



**Autism
AIM**

Definitions

Supplementary Guide

PIP Terminology

There are a few words which have legal definitions for PIP that are used throughout the form. It is important to understand what these words mean so you can decide when it is appropriate to use them.



Aid or Appliance

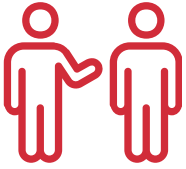
Any device or tool that helps you do things you might find difficult because of a disability or health condition. This could be something like a hearing aid or a grabber. It could also include aids like social stories, alarms and task boards. It is anything that makes life easier for someone who needs this adaptation to do their daily tasks.



Assistance

Someone physically helping you, not including talking to you. For example, this could be holding or supporting you whilst you walk, or catching you if you fall. It could also be things like fastening buttons when you get dressed.

Guidance by the DWP says 'Assistance is support that requires the presence and physical intervention of another person to help complete the activity – including doing some but not all of the activity in question. This only needs to be required for part of the activity'.



Prompting

Someone reminding or encouraging you to do something. It may also be when someone explains certain tasks to you. For example, if someone reminds you to take your medication, then this is prompting. Prompting can be in person, telephone calls, texts or emails. For this to apply, it only needs to be present for part of the activity.

It is important to also inform the DWP about reminders and alarms, as these could be considered an aid or help show the need for prompting.



Reliably

This means safely, repeatedly, to an acceptable standard and in a reasonable time. For a more detailed breakdown, see the *Reliability* chapter of our How Your Disability Affects You guide.



Supervision

Someone watching over you to make sure you are safe and avoid any adverse event from happening to you. For example, if you need someone to watch you whilst you cook because you might forget things or hurt yourself, then this is supervision. To apply, supervision must be required for the full duration of the activity.



Unaided

This means without the use of an aid or appliance. This also means without the supervision, prompting or assistance of another person. If none of these apply, then this means you can do the task unaided.

Autistic Terminology

Decision makers may not always understand or be aware of autism-specific terminology. Consider providing a short definition the first time you use autism-specific terms. This can help contextualise your experience for the assessor.



Autistic Burnout

Autistic burnout is a response to prolonged or chronic stress. Symptoms can include fatigue, loss of skills or executive functioning, and a lack of tolerance of sensory stimuli.

During burnout, it can be harder to focus or manage activities of daily living. You may also need extra time to recharge.

Burnout can be caused by masking, unmet needs and changes to routine. This is not an exhaustive list of causes.



Executive Functioning

This refers to the set of mental skills that help you plan, organise and manage tasks. It includes things like being able to pay attention, switch focus, flexible thinking, and control impulses. Many daily activities are affected by executive functions.



Interoception

Your body's ability to sense and understand its internal signals, like hunger, thirst, toilet needs, pain or feeling full. It is essentially how you perceive what is going on inside of you.



Masking

Masking is when you hide or change your natural behaviours to fit in with people around you. It may involve suppressing soothing behaviours, such as stimming or intense interests. It can also mean copying behaviours of those around you, such as social scripts. Masking can lead to burnout, increased meltdowns, exhaustion and social isolation.



Meltdown

A meltdown happens when someone feels distress or unable to cope with the situation. It can be a strong reaction to overwhelming cognitive, sensory or emotional experiences.

Autistic meltdowns will look different for different people. They may involve intense emotions like anger, frustration, or anxiety; and may include behaviours like yelling, crying, biting or hitting.

It is important to tell PIP what meltdowns look like to you, including how long these typically last and how long you take to recover from them. It is important to say if you are likely to harm yourself or others during a meltdown.



Sensory Overload

Sensory overload happens when someone receives too much sensory information at once, making it difficult to process. This can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, distressed and physically uncomfortable. It can involve any of the senses.



Shutdown

This is when you may be overwhelmed by sensory or social experiences and retreat into yourself. During a shutdown, you might withdraw from interaction, become non-responsive, or appear disconnected from your surroundings.

Like meltdowns, these will look different to different people. It is important to tell PIP what shutdowns look like to you, including how long they last and how long you take to recover from them.



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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