



# Assessments

PIP Guide Series: 3

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# Assessment Arrangements

The DWP might ask you to attend an assessment. You don't need to be worried if this happens – most claimants have an assessment.

The assessment can be conducted as a phone call, video call, home visit or at an assessment centre. You can let the DWP know if you have a preference or if an assessment method would be difficult or inaccessible for you. You can also tell them of any other reasonable adjustments you require.



It is important that you go to this! Your PIP claim will be rejected if you don't attend the assessment and you will have to restart your application.

If you have missed your appointment or if you are unable to attend it, you must contact the assessment provider straight away! They may be able to reschedule it or provide reasonable adjustments which make it possible for you to attend, if you explain your situation. The number to contact is on your appointment letter.

The PIP assessment provides more information for the decision maker. Points are awarded as outlined in the 'PIP2 Form – How Your Disability Affects You' guide.

# Preparing for PIP Assessment

There are a few things you can do to prepare for a PIP assessment:

Make sure any additional evidence you want to include has been sent to the DWP. Your PIP2 “how your disability affects you” form and the assessment report will be considered as evidence. You can send more evidence to support your claim.

Consider what reasonable adjustments you may need and ask for them. Be aware that you might not get what you ask for. If this happens, you should continue with the assessment and make a note of any difficulties you faced. You can mention these difficulties in an appeal.



PIP assessments can be very tiring. You may want to consider arranging time before and after the assessment to allow you to rest.



Inform the DWP that you intend to record the assessment. You are allowed to record the assessment audio for your own use. Having a recording of what was said can be helpful if you want to appeal the outcome. You are not allowed to record videos.

Create a checklist of the key points you wrote in your PIP2 form to refer to during the assessment. You can also have a copy of the PIP2 form with you in the assessment.

You might find it helpful to create scripts for yourself and the person supporting you to explain things to the assessor.

Work out how long you usually need for breaks to be helpful and write this time down. A break in the assessment is supposed to be for your benefit, to allow yourself time to rest and refocus. Having an idea of what you might need can help reduce pressure for you to continue before you are ready.



# Support for the Assessment

Ask someone to support you during the assessment and prepare with them. Make sure they know what you intend to say and how to best support you. Make sure they know the signs to look out for that indicate you are distressed, overwhelmed or struggling to communicate.

In most situations, the person supporting you should not answer questions for you. They can help you by prompting you if there is an example you could give, or if you forget to add context about what help you need to complete tasks. They can help highlight if your answers don't give an accurate picture of your situation. They can also help interpret your answers, for example if you have unclear speech or use alternative communication methods.



# Your Typical Day



Don't change your typical day  
- don't make a special effort!

If you typically struggle to get washed and dressed, don't push yourself to do this. The PIP assessors are likely to ask you about when you last did these tasks and treat your answer as if it reflects a typical day. They also often make assumptions based on their observations and might not ask follow-up questions to see if these assumptions are correct.

Have a copy of your completed 'PIP2 - how your disability affects you' form. You can refer back to what you have already told the DWP.

Make sure you have any sensory and communication tools available that you would find helpful. It is okay for you to use communication aids and sensory equipment to help you during the assessment. If you need extra time to respond because you are using these tools, the assessor should be patient and allow you to respond.



# Communication

Ask the assessor to use clear direct questions and follow-up questions. Ask them to explain what information they are trying to find out. Explain that you are autistic, and that this communication adjustment will help you understand and answer questions.

If the assessor does not communicate in an accessible manner, you can inform them that it is difficult for you to understand what they are asking.

If this doesn't resolve things, try your best to complete the assessment. You can mention that you had communication difficulties during the assessment if you need to appeal.



Ask for questions to be repeated or reworded if you need to.

Try not to mask. Let yourself stim, use alternative communication methods, leave the room if it gets too overwhelming. If you have someone with you to support you, then let them help you explain your needs to the assessor. They can say what you prepared in advance.



# Explaining your Difficulties

In the PIP assessment, the assessor will be looking for evidence of your difficulties. Tell them where you need help. The assessor might not directly ask if you need prompting, supervision or assistance, or if you use aids to help you, or if an activity causes you pain or distress. You should still tell them about these things even if they don't ask.

Let the assessor know what impact things have on you even if they don't ask directly.



Don't focus on what you can do or what you enjoy doing as this can hide the things you find difficult. **The assessor needs to know what is distressing, tiring, painful or hard.**

The assessor might ask about your hobbies. Be aware that there isn't a PIP activity for hobbies, but some hobbies might overlap with PIP activities. Some claimants report feeling that their hobbies were used to discredit their difficulties. If this happens, consider appealing and clarifying how your disability affects you.

You should also explain where the effect your conditions have is variable.

Be prepared to tell the assessor how often you are able to do things. It can be helpful to have a diary which demonstrates which days you have and have not been able to complete tasks

The assessor might ask about how you are on “good days” and “bad days”. Be aware that the assessor is likely to interpret what this means differently to you. They could interpret “good day” to mean that you have no difficulties at all whereas you might think of a “good day” as one where you manage to complete an activity despite those difficulties. Let them know clearly what your difficulties are instead of using these terms.

Remember that you should let the assessor know about the worst, most difficult days. If you sometimes don't cope, but are coping on the day of the assessment, you will need to tell the assessor about the bad days. If you don't tell them, they won't know about it.

You can repeat what you told them in the form. You don't have to answer the questions from memory. Some claimants report that they have been recorded as “having sufficient memory” for tasks because they were able to inform the assessor of the medication they take. When asked about activities you can inform the assessor clearly if you have the information in front of you, or ask the person supporting you to help give the information.

# After the Assessment



After the assessment, you will need to wait for a decision to be made about your claim. You will receive a letter informing you what decision was made.

If you are happy with the outcome, you do not need to do anything more.

If you are not happy with the outcome, you can appeal by requesting a mandatory reconsideration.

If you choose to request a mandatory reconsideration, please refer to the Appeals Guide in this series.



# Other guides in the series:

## Core Guides:

Guide 1: Starting Your PIP Claim

Guide 2: How Your Disability Affects You

Guide 3: Assessments ←

Guide 4: Understanding Your PIP Award

Guide 5: Appeals

Guide 6: Renewing PIP

## Supplementary Guides:

- Definitions
- PIP Evidence
- Reasonable Adjustments
- Mental Wellbeing Through the PIP Process



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