who use or could reasonably be expected to use aids to carry out an activity will generally receive a higher scoring descriptor than those who can carry out the activity unaided.

When considering whether it is reasonable to expect a claimant to use an aid or appliance that they do not usually use, the health professional will consider whether:

The claimant possesses the aid or appliance.

The aid or appliance is widely available.

The aid or appliance is available at no or low cost.

It is medically reasonable for them to use an aid or appliance.

The claimant was given specific medical advice about managing their condition, and it is reasonable for them to continue following that advice.

The claimant would be advised to use an aid or appliance if they sought advice from a professional such as a GP or occupational therapist.

The claimant is able to use and store the aid or appliance.

The claimant is unable to use an aid or appliance due to their physical or mental health condition – for example, they are unable to use a walking stick or manual wheelchair due to a cardiac, respiratory, upper body or mental health condition.

either the use of aids or appliances or help from another person.

Assistance dogs

We recognise that guide, hearing and dual sensory dogs are not ‘aids’ but have attempted to ensure that the descriptors capture the additional barriers and costs of needing such a dog where they are required to enable claimants to follow a route safely. Activity 11 therefore explicitly refers to the use of an ‘assistance dog’. Assistance dogs are defined as dogs trained to help people with sensory impairments.

‘Unaided’

Within the assessment criteria, the ability to perform an activity ‘unaided’ means without

Daily Living activities

Activity 1 – Preparing food

This activity considers a claimant's ability to prepare a simple meal. This is not a reflection of a claimant's cooking skills but instead a consideration of the impact of impairment on ability to perform the tasks required. It assesses ability to open packaging, serve food, peel and chop food and use a microwave oven or cooker hob to cook or heat food.

Notes:

Preparing food means the activities required to make food ready for cooking and eating, such as peeling and chopping.

Cooking food means heating food at above waist height – for example, using a microwave oven or on a cooker hob. It does not consider the ability to bend down – for example, to access an oven.

A simple meal is a cooked one-course meal for one from fresh ingredients. Packaging includes tins, which may require the use of a tin opener.

In this activity aids and appliances could include, for example, prostheses, perching stool, lightweight pots and pans, easy grip handles on utensils and single lever arm taps.

Pre-chopped vegetables are not considered an aid or appliance. However, a claimant who is reliant on them because they would be unable to peel or chop fresh vegetables may be considered as requiring an aid or appliance or support from another person to complete the activity.

A	Can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided.	0
B	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
C	Cannot cook a simple meal using a conventional cooker but is able to do so using a microwave.	2
	For example: may apply to claimants who cannot safely use a	

	cooker hob and hot pans.	
D	Needs prompting to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
	For example: may apply to claimants who lack motivation, who need to be reminded how to prepare and cook food or who are unable to ascertain if food is within date.	
E	Needs supervision or assistance to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	4
	For example: may apply to claimants who need supervision to prepare and cannot safely use a microwave oven; or to claimants who cannot prepare or safely heat food	
F	Cannot prepare and cook food.	8

Activity 2 – Taking nutrition

This activity considers a claimant's ability to be nourished, either by cutting food into pieces, conveying to the mouth, chewing and swallowing; or through the use of therapeutic sources.

Notes:

A therapeutic source means parenteral or enteral tube feeding using a rate limiting device such as a delivery system or feed pump.

A key consideration when considering whether supervision is required should be whether the claimant has a real risk of choking when taking nutrition.

A	Can take nutrition unaided.	0
B	Needs – to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or 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
	For example: may apply to claimants who require enteral or parenteral feeding but can carry it out unaided.	
D	Needs prompting to be able to take nutrition.	4
	For example: may apply to claimants who need to be reminded to eat or who need prompting about portion size.	
E	Needs assistance to be able to manage a therapeutic source to take nutrition.	6

	For example: may apply to claimants who require enteral or parenteral feeding and require support to manage the equipment.	
F	Cannot convey food and drink to their mouth and needs another person to do so.	10

Activity 3 – Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition

This activity considers a claimant's ability to:

- (i) appropriately take medications in a domestic setting and which are prescribed or recommended by a registered doctor, nurse or pharmacist;
- (ii) monitor and detect changes in a health condition; and
- (iii) manage therapeutic activities that are carried out in a domestic setting and prescribed or recommended by a registered doctor, nurse, pharmacist or healthcare professional regulated by the Health Professions Council;

and without any of which their health is likely to deteriorate.

Notes:

Managing medication means the ability to take prescribed medication in the correct way and at the right time.

Monitoring a health condition or recognise significant changes means the ability to detect changes in the condition and take corrective action as advised by a healthcare professional.

This activity does not take into account medication and monitoring requiring administration by a healthcare professional.

Examples of prescribed or recommended medication include tablets, inhalers and creams and therapies could include home oxygen, domiciliary dialysis, nebulisers and exercise regimes to prevent complications such as contractures. Whilst medications and therapies do not necessarily have to be prescribed, there must be a consensus of medical opinion that supports their use in treatment of the condition.

Supervision due to the risk of accidental or deliberate overdose or deliberate self harm is captured in these descriptors as the person would require continuous support from another person in order to prevent this.

For the purpose of this activity, the majority of days test does not require the individual to actually be receiving therapy on the majority of days in a year. However, the descriptor would still need to accurately describe the claimant's circumstances on a majority of days – i.e. on a majority of days the statement about how much support an individual needs a week must be true. For example, if a claimant needs assistance to undergo home dialysis for three hours on Monday and Friday, they would not actually be receiving therapy on a majority of days in a year. However, on a majority of days in the year, the statement that they need 'assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 3.5 but no more than 7 hours a week' would still apply as it accurately describes the level of support needed in a week.

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	Needs either – to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage medication; or supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication or 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 hours a week but no more than 7 hours.	4
E	Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 7 hours a week but no more than 14 hours.	6
F	Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 14 hours a week.	8

Activity 4 – Washing and bathing		
This activity considers a claimant’s ability to wash and bathe, including washing their whole body and getting in and out of an un-adapted bath or shower.		
A	Can wash and bathe unaided.	0
B	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to wash or bathe.	2
	For example: suitable aids could include a long-handled sponge, shower seat or bath rail.	
C	Needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe.	2
	For example: may apply to claimants who lack motivation or need to be reminded to wash or require supervision for safety.	
D	Needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or their body below the waist.	2
	For example: may apply to claimants who are unable to make use of aids and who cannot reach their lower limbs or hair.	
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

Activity 5 – Managing toilet needs or incontinence

This activity considers a claimant's ability to get on and off the toilet, to clean afterwards and to manage evacuation of the bladder and/or bowel, including the use of collecting devices.

This activity does **not** include the ability to manage clothing, for example fastening and unfastening zips or buttons, as this is covered in activity 6.

Notes:

Toilet needs means the ability to get on and off the toilet, evacuation of the bladder and bowel and clean oneself afterwards.

Managing incontinence means the ability to manage evacuation of the bladder and/or bowel including using collecting devices and clean oneself afterwards.

Claimants with catheters and collecting devices are considered incontinent for the purposes of this activity.

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
	For example: suitable aids could include commodes, raised toilet seats, bottom wipers, bidets, incontinence pads or a stoma bag.	
C	Needs supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs.	2
	For example: may apply to claimants who need to be reminded to go to the toilet or need supervision to get on and off the toilet safely.	
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

Activity 6 – Dressing and undressing

This activity assesses a claimant's ability to put on and take off culturally appropriate, un-adapted clothing that is suitable for the situation. This may include the need for fastenings such as zips or buttons and considers the ability to put on/take off socks and shoes.

A	Can dress and undress unaided.	0
B	Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to dress or undress.	2
	For example: suitable aids could include modified buttons, zips, front fastening bras, trousers, velcro fastenings and shoe aids.	
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
	For example: may apply to claimants who need to be encouraged to dress. Includes a consideration of whether the claimant can determine what is appropriate for the environment, such as time of day and the weather.	
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

Activity 7 – Communicating verbally

This activity considers a claimant's ability to communicate verbally with regard to expressive (conveying) communication and receptive (receiving and understanding) communication.

Notes:

This activity considers the ability to convey and understand verbal information with other people in one's native language.

Basic verbal information is information conveyed in a simple sentence.

Complex verbal information is information conveyed in either more than one sentence or one complicated sentence.

Verbal information can include information that is interpreted from verbal into non-verbal form or vice-versa – for example, speech interpreted through sign language or into written text.

Communication support means support from another person trained or experienced in communicating with people with specific communication needs (for example, a sign language interpreter) or someone directly experienced in communicating with the claimant themselves (for example, a family member).

Individuals who cannot express or understand verbal information and would need communication support to do so should receive the appropriate descriptor even if they do not have access to this support. For example, a deaf person who cannot communicate verbally and does not use sign language might need another person to support them in another way – such as by writing verbal information down – even if they do not routinely have such help.

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
	For example: may apply to claimants who require a hearing aid or an electrolarynx.	

C	Needs communication support to be able to express or understand complex verbal information.	4
	For example: may apply to claimants who require a sign language interpreter.	
D	Needs communication support to be able to express or understand basic verbal information.	8
	For example: may apply to claimants who require a sign language interpreter.	
E	Cannot express or understand verbal information even with communication support.	12

Activity 8 – Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words

This activity considers a claimant's ability to read and understand signs, symbols and words.

Notes:

This activity considers the capability to read and understand written or printed information in the person's native language.

Basic information is signs, symbols or dates. Complex information is more than one sentence of written or printed standard size text – for example, text found in utility bills and bank statements.

Consideration needs to be given to whether the claimant can read and understand information both indoors and outdoors. In doing so consideration should also be given to whether the claimant uses or could reasonably be expected to use aids or appliances, such as a large magnifier to read text when indoors and a portable magnifying glass to do so when outdoors. If the claimant is unable to complete the activity as described either indoors or outdoors, the descriptor may apply.

To be considered able to read, claimants must be able to see the information.

For the purpose of this activity, accessing information via Braille is not considered as reading.

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
	For example: may apply to claimants who require low vision aids.	
C	Needs assistance to be able to read or understand complex written information.	2

	For example: may apply to claimants who require another person to explain information to them.	
D	Needs assistance to be able to read or understand basic written information.	4
	For example: may apply to claimants who require another person to explain information to them.	
E	Cannot read or understand signs, symbols or words at all.	8
	For example: may apply to claimants who require another person to read everything for them.	

Activity 9 – Engaging with other people face to face

This activity considers a claimant's ability to engage with other people which means to interact face to face in a contextually and socially appropriate manner, understand body language and establish relationships.

Notes:

An inability to engage socially must be due to the impact of impairment and not simply a matter of preference by the claimant.

Social support means support from a person trained or experienced in assisting people to engage in social situations, or someone directly experienced in supporting the claimant themselves (for example a family member), who can compensate for limited ability to understand and respond to body language, other social cues and assist social integration.

'Psychological distress' means distress related to an enduring mental health condition or an intellectual or cognitive impairment. However, this condition may have a physical root cause.

When considering whether claimants can engage with others, consideration should be given to whether they can engage with people generally, not just those people they know well.

A	Can engage with other people unaided.	0
B	Needs prompting to be able to engage with other people.	2
	For example: may apply to people who need encouragement to interact with others by the presence of a third party.	
C	Needs social support to be able to engage with other people.	4
	For example: may apply to people who are only able to interact with others by the presence of a third party.	

D	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

Activity 10 – Making budgeting decisions

This activity considers the ability of a claimant to make everyday budgeting decisions.

Notes:

Complex budgeting decisions are those that are involved in calculating household and personal budgets, managing and paying bills and planning future purchases.

Simple budgeting decisions are those that are involved in activities such as calculating the cost of goods and change required following purchases.

Assistance in this activity refers to another person carrying out elements, although not all, of the decision making process for the claimant.

A	Can make complex budgeting decisions unaided.	0
B	Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make complex budgeting decisions.	2
	For example: may apply to claimants who need to be encouraged or reminded to make complex budgeting decisions.	
C	Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make simple budgeting decisions.	4
	For example: may apply to claimants who need to be encouraged or reminded to make simple financial decisions.	
D	Cannot make any budgeting decisions at all.	6

Mobility activities

Activity 11 – Planning and following journeys

This activity considers a claimant's ability to work out and follow the route of a journey.

Notes:

A person should only be considered able to follow an unfamiliar journey if they are capable of using public transport (bus or train).

Consideration should be given to safety and whether there would be a substantial risk to the claimant or others if they went out alone.

Orientation aids are specialist aids designed to assist disabled people in following a route.

'Psychological distress' means distress related to an enduring mental health condition or an intellectual or cognitive impairment. However, this condition may have a physical root cause – such as unmanageable incontinence which leads to anxiety about making journeys.

Small disruptions and unexpected changes, such as roadworks and changed bus-stops, are commonplace when following journeys and consideration should be given to whether the claimant would be able to carry out the activity as described if such commonplace disruptions occur.

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
	For example: may apply to claimants who are only able to leave the home when accompanied by another person.	
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
	For example: may apply to claimants who are unable to leave the home at all.	
F	Cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid.	12

Activity 12 – Moving around

This activity considers a claimant's physical ability to move around without severe discomfort such as breathlessness, pain or fatigue. This includes the ability to stand and then move up to 20 metres, up to 50 metres, up to 200 metres and over 200 metres.

Notes:

This activity should be judged in relation to a type of surface normally expected out of doors such as pavements on the flat and includes the consideration of kerbs.

20 metres is considered to be the distance that a claimant is required to be able to repeatedly walk in order to achieve a basic level of independence in the home.

50 metres is considered to be the distance that a claimant is required to be able to repeatedly walk in order to achieve a basic level of independence outdoors.

50 to 200 metres is considered to be the distance that a claimant is required to be able to repeatedly walk in order to achieve a higher level of independence outdoors.

Standing means to stand upright with at least one biological foot on the ground with or without suitable aids and appliances (note – a prosthesis is considered an appliance so a claimant with a unilateral prosthetic leg may be able to stand whereas a bilateral lower limb amputee would be unable to stand under this definition).

“Stand and then move” requires an individual to stand and then move independently while remaining standing. It does not include a claimant who stands and then transfers into a wheelchair or similar device. Individuals who require a wheelchair or similar device to move a distance should not be considered able to stand and move that distance.

Aids or appliances that a person uses to support their physical mobility may include walking sticks, crutches and prostheses.

When assessing whether the activity can be carried out reliably, consideration should be given to the manner in which they do so. This includes but is not limited to, their gait, their speed, the risk of falls and symptoms or side effects that could affect their ability to complete the activity, such as pain, breathlessness and fatigue. However, for this activity this only refers to the physical act of moving. For example, danger awareness is considered as part of activity 11.

A	Can stand and then move more than 200 metres.	0
B	Can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres	4

C	Either aided or unaided, can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres	8
D	Either aided or unaided, can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	10
	For example, this would include people who can stand and move more than 20 metres but no further than 50 metres, but need to use an aid or appliance such as a stick or crutch to do so.	
E	Can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres.	12
F	Cannot – stand; or move at all; or move more than 1 metre.	12