

# Employment and Support Allowance: scoring descriptors

## Part 1: Physical functions

**Activity 1. Mobilising unaided by another person with or without a walking stick, manual wheelchair or other aid if such aid is normally or could reasonably be worn or used.**

- Cannot unaided by another person either:  
mobilise more than 50 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion;  
or  
repeatedly mobilise 50 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion. **Score 15**
- Cannot, unaided by another person, mount or descend two steps even with the support of a handrail. **Score 9**
- Cannot, unaided by another person, either:  
mobilise more than 100 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion;  
or  
repeatedly mobilise 100 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion. **Score 9**
- Cannot, unaided by another person, either:  
mobilise more than 200 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion;  
or  
repeatedly mobilise 200 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

**Activity 2. Standing and sitting.**

- Cannot move between one seated position and another seated position which are located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from another person. **Score 15**
- Cannot, for the majority of the time, remain at a work station:  
standing unassisted by another person (even if free to move around);  
sitting (even in an adjustable chair) or  
a combination of standing and sitting for more than 30 minutes, before needing to move away in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion. **Score 9**
- Cannot, for the majority of the time, remain at a work station:  
standing unassisted by another person (even if free to move around);  
sitting (even in an adjustable chair); or

a combination of both  
for more than an hour before needing to move away in order to avoid significant  
discomfort or exhaustion. **Score 6**

- None of the above applies **Score 0**

#### **Activity 3. Reaching.**

- Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat or jacket. **Score 15**
- Cannot raise either arm to top of head as if to put on a hat. **Score 9**
- Cannot raise either arm above head height as if to reach for something. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

#### **Activity 4. Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms.**

- Cannot pick up and move a 0.5 litre carton full of liquid. **Score 15**
- Cannot pick up and move a one litre carton full of liquid. **Score 9**
- Cannot transfer a light but bulky object such as an empty cardboard box. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

#### **Activity 5. Manual dexterity.**

- Cannot press a button (such as a telephone keypad) with either hand or cannot turn the pages of a book with either hand. **Score 15**
- Cannot pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with either hand. **Score 15**
- Cannot use a pen or pencil to make a meaningful mark. **Score 9**
- Cannot single-handedly use a suitable keyboard or mouse. **Score 9**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

#### **Activity 6. Making self understood through speaking, writing, typing, or other means which are normally or could reasonably be used, unaided by another person.**

- Cannot convey a simple message, such as the presence of a hazard. **Score 15**
- Has significant difficulty conveying a simple message to strangers. **Score 15**
- Has some difficulty conveying a simple message to strangers. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

#### **Activity 7. Understanding communication by:**

**verbal means (such as hearing or lip reading) alone, non-verbal means (such as reading 16-point print or Braille) alone; or a combination of both verbal/non-verbal using any aid that is normally or could reasonably be used, unaided by another person.**

- Cannot understand a simple message, such as the location of a fire escape, due to sensory impairment. **Score 15**

- Has significant difficulty understanding a simple message from a stranger due to sensory impairment. **Score 15**
- Has some difficulty understanding a simple message from a stranger due to sensory impairment. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

**Activity 8. Navigation and maintaining safety using a guide dog or other aid if either or both are normally or could reasonably be used.**

- Unable to navigate around familiar surroundings, without being accompanied by another person, due to sensory impairment. **Score 15**
- Cannot safely complete a potentially hazardous task such as crossing the road, without being accompanied by another person, due to sensory impairment. **Score 15**
- Unable to navigate around unfamiliar surroundings, without being accompanied by another person, due to sensory impairment. **Score 9**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

**Activity 9. Absence or loss of control whilst conscious leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or bladder, other than enuresis (bed-wetting), despite the wearing or use of any aids or adaptations which are normally or could reasonably be worn or used.**

- At least once a month experiences:  
loss of control leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or voiding of the bladder; or  
substantial leakage of the contents of a collecting device, sufficient to require cleaning and a change in clothing. **Score 15**
- The majority of time is at risk of loss of control leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or voiding of the bladder, sufficient to require cleaning and a change in clothing, if not able to reach a toilet quickly. **Score 6**
- Neither of the above applies. **Score 0**

**Activity 10. Consciousness during waking moments.**

- At least once a week, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration. **Score 15**
- At least once a month, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0.**

## Part 2: Mental, cognitive and intellectual functions

### Activity 11. Learning tasks.

- Cannot learn how to complete a simple task, e.g. setting an alarm clock. **Score 15**
- Cannot learn anything beyond a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock. **Score 9**
- Cannot learn anything beyond a moderately complex task, such as the steps involved in operating a washing machine to clean clothes. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

### Activity 12. Awareness of everyday hazards (such as boiling water or sharp objects).

- Reduced awareness of everyday hazards leads to a significant risk of:  
injury to self or others; or  
damage to property or possessions such that the claimant requires supervision for the majority of the time to maintain safety. **Score 15**
- Reduced awareness of everyday hazards leads to a significant risk of  
injury to self or others; or  
damage to property or possessions such that the claimant frequently requires supervision to maintain safety. **Score 9**
- Reduced awareness of everyday hazards leads to a significant risk of:  
injury to self or others; or  
damage to property or possessions such that the claimant occasionally requires supervision to maintain safety. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

### Activity 13. Initiating and completing personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks).

- Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions. **Score 15**
- Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions for the majority of the time. **Score 9**
- Frequently cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions. **Score 6**
- None of the above applies. **Score 0**

### Activity 14. Coping with change.

- Cannot cope with any change to the extent that day-to-day life cannot be managed. **Score 15**
- Cannot cope with minor planned change (such as a pre-arranged change to the routine time scheduled for a lunch break), to the extent that, overall, day-to-day life is made significantly more difficult. **Score 9**