



## **Preparing for your PIP assessment**

Unless you have a terminal illness, you'll usually have to have an assessment to complete your Personal Independence Payment (PIP) application. It's an opportunity for you to talk about how your condition affects you - it's not a diagnosis of your condition or a medical examination.

It's important that you prepare for your assessment because it's how the DWP decides whether or not you can get PIP.

Assessments are carried out by a health professional who will write a report and send it to the DWP.

### **Talking about how your condition affects you.**

You should be prepared to talk about how your condition affects you even if you've already detailed it on your PIP claim form. It can be hard to do this but it will really help if you can talk about:

- the kind of things you have difficulty with, or can't do at all - for example, walking up steps without help or remembering to go to appointments
- how your condition affects you from day to day
- what a bad day is like for you - for example, 'On a bad day, I can't walk at all because my injured leg hurts so much' or 'On a bad day, I'm so depressed I can't concentrate on anything'

It's a good idea to take a copy of your PIP claim form with you. That way you can refer to it in the assessment and make sure you tell the assessor everything you want them to know about your condition.

### **Observations on what you say and do during the assessment**

The assessor will use the information you gave on your PIP claim form but also draw opinions from what you say and do on the day. For example, they might ask you how you got to the assessment centre. If you say you came on the bus, they'll make a note that you can travel alone on public transport.

You might also be asked to carry out some physical tasks during the assessment. Don't feel you have to do things in the assessment that you wouldn't normally be able to do. If you do them on assessment day, the assessor may think you can always do them. If you're not comfortable with something - say so.

## **Take someone with you for support**

You can take someone with you into the actual assessment if they're 16 or over. This could be anyone who makes you feel more comfortable, like a friend, relative or carer. If you want, they can take part in discussions and take notes for you.

Include this person's details on your PIP claim form. If you've already sent the form, phone the assessment centre and tell them you will have someone with you. Try to do this at least 2 working days in advance.

## **Ask for an adjustment**

Check with the assessment centre that it has everything you need (if it doesn't, you can ask for it). This can help make you feel more comfortable on the day. For example:

- ask if you'll have to go upstairs, and if there's a lift that can accommodate a wheelchair if you need one
- ask how roomy the centre is if you get anxious in enclosed spaces - if the rooms or corridors are small, tell them this could make you anxious and see what they can offer you
- ask for an interpreter or signer if you need one - do this at least 2 working days before your assessment so they have time to organise it
- ask for the person carrying out the assessment to be the same gender as you, if that's important to you
- ask if you can make an audio recording of the assessment - you must ask to do this before your assessment and ask the centre about the rules for using recording equipment

## **Changing the venue**

If the location of your assessment is more than 90 minutes away by public transport you may be offered an alternative location or home visit.

You might be offered a home visit instead of having to go to an assessment centre, if your GP normally visits you in your home.

## **How to ask for an adjustment**

To ask for an adjustment, phone the assessment centre using the number on your appointment letter. If you ask for an adjustment and it's not made, this could be discrimination - contact your local advice agency for more help.

## **Warning: you must go to your assessment**

You must go to your assessment otherwise your PIP claim will be rejected and you'll have to start the application process all over again.

Contact the assessment centre straight away if you can't make your appointment or if you've already missed it. If you've a good reason for not going they may reschedule it. The number to contact is on your appointment letter.

There are no rules on what is a good reason for missing an assessment but the DWP should take into account your health and things that may affect you like a family bereavement.

If your PIP claim is rejected because you missed your assessment, you can ask the DWP to change this decision. You must have been given at least 7 days' written notice of the assessment date (unless you agreed to a shorter notice period).

## **Travel expenses**

The cost of the journey from your home to the assessment centre (and back again), parking and fuel can be reimbursed. If you take someone with you to the assessment, their travel costs can be reimbursed but only if they travel with you.

You can't get your travel expenses paid before the assessment and you can't be reimbursed for things like meals and loss of earnings.

If you travel by taxi, you must get the centre to approve the use of the taxi before your assessment. If you don't, they may not reimburse the fare.

If you travel by car, the cost of parking can be reimbursed and 25p per mile can be paid towards the cost of fuel.

## **How to claim travel expenses**

Ask the receptionist at the assessment centre for a travel expenses claim form and pre-paid self-addressed envelope. Include all your tickets and receipts with the claim form.

## **Help sheet for the day of your assessment**

Don't let the assessor rush you and try not to just answer 'yes' or 'no' to their questions. Always try to explain how doing something would make you feel afterwards and the impact it can have on you if you had to do it repeatedly in a short period of time.

Download the PIP assessment help sheet - to take with you to your assessment:

[https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Documents/Advice%20\(public\)/pip-helpsheet-assessment.pdf](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Documents/Advice%20(public)/pip-helpsheet-assessment.pdf)

Print it out and take it with you. It includes tips on what to take to your assessment, and do's and don'ts during the assessment.