PIP SELF HELP GUIDE

How to fill in your PIP form step-by-step

PIP CHECK AND SEND SERVICE

Thursday
10:30 – 12:00

We have quick review slots available on Thursdays to look over your form and suggest any minor changes before you send it. Please note, this is not a full form-filling service, but a chance to check your answers together and make any final adjustments.

First – how PIP actually works VERY IMPORTANT

PIP is not about your diagnosis.

It is about how your condition affects your daily life.

You score points based on what you can and cannot do.

The most important rule: "Reliably"

You must explain if you cannot do something reliably, meaning:

- Not safely
- Not to a good standard
- Not often enough
- Takes too long

> **If this applies, you should still say you cannot do it**

Points system

- 8 points = Standard rate
- 12 points = Enhanced rate

There are 2 parts:

- Daily Living (e.g. washing, dressing, cooking)
- Mobility (getting around, going out)

Key words THESE SCORE POINTS

Use these words in your answers:

Aid	equipment (stick, shower chair, apps, etc.)
Prompting	reminders, encouragement
Supervision	someone watching to keep you safe
Assistance	physical help from someone

Writing tip VERY IMPORTANT

For EVERY answer, use this sentence starter:

> "Because of my **[condition]**, I cannot **[activity]** reliably. I need **[type of help]**. If I don't get this help, **[what happens]**. This happens **[how often]**."

How to answer each question

For EVERY activity, follow this structure:

- What condition affects you
- What problems you have
- What help you need
- What happens if you don't get help
- How often it happens
- Give a real example

Importance of motivation and encouragement

You might feel like you can do things like cooking, washing, taking medication, or going out but in reality, you may struggle to get started or keep going without encouragement.

> **This is very important for PIP.**

If your condition affects your motivation (for example depression, anxiety, PTSD, or low mood), you should explain this. In PIP, needing encouragement or reminders is called “prompting”, and it can count towards your score.

Ask yourself:

- Do I need someone to remind or encourage me to do this?
- What happens if nobody encourages me?
- How long would I go without doing it?

Examples you can use

“Without prompting, I would go several days without washing.”

“I do not eat unless someone reminds me.”

“I stay in bed most of the day and need encouragement to get up.”

“I avoid going out unless someone pushes me to go.”

Key point:

Even if you can physically do something, if you don’t do it without encouragement, you should say this.

This shows you cannot do the activity reliably on your own, which is what PIP looks at.

3. Preparing food

What this question really means:

Can you prepare and cook a simple meal from fresh ingredients (not just microwave meals)?

This includes:

- Peeling and chopping
- Using a cooker safely
- Standing long enough to cook

You may struggle if you:

- Have pain, fatigue, tremors
- Get distracted or forget things
- Are at risk of burns or injury
- Cannot stand long enough

What help counts:

Someone physically helping → **assistance**

Someone watching you → **supervision**

Someone reminding you → **prompting**

Equipment (perching stool, adapted knives) → **aid**

Do you use Aids or need adaptions such as:

- Perching stool
- Adapted cutlery
- Electric can opener
- Microwave (if used because you can’t safely a conventional oven)

3. Preparing food, continued

How to answer (structure):

- What you try to do
- What goes wrong
- What help you need
- What happens if you don't get help

Examples

"I cannot chop vegetables due to arthritis. I have dropped knives and cut myself before. My partner prepares food for me."

"I forget I am cooking and have left the hob on. I need supervision for safety."

"I get too tired to stand and have to sit down halfway through cooking. I can only prepare microwave meals."

4. Eating and drinking

What this means:

Can you:

- Cut food
- Eat safely
- Swallow properly

You may struggle if:

- You have weak grip or tremors
- You choke or have swallowing problems
- You forget to eat

Help includes:

- Cutting food
- Reminding you to eat
- Watching you to prevent choking

Examples

"I cannot cut food due to hand pain. My carer prepares my meals."

"I forget to eat due to depression and need prompting."

"I choke on food and need supervision when eating."

5. Managing medication or treatment

What this means:

Can you:

- Take medication correctly
- Remember doses
- Manage treatments (e.g. physio, insulin)

You may struggle if:

- You forget medication
- You get confused about doses
- You avoid treatment

Help includes:

- Reminders (alarms, carers)
- Supervision
- Help organising medication

Examples

"I forget to take medication without reminders from my partner."

"I get confused about which tablets to take and when."

"My support worker supervises me because I previously stopped medication and became unwell."

6. Washing and bathing

What this means:

Can you:

- Wash your whole body
- Get in/out of bath or shower safely

You may struggle if:

- You have poor balance
- You cannot reach parts of your body
- You feel unsafe

Help includes:

- Physical help
- Supervision
- Equipment (grab rails, shower chair)

Do you use Aids or need adaptions such as:

- Grab rails
- Bath seat / bath board
- Walk-in shower
- Long-handled sponge

Examples

"I cannot get in the bath without help due to balance problems."

"I use a shower chair but still need supervision."

"I cannot wash my lower body due to pain and need assistance."

7. Toilet needs

What this means:

Can you:

- Get to the toilet in time
- Clean yourself properly
- Manage continence

You may struggle if:

- You have accidents
- You cannot clean yourself
- You need help transferring

Help includes:

- Cleaning
- Managing pads
- Physical assistance

Do you use Aids or need adaptions such as:

- Raised toilet seat
- Commode
- Handrails

Examples

"I need help cleaning myself due to limited movement."

"I have accidents and need help changing clothes."

"I need support getting on and off the toilet."

8. Dressing and undressing

What this means:

Can you:

- Put clothes on
- Fasten buttons/zips
- Dress appropriately

You may struggle if:

- You have pain or stiffness
- You cannot bend
- You get confused

Help includes:

- Physical help
- Prompting
- Adaptive clothing

Do you use Aids or need adaptions such as:

- Button hook
- Sock aid
- Long-handled shoe horn

Examples

"I cannot fasten buttons due to arthritis."

"I need help putting on socks and shoes."

"I forget to dress appropriately for weather without prompting."

9. Communicating

What this means:

Can you:

- Speak clearly
- Understand others
- Communicate your needs

You may struggle if:

- You have anxiety, speech issues, hearing loss
- You cannot use the phone

Help includes:

- Someone speaking for you
- Communication aids
- Support understanding others

Examples

"I struggle to speak when anxious and need support."

"I cannot use the phone due to panic attacks."

"I need someone to explain things to me."

10. Reading and understanding

What this means:

Can you:

- Read letters
- Understand written information

You may struggle if:

- You have vision problems
- You have learning or cognitive difficulties

Help includes:

- Someone reading for you
- Explaining information

Examples

"I cannot read small print and need help with letters."

"I do not understand written instructions without support."

11. Mixing with people

What this means:

Can you:

- Socialise
- Cope with other people

You may struggle if:

- You have anxiety, PTSD, autism
- You avoid people

Help includes:

- Encouragement
- Support to attend appointments
- Someone with you

Examples

"I cannot go out alone due to anxiety."

"I avoid people and isolate myself."

"I need someone with me to attend appointments."

12. Making decisions about money

What this means:

Can you:

- Budget
- Pay bills
- Understand money

You may struggle if:

- You forget bills
- You overspend
- You don’t understand money

Help includes:

- Someone managing finances
- Reminders
- Supervision

Examples

“My partner manages my bills because I forget to pay them.”

“I cannot budget and spend money impulsively.”

“I do not understand bank statements.”

13. Planning & following a journey

> **This is about your mental ability to go out, not your physical ability to walk**

You may score points if:

- You need encouragement or prompting to leave the house
- You feel too anxious, overwhelmed, or unsafe to go out alone
- You need someone with you to go anywhere
- You get confused, lost, or cannot cope with unfamiliar places
- You struggle to understand or follow directions

This also includes reading and understanding

You should include if you struggle to:

- Read or follow a map
- Understand directions
- Read bus/train timetables
- Plan a route or journey on your own

Even if this is due to literacy difficulties, learning needs, or concentration problems, it still counts

Ask yourself:

- Can I plan a journey on my own?
- Can I follow directions without help?
- What happens if I try to go out alone?
- Do I avoid going out unless someone encourages me?

13. Planning & following a journey, continued

Examples you can use

"I cannot leave home alone due to panic attacks."

"I need someone with me to go anywhere unfamiliar."

"I cannot go out at all due to overwhelming anxiety."

"I cannot follow directions or read maps, so I get lost."

"I struggle to read bus timetables and need help planning journeys."

"Without encouragement, I would not leave the house."

Key point:

Even if you can physically travel, if you cannot:

- Plan a journey
- Follow it
- Or go out without support

you should explain this clearly, as it can score points under PIP

14. Moving around (walking)

> **This is about how far you can walk, not how far you push yourself**

Think about:

- How far can you walk before you have to stop?
- Do you feel pain, breathlessness, or fatigue?
- Can you walk safely and repeatedly?
- Do you use aids or need adaptations?

Aids and adaptations:

- Walking stick
- Crutches
- Walking frame
- Wheelchair or mobility scooter

You should include:

- What you use
- How often
- Whether you still struggle even with it

Understanding distances VERY IMPORTANT

It can be hard to picture metres, so here are simple examples:

20 metres	≈ about 2–3 bus lengths
50 metres	≈ about 5 bus lengths
100 metres	≈ about the length of a football pitch

If you can't walk more than:

20 metres → **this is a high level of difficulty**

50 metres → **still significant limitation**

14. Moving around (walking), continued

Ask yourself:

- How far can I walk before I need to stop?
- Do I need to rest? How often?
- Can I walk that distance again after resting?
- Do I feel unsafe or at risk of falling?

Examples you can use

"I can only walk about 20 metres (around 2–3 bus lengths) before I have to stop due to pain."

"I use a walking stick but still need to rest every few minutes."

"I cannot walk the length of a football pitch without stopping several times."

"I feel unsteady and at risk of falling, so I need support when walking."

"Even with a mobility aid, I cannot walk far and get very fatigued."

Key point:

It is not about the furthest you have ever walked.

> **It is about what you can do reliably, safely, and repeatedly.**

Safety VERY IMPORTANT

You should mention if:

- You fall
- You forget things (e.g. cooker on)
- You self-harm or become unsafe
- You need someone to watch you

Examples

"I leave the cooker on and forget, which is dangerous."

"I need supervision due to seizures."

Final tips MOST IMPORTANT PART

Do:

- Give real-life examples
- Explain your worst days
- Be detailed and honest
- Say if things vary
- State how an Aid or adaption could help even if you do not have one currently.

Don't:

- Just tick boxes without explaining
- Say "I'm fine" if you struggle sometimes
- Underplay your difficulties

Simple way to think about it

For every question, ask yourself:

> **"What would happen if I had no help?" Then write that.**

Evidence HELPS A LOT

Providing evidence can make your claim stronger. This helps show how your condition affects your daily life.

Useful evidence can include:

- GP letters
- Hospital reports
- Care plans
- Letters from carers, support workers, friends or family

Support from professionals VERY IMPORTANT

It is helpful to include any support you receive from health or support professionals, especially if it relates to specific difficulties in your form.

For example:

- If you have seen a dietician, include this in the eating section
- If you have a therapist or mental health worker, include this in mixing with people or going out
- If you see a physiotherapist, include this in moving around or washing/dressing
- If you have support with medication, mention who helps you and why

This shows that your difficulties are recognised and serious enough to need professional support

Evidence, continued

Examples you can use

"I am under a dietician because I struggle to eat regularly."

"I receive therapy for social anxiety, which affects my ability to mix with others."

"My GP is aware that I forget to take medication and has advised support."

Important:

Do not delay sending your form if you are waiting for evidence

You can:

- Send the form on time
- Send additional evidence later

Key point:

Even if you do not have much evidence, your own detailed explanation is still very important

But including professional support helps to

- Back up what you are saying
- Show how your condition affects you day-to-day

Keeping a diary VERY HELPFUL

Why keeping a diary is important

A diary is useful evidence to help the DWP understand how your condition affects you day to day, including:

- Daily living activities
- Mobility and getting around

> **You are the best person to explain your difficulties.**

Writing a diary

Your diary should record:

- What you struggle with
- What help you need
- What happens without help
- How often this happens

If you find it difficult, you can ask:

- A partner, relative, or friend
- A carer or support worker

If someone helps, explain this in your PIP form.

What your diary should show

Your diary should clearly show where you cannot do activities reliably, meaning:

- Not safely
- Not to a good standard
- Not often enough
- Takes too long

> **If this applies, you should say you cannot do it.**

Keeping a diary: what to include IMPORTANT

You may score points if:

- You need aids or equipment
- You need prompting or reminders
- You need help from another person
- Tasks take you a long time
- You can only manage at certain times
- You have good and bad days
- You are unsafe on your own
- You need supervision

If any of these apply, include them in your diary.

What to write about

Your diary should cover:

- Preparing food
- Eating and drinking
- Managing medication
- Washing and bathing
- Dressing
- Communication
- Mixing with others
- Going out and planning journeys
- Moving around

Practical tips

- Keep entries short and simple
- Write over a few days (including bad days)
- Use real-life examples
- Be honest and detailed

Simple way to think about it

When writing your diary, ask:

> **"What would happen if I had no help?"**

Then write that.

PIP daily diary

Date / Time	Activity	What I struggled with	Help Needed	What happened without help

PIP glossary QUICK GUIDE

These are key terms used in PIP. Understanding them will help you explain your needs clearly.

The most important rule: reliably

You must be able to do something:

- Safely
- To a good standard
- Often enough
- In a reasonable time

> **If not, you should say you cannot do it reliably**

Types of help

Aid or Appliance	Equipment that helps you (e.g. stick, shower chair, adapted tools)
Assistance	Physical help from another person
Prompting	Reminders or encouragement
Supervision	Someone watching to keep you safe

Key words

Safely	Without risk of harm
Repeatedly	Able to do it as often as needed
Reasonable Time	No more than twice as long as usual
Acceptable Standard	Done properly

Glossary, continued

Daily living terms

Prepare Food	Getting food ready (chopping, peeling)
Cook	Using heat safely
Take Nutrition	Eating and drinking safely
Manage Medication	Taking medicine correctly
Manage Therapy	Following treatments (e.g. physio)
Monitor Health	Noticing changes and acting
Wash/Bathe	Includes getting in/out safely
Toilet Needs	Using the toilet and cleaning yourself
Manage Incontinence	Managing accidents or using pads
Dress/Undress	Putting on clothes, socks, shoes

Communication & thinking

Communicate	Speaking and understanding
Read	Reading written information
Engage Socially	Mixing with people appropriately

Glossary, continued

Budgeting

Simple	Everyday spending
Complex	Bills, budgeting, planning

Mobility terms

Plan & Follow a Journey	Going out, following routes, coping with unfamiliar places
Psychological Distress	Anxiety, panic, or mental health difficulties
Stand & Move	Standing and walking (not wheelchair distance)

Other useful terms

Descriptor	How your ability is assessed (scores points)
Case Manager	DWP decision maker
Healthcare Professional	Person doing your assessment
PIP2 Form	“How your disability affects you” (main form)

Simple way to think about PIP

It is not about your condition

It is about how your condition affects your daily life

Always ask:

> **“What would happen if I had no help?”**