

Personal Independence Payment



Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a new benefit that was introduced in Northern Ireland on 20th June 2016. From this date, anyone aged 16 to 64 years old can no longer make a claim for Disability Living Allowance but instead must apply for PIP.

Who can claim?

To qualify for PIP you must meet all the following criteria:

- Aged 16 - 64 years.
- Satisfy the daily living and/or mobility activities test.
- Have satisfied the tests for at least three months and be likely to continue to satisfy the test for at least nine months after the three-month qualifying period (you can make your claim before the three months have passed, but you will not receive any payment until they have).
- The benefit is not means tested and is non-taxable and non-contributory. This means that entitlement to PIP is not dependent on someone's financial status or whether they have paid National Insurance Contributions. PIP can be awarded to those in part time or full time as well as those unemployed.
- Have no immigration conditions attached to your stay in the UK subject to some exceptions.
- Meet the residence and presence conditions.

Throughout this factsheet there will be references to an autistic adult.

Most decisions about PIP that are turned down are often because an applicant does not put enough information down on the form about the impact autism has on care needs or mobility.

Consider the basis for diagnosis and the effects of the disability. Not just their behaviours but how their behaviour affects their safety; the safety of others and their mobility.

Think about the life stage they are at and how that is impacting upon them differently. Are there new, emerging issues to deal with? Are some interventions that

previously worked no longer effective? What strategies do they use to get through each day and help the them cope with the challenges that everyday life brings?

How is PIP awarded?

PIP has two parts - the daily living component and a mobility component. You can claim either or both components depending on your needs. Each component is awarded at two rates, either: -

- Standard rate – where your ability to carry out daily living/mobility activities is limited by your physical or mental condition.
- Enhanced rate – where your ability to carry out daily living/mobility activities is severely limited by your physical or mental condition.

To be awarded the standard rate of the daily living component you have to score at least eight points from the ten activities that assess daily living.

To be awarded the enhanced rate you have to score at least 12 points from the ten activities that assess daily living. A table of descriptors is available online regarding area points, please visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/Migrated_Documents/adviceguide/pip-9-table-of-activities-descriptors-and-points.pdf

To be awarded the standard rate of the mobility component you have to score at least eight points from the two activities that assess mobility.

To be awarded the enhanced rate of the mobility component you have to score at least 12 points from the two activities that assess mobility.

How much will I get?

(2023/24 weekly rates) – these rates will normally change in April each year.

	Standard	Enhanced
Daily Living Component	£68.10	£101.75
Mobility Component	£26.90	£71.00

How do I apply?

A claim for PIP is generally made by telephone although paper claim forms are available in exceptional circumstances (Form PIP1). To start a new claim for PIP telephone the PIP Centre on 0800 012 1573 (Textphone 0800 012 1574)

The telephone call can be made by someone else, but they will need to be with you. The telephone call sets the date of the claim and you will need the information listed below:

- Your full name and date of birth.
- Your address and telephone number.
- Your National Insurance number.
- Your bank or building society account details.
- Your GP or health professional's details.
- Details of any recent stays in hospitals, care homes or hospices.
- Details of any time you have spent outside of the country.
- Nationality or immigration details.
- If you are terminally ill, you will need to discuss your conditions during this initial claim.

The PIP Centre will then check eligibility conditions, if these are met a bar-coded form is sent to you by post. (PIP 2)

How your disability affects you (PIP 2)

How you present your case is very important. The person who assesses your application is unlikely to have detailed knowledge of autism. It is important to give them as much relevant information as possible.

Seek assistance from an independent advice centre and take your time. The form is long, and it can be completed in sections.

This form will ask for information about how your disability affects you. They will not collect additional evidence (the responsibility is on the applicant to send supporting evidence back with the completed form). Therefore it is important that it is included. Please photocopy any documents you are sending as you can take them to the Health Care Professional (HCP) assessor during the assessment, ensuring they have read them.

Examples of supporting evidence:

- You can send evidence of prescription lists, paediatrician/hospital reports, Occupational Therapist (OT) or Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) reports, attendance letters for appointments or counselling etc.
 - You can also submit evidence from other people such as a letter from a social worker, school (if applicable) or other supports (Autism NI can provide a letter of advocacy)
 - A diary can be included to detail how autism affects you and/or varies over time
- On the form there is a section for 'additional information'. In this section, carers, friends or family can also provide information if they understand well the difficulties faced.

Overview the twelve activities, work out which tests are satisfied before filling out the form. Remember to consider the following four points when determining ability to undertake/participate/complete the twelve activities:

Safely: In a way that is unlikely, to cause harm to the applicant or anyone else, either during or after the task is completed. For something to be seen as unsafe, harm must be 'likely to occur' rather than you are feeling that it 'may occur'.

To an acceptable standard: A standard that is good enough; i.e. of a standard that most people would normally expect to achieve. An example of not completing a task to an acceptable standard would be if an applicant can manage to wash but do not realise they have completed it inadequately and are still not clean afterwards.

Repeatedly: Being able to repeat the task as often as is reasonably required. The combined effects are relevant because the effort of completing a task could make it harder to repeat it or to complete other activities. An example may be that the applicant is able to prepare a meal once without help, but the exhaustion from doing this means that another meal could not be prepared that day. Therefore the applicant should be treated as being unable to prepare a meal unaided.

In a reasonable time: No more than twice as long as the maximum amount of time as a person without the applicant's disability. An example may be that many autistic individuals can walk, but still receive a mobility component, as they cannot make good progress outdoors, unless another person helps them, and this can take longer.

Other important form filling points:

- Whether the applicant needs the help, not whether they are already getting it.
- If the applicant is unsure of how much help or how long, keep a daily diary for approximately one week.
- If they are applying for the moving around activity (point 2, mobility activities), take a proper measurement of how far and how long it takes to walk that far.
- Seek help from a local advice agency to complete the claim form, ask for an adviser with autism awareness if possible.
- Keep a photocopy of your form and evidence you send.

Assessment

The form and evidence have to be returned in the envelope provided within one month and are sent to a health professional.

If there is enough information an assessment may be completed at this stage, the majority of applicants are called for a face to face assessment. Ask if you can request a paper based assessment as an alternative.

Plan the journey to the assessment centre (if not a home assessment) in advance. We strongly recommend attending with an appointee or family/friend who knows the applicant and how their disability affects them.

It is an opportunity for the applicant to talk about how their disability affects them - it is not a diagnosis or a medical examination.

It is important to prepare. Evidence from the assessment will decide if PIP should be awarded.

A health professional will carry out the assessment - they'll write a report and send it to the decision maker.

The Decision

The PIP Centre in Northern Ireland will send you a letter providing a decision on the PIP claim and a clear explanation of how that decision has been reached. If the applicant is awarded PIP, the letter will include details on the amount and length of the award and the reasons for reaching this decision.

Refused or low award and challenging a decision

If you are refused PIP or are awarded PIP at a lower rate than expected, you can ask the Department for Communities to look at the award again. This must be completed before you can appeal. It is called a Mandatory Reconsideration. If you are unhappy with a reconsideration decision you must lodge an appeal with the Appeals Service. Attach a copy of the Mandatory Reconsideration notice with the appeal. It is important to get advice as quickly as possible because there are time limits that mean you must take action within one month.

If the applicant was previously in receipt of DLA and refused PIP or has a financial loss, they may be entitled to Welfare Supplementary Payments (WSP). This is not paid through Mandatory Reconsideration but is obtainable during an appeal. For more information and resources about appealing a benefit decision, contact your local advice services.

Useful links

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/nireland

www.adviceni.net/advice

www.cerebra.org.uk/

www.adviceguide.org.uk/n.ireland

www.carersuk.org/appealsguide

www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/benefits-and-pensions



Autism NI is Northern Ireland's main autism charity and works to provide life-changing services for over 35,000 autistic people currently living in Northern Ireland.

Our work wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Your donation can help us continue to provide invaluable autism services, and build an inclusive society where autistic people can reach their full potential.

To make a donation, please visit www.autismni.org or call us on **028 9040 1729**.

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