

Quick Personal Independence Payment (PIP) tips for family carers

The PIP application process can be a daunting and emotionally draining process for many family carers.

Not only does the outcome have huge implications for you and your relative, but you also have to think about your relative in a very negative light and about all of the things that they struggle to do.

First of all though – don't despair! These tips are intended to make the process of completing the form as straightforward as possible, and help you complete it in a way that will give the assessors an accurate picture of your relative's situation.

PIP tips

- Familiarise yourself with the application form and read over any PIP literature that you have. Read through the 12 activities and choose the ones which you think apply to your relative. Don't attempt to complete the application form in one go – instead, **try to complete just one activity per day**.
- If you need more time for the PIP application process, because of a hospital appointment or a holiday, contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) immediately to request this. If you cannot collect additional evidence in time don't worry as it can be sent after the deadline date. However, **it is essential that the application is made in time or your relative's claim could be refused** – so ensure that it is sent recorded delivery ahead of the deadline.
- **Always fill out the boxes for extra information** and state the obvious in the assessment because it won't be obvious to the assessor.
- **Provide real-life examples** for each activity, particularly if there are any safety concerns or risks involved with your relative carrying out the task, and provide as much detail as possible.

- Assessors must consider the following factors for each activity:
 - the **approach** (how the person carries out the task, what assistance is required, and how long it takes to complete the task and whether it is safe)
 - the **outcome** (whether the activity can be successfully completed and to what standard)
 - the **impact** (the effect that reaching the outcome has on the individual and others, and whether the individual can repeat the activity in a reasonable timeframe to the same standard)
 - the **variability** (how an individual's approach and outcome changes overtime, and what impact this has on them).

So think about: what your relative's health condition or disability is, and how this impacts on each activity; the problems and challenges associated with carrying out each activity; whether the problems arise during the morning, evening, at night, or all of the time; how your relative's condition varies, from day-to-day or week-to-week, and how much it varies; and what problems your relative experiences when they are at their best, worst and average.

- **Consider keeping a diary** for the next two weeks of how your relative is affected day-to-day by their health condition or disability. This will help to evidence their daily challenges and any fluctuating conditions.
- **Remember the 'reliability' factor.** A person must be able to carry out an activity safely, to an acceptable standard, repeatedly, and in a reasonable time period. If the person is not able to do an activity 'reliably', in all the four ways listed above (even with an aid or appliance), then they cannot do that activity.
- **Include details of any help needed** – even if your relative does not receive that help. Make reference to any supervision, prompting or assistance needed or provided from another person, and list any aids (eg a walking stick), appliances (eg a wheelchair) or personalised technology (eg a safety kettle) that your relative uses or needs.
- **Consider writing your own report** about what you feel your relative's challenges are. This is also your opportunity to tell the DWP if you feel that your relative would not cope with a face-to-face assessment and why. Similarly, if your relative has mobility problems and would struggle to get to an assessment centre then this is your opportunity to request a home visit.
- **Keep a photocopy of the application form**, and staple any additional pages to the original that you intend to send to the DWP. Write your relative's name, national insurance number and date of birth on the top of each additional page.

You could also provide a list of the additional pages and documents that you have sent, to ensure that everything is accounted for.

- **The more evidence that you provide the better the outcome is likely to be.** Include any assessments that provide an accurate account of your relative's condition and how it affects them. This could be a recent adult social care assessment, a care and support plan, or a behavioural plan, or reports from psychologists, psychiatrists and care providers. You could also request a supporting letter from your relative's GP (contact us for a template). You may be asked to pay for new evidence reports; however, you can ask the DWP to request the reports instead – but, you risk them not requesting the information and the evidence not being considered.
- **Send photocopies of the evidence** rather than the original documents. Do not mark any evidence as 'confidential' or 'in confidence'.

If you are still struggling to complete the assessment on your own, ask social services to provide you with contact details for local benefits support groups and charities. You can also contact us for more information.

Contact the Family Carer Support Service

Tel: Freephone **0808 801 0448**. We're available to talk Tuesday to Thursday 9:15am to 4pm, but if you call outside of these hours, please leave a voicemail and we will return your call within seven working days.

Email: familycarersupport@hft.org.uk