www.asdhelpinghands.org.uk

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Your guide to understanding and applying for Personal Independence Payment.

Updated October 2025

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1. What is Personal Independence Payment (PIP)?

Personal Independence Payment (often called PIP) is a benefit that helps people aged 16 or over who have a long-term health condition or disability. It's designed to help with the extra costs of living with a condition that affects how you manage everyday life or get around.

PIP is not based on your income, savings, or whether you are working. Instead, it looks at how your condition affects you day-to-day — for example, how you prepare food, communicate, plan journeys, or manage personal care.
PIP has two parts, known as components:

- Daily Living Component – for people who need help with everyday tasks such as eating, washing, dressing, communicating, or managing medication.
- Mobility Component – for people who find it difficult to move around, plan or follow a journey, or experience anxiety or disorientation when travelling.

Each component can be paid at either a Standard or Enhanced rate, depending on how much support you need. Some people qualify for both components, while others qualify for just one.

Unlike Disability Living Allowance (DLA), which PIP replaced for most adults, PIP is not awarded based on your medical diagnosis alone. Instead, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) looks at how your health condition or disability affects your ability to do certain tasks "reliably". This means:

- Safely – you can do it without risk to yourself or others.
- To an acceptable standard – you can do it well enough, not just barely manage.
- Repeatedly – you can do it as often as needed, not just once.
- In a reasonable time – it doesn't take you much longer than someone without your condition.

Because of this, two people with the same diagnosis might receive very different awards. What matters most is the impact your condition has on your everyday life.
If your health condition or disability has lasted (or is expected to last) at least 12 months, and it affects your ability to manage daily living or mobility tasks, you may be eligible to claim PIP.

For many autistic people and those with long-term physical or mental health conditions, PIP can make a real difference — helping to cover extra costs such as transport, equipment, or support services.

2. Can I apply for PIP?

Personal Independence Payment is designed for anyone aged 16 to State Pension age who has a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability that affects how they manage everyday life or move around.

To qualify, your condition must have:

- **Lasted or be expected to last at least 12 months, and**
- **A noticeable impact on your ability to carry out certain daily activities.**

You do not need a formal diagnosis to apply, although having medical evidence can help. What matters most is how your condition affects you, not the name of the condition itself.

PIP can be claimed by people with a wide range of conditions, including:

- Autism, ADHD, and learning differences
- Anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions
- Neurological conditions such as migraines, epilepsy, or multiple sclerosis
- Long-term physical conditions, including chronic pain, fatigue, or mobility issues

PIP is available whether your condition is visible or hidden. Many people with invisible disabilities, such as autism or mental health conditions, qualify because of the impact these have on their daily life, for example, difficulties with communication, decision-making, or coping with change.

You must also meet residency rules, which usually mean:

- You live in England, Scotland, or Wales when you apply, and
- You have lived in Great Britain for at least two of the last three years, unless you're terminally ill or a member of the armed forces.

You can apply for PIP whether you're working, studying, or not working. It isn't affected by your savings, income, or employment status. Some people who receive other benefits (such as Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance) also receive PIP at the same time.

Many people believe that PIP is only for those with physical disabilities or those who "can't work," but this isn't true. PIP recognises that everyone's experience of disability is different. Even if you are independent in some areas, you may still qualify for help if certain tasks are difficult, tiring, or need support from others.

PIP Eligibility Checklist

I am aged 16 or over and under State Pension age.

I live in England, Scotland, or Wales.

I have lived in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years.

I expect my condition to last 12 months or more.

My condition or disability makes daily life or moving around difficult.

If you're unsure whether you might qualify, it's always worth seeking advice before applying. Charities such as ASD Helping Hands can help you understand your eligibility and guide you through the process.

3. The Two PIP Components

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is made up of two parts, known as components. Each one looks at different areas of daily life and mobility. You may qualify for one or both, depending on how your condition affects you.

Daily Living

This part of PIP is for people who need help with everyday tasks at home or in their community. It covers things like:

- **Preparing and cooking food** – for example, needing help using the oven, or being unable to plan and cook safely.
- **Eating and drinking** – needing support to cut up food, remember to eat, or manage dietary needs.
- **Managing medication or treatment** – needing reminders, help organising tablets, or support with medical devices.
- **Washing and bathing** – finding it hard to get in or out of the bath, or needing reassurance or prompts to wash.
- **Dressing and undressing** – struggling with coordination, sensory issues, or fatigue.
- **Managing toilet needs** – needing supervision or physical support.
- **Communicating with others** – difficulty understanding or expressing information clearly.
- **Reading and understanding** information – needing help with letters, forms, or written instructions.
- **Managing money** – needing support to budget, handle cash, or understand bills.

If your condition affects several of these areas, you may be awarded the Daily Living Component.

There are two payment rates:

- **Standard rate** – for people who need some help or support.
- **Enhanced rate** – for people who need a high level of help or supervision.

Daily Living

The Mobility Component is for people who have difficulties getting around or planning and following journeys.

It covers two main areas:

- **Moving around** – for example, being unable to walk short distances without pain, fatigue, or risk of falling.
- **Planning and following journeys** – for people who find it difficult to plan routes, experience anxiety, sensory overload, or become disoriented when travelling alone.

Just like the Daily Living Component, the Mobility Component has two rates:

- **Standard rate** – for people who have some mobility difficulties.
- **Enhanced rate** – for those who have severe difficulties moving around or need significant support to travel safely.

Many people with autism, ADHD, anxiety, or other hidden disabilities qualify for PIP under the planning and following journeys section. This might include difficulties using public transport, needing another person for reassurance, or being unable to go out alone due to sensory or social challenges.

The amount you receive depends on how your condition affects you, not the name of your diagnosis.

Even if you can manage some tasks independently, you may still qualify if it takes you much longer, causes distress, or you need help to do it safely or reliably.

4. How is PIP assessed?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is assessed using a points-based system that looks at how your condition affects your ability to carry out everyday activities — not your diagnosis or the name of your condition.

The assessment focuses on what you can and cannot do safely, repeatedly, to an acceptable standard, and within a reasonable time. These are known as the reliability criteria.

Understanding the Activities

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) uses a set of activities to measure how your condition affects your daily life.

There are **10 Daily Living activities** and **2 Mobility activities**.

Each activity includes specific tasks known as descriptors. You score points depending on the level of help or support you need for each one.

The total points decide whether you receive the Standard or Enhanced rate for each component.

Daily Living Activities Include:

- Preparing food
- Eating and drinking
- Managing treatment or medication
- Washing and bathing
- Managing toilet needs
- Dressing and undressing
- Communicating verbally
- Reading and understanding written information
- Mixing with other people
- Making budgeting decisions

Mobility Activities Include:

- Planning and following journeys
- Moving around

Each activity is scored from 0 to 12 points, depending on how much help you need.

- 8 points or more = Standard rate
- 12 points or more = Enhanced rate

The Importance of Real-Life Examples

When you apply, it's important to describe what life is like on a typical day. Give examples of when things go wrong or when you need help.

For example:

> "I can prepare food, but I often forget to turn off the oven or get overwhelmed by the noise and smells."
>
> "I can go to familiar places, but I can't travel somewhere new without someone with me."

These details show how your condition affects you in practice, rather than how you manage on your best days.

Reliability Matters

To qualify, you must show that you cannot do certain tasks reliably. This means you:

- **Can't do it safely** (you could harm yourself or others)
- **Can't do it repeatedly** (you become too tired, stressed, or unwell)
- **Can't do it to an acceptable standard** (you can't complete the task properly)
- **Can't do it in a reasonable time** (it takes you much longer than it should)

If you can only manage something sometimes or with help, you should explain this clearly. The DWP is interested in what happens most of the time, not just occasionally.

Supporting Evidence

You can send evidence to back up your claim, such as:

- Medical reports, care plans, or diagnosis letters
- Letters from professionals (GPs, therapists, support workers)
- Daily logs or symptom diaries
- Statements from family, carers, or support staff who see the impact of your condition

Strong evidence helps the assessor understand your needs clearly and avoids decisions based on assumptions. It is best if this evidence is dated within the last 12 months, but not necessary.

5. How to apply for PIP?

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can feel overwhelming, but breaking it into small steps makes it more manageable. Below is a simple guide to help you understand what to expect at each stage of the process.

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1 Step 1: Start Your Claim

To begin your claim, you need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

You can do this by phone or by post (using a paper form if you cannot use the phone).

When you call, you'll need to provide:

- Your full name, address, and date of birth
- Your National Insurance number
- Your GP or healthcare professional's details
- Bank account information (for any payments)

You'll then receive a form called "How Your Disability Affects You" (PIP2) in the post.

In some circumstances, you can also start your PIP claim online by visiting: www.apply-for-pip.dwp.gov.uk/eligibility/check-if-eligible

2 Step 2: Complete the PIP2 Form

This form is your chance to explain how your condition affects your daily life.

It includes questions about:

- Everyday tasks (like preparing food or washing)
- How you move around
- The help you need or the difficulties you face

Tips for completing the form:

- Describe what happens on a bad day, not just a good one
- Give detailed examples of when you've struggled
- Explain why you need help — not just that you do
- Use the reliably rule (safely, repeatedly, acceptable standard, reasonable time)
- Send copies of any supporting evidence with the form

You usually have one month to return the form, but you can ask for an extension if you need more time.

3 Step 3: The Assessment

After sending your form, most people are invited to a **PIP assessment.**

This can take place:

- Over the **phone**,
- By **video call**, or
- **In person** at an assessment centre.

During the assessment, a **health professional** will ask questions about your daily life. They may also ask you to describe situations from your form in more detail.

You can:

- Have someone with you for support
- Request reasonable adjustments (for example, a quieter room or longer appointment)
- Ask for the assessment to be **recorded** if it helps you feel comfortable

4 Step 4: Getting a Decision

After the assessment, the DWP will review your form, your evidence, and the assessor's report.

They will then send you a decision letter explaining:

- Whether you've been awarded PIP
- Which components and rates you receive
- The number of points you scored

If you disagree with the outcome, you can ask for a **Mandatory Reconsideration** — a review of your claim (covered later in Section 7).

5 Step 5: Payments

If you're awarded PIP, it's usually paid every four weeks directly into your bank account.

Your award may be short-term or long-term, depending on how the DWP expects your condition to change. Awards are typically awarded for **3 - 4 years** before being reviewed.

Applying for PIP takes time, but it's worth doing if your condition makes everyday life or mobility more difficult. You can get help from **ASD Helping Hands** at any stage of the process — from completing the form to preparing for your assessment.

6. Preparing for your assessment

Once you've sent your PIP form, you may be asked to attend an assessment. This is your opportunity to explain how your condition affects your day-to-day life. It's not a test of your diagnosis, but a chance for the assessor to understand your real-life experiences.

What the Assessment Involves

Most assessments are carried out by a health professional who works for one of the DWP's assessment providers (such as Capita or IAS).

They will ask you questions about:

- How your condition affects you on a daily basis
- What a "typical" day looks like
- What support you need or receive
- How you manage tasks like preparing food, getting dressed, or going out

Assessments usually last around 45 minutes to an hour and may take place:

- Over the **phone**
- By **video call**, or
- **In person** at an assessment centre

Before the Assessment

It's helpful to do a little preparation beforehand.

You can:

- Read through your PIP form so you remember what you wrote.
- Make notes of key examples you want to mention — times when tasks were difficult, took longer, or caused distress.
- Have medical letters, prescriptions, or care plans nearby in case you're asked about them.
- Arrange for someone to be with you if you need support or reassurance.

💡 **Tip: It's okay to have notes in front of you and to refer to them during your assessment.**

During the Assessment

The assessor will ask you questions in plain language, but don't feel rushed. Take your time and explain how things really are, especially on **bad days.**

- If something is painful, exhausting, or distressing, say so.
- Be honest — even if you can sometimes do a task, explain the effort, time, or support it takes.
- Use examples: "Yesterday, I tried to make lunch but got overwhelmed by noise and forgot to eat."

You can ask for **questions to be repeated or explained** if you don't understand.

You're also allowed to ask for **breaks** if you feel anxious or tired.

Requesting Adjustments

You have the right to ask for reasonable adjustments, such as:

- A **quiet waiting room** or **first appointment of the day** (to reduce anxiety)
- A **support perso**n to attend with you
- An **extra-long appointment** if you need more time to answer questions
- A **recorded assessment** so you have a copy for your records

If you need any of these adjustments, contact the assessment provider before your appointment.

Requesting Adjustments

You can ask the DWP for a copy of the assessment report once it's complete.

This can help you understand how the decision was made and can be useful if you later need to challenge it.

Remember: the assessment is only one part of your claim. The final decision will also consider your PIP form and any evidence you sent.

Many people feel anxious before their assessment, but preparation makes a big difference.

Remember this is your chance to share your story. Take your time, be honest, and ask for support if you need it.

7. After you recieve your decision

After your assessment, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will review your claim, your supporting evidence, and the assessor's report. You'll then receive a decision letter in the post explaining the outcome of your claim.

This letter will tell you:

- Whether you've been awarded PIP
- Which components you've been given (Daily Living, Mobility, or both)
- The rate you'll receive (Standard or Enhanced)
- How long your award will last
- The number of points you scored in each area

If You're Awarded PIP

Your payments usually start four weeks after the date of your decision letter. PIP is normally paid every four weeks into your bank account.

Your award may be:

- **Short-term** (1–3 years) – if your condition might change
- **Long-term** (5–10 years) – if your needs are unlikely to change
- **Ongoing** – with only a light-touch review every 10 years

Keep your decision letter safe, as you may need it for other benefits, blue badge applications, or housing support.

If You Disagree with the Decision

If you believe your award is wrong — for example, if your needs haven't been recognised properly — you can ask for it to be looked at again. This process is called a **Mandatory Reconsideration (MR).**

You must ask for a reconsideration **within one month of the date** on your decision letter.

To do this, you can:

- Write a letter explaining why you disagree
- Use the Mandatory Reconsideration form (available at www.gov.uk)
- Contact the DWP by phone to request it verbally

When writing your MR, explain **which parts of the decision you disagree** with and why. Use examples and, if possible, provide **new or clearer evidence** (such as a letter from your GP, therapist, or support worker).

If the Decision Still Doesn’t Change

If your award remains the same after the reconsideration, you have the **right to appeal** to an **independent tribunal.**

Tribunals are separate from the DWP and are made up of professionals who review your case fairly.

Many people win their PIP appeals, especially if they attend the hearing or submit strong written evidence. You can get support from ASD Helping Hands, Citizens Advice, or another advocacy service during this process.

Reviews and Renewals

If your PIP is awarded for a fixed time, the DWP will usually contact you **up to one year before** it’s due to end.

You’ll be asked to **complete a review form** to confirm whether your needs have changed.

If your condition worsens or improves before your next review, you must tell the DWP, as it could affect your payment. However, be aware that reporting a change can trigger a **new assessment**, so seek advice first.

Remember, if your Circumstances change, you need to inform DWP

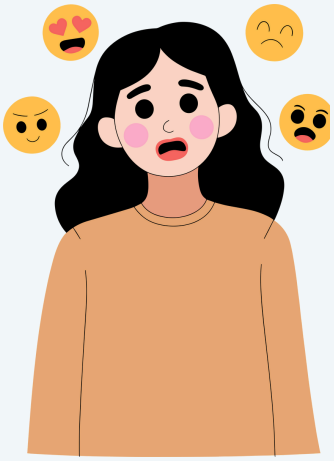
Tell the DWP if:

- You move house or change your GP
- Your health condition changes significantly
- You’re admitted to hospital or residential care
- You leave the country for more than 13 weeks

Keeping your information up to date helps avoid payment delays or overpayments later on.

8. Common challenges and how to overcome them

The PIP process can be confusing and, at times, stressful, especially for autistic people and those with hidden disabilities. Understanding common challenges can help you prepare and feel more confident throughout your claim.



Challenge 1: Feeling Overwhelmed by the Forms

The “How Your Disability Affects You” (PIP2) form is long and can feel daunting.

It asks detailed questions about everyday life that may be difficult to answer.

Try this:

- Take it **one section at a time**, even just one question per day.
- Use **short, clear sentences** and give real-life examples.
- Ask a trusted person, support worker, or charity (like ASD Helping Hands) for help completing it.
- Keep a **daily log of difficulties** — what went wrong, how you felt, and what help you needed.

Challenge 2: The Assessor Doesn’t Understand Autism or Hidden Disabilities

Some assessors may not fully understand the impact of autism, anxiety, or sensory differences.

They might assume that because you appear capable, you don’t need support.

Try this:

- Be honest about what happens behind the scenes — the effort, distress, or exhaustion certain tasks cause.
- Avoid phrases like “I’m fine” or “I manage,” unless you explain **how** you manage and **what support** you need to do so.
- Use examples from your daily life to make your challenges clear and relatable.
- Bring written notes or have a supporter who can explain things if you find communication difficult.

Challenge 3: Forgetting to Include Mental Health or Sensory Difficulties

Many people only write about their physical challenges, forgetting to mention emotional, cognitive, or sensory impacts.

Try this:

- Include how **anxiety, fatigue, memory issues, or sensory overload** affect your ability to complete tasks.
- Explain if you need **reminders, structure, or reassurance** to do things safely.
- Describe what happens if you try to push through difficulties — do you shut down, become distressed, or need recovery time?

Challenge 4: Worrying About the Assessment

It's completely normal to feel anxious about your assessment. Many people fear they won't be believed or that they'll say the wrong thing.

Try this:

- Prepare notes with examples you want to mention.
- Have a family member, carer, or friend join you for support.
- Ask for **reasonable adjustments**, such as extra time or a quieter setting.
- Take breaks during the appointment if you need them.

Challenge 5: Getting a Low or No Award

If you're unhappy with your decision, remember — you have the right to challenge it. Many people receive higher awards after a **Mandatory Reconsideration** or **Appeal.**

Try this:

- Read your decision letter carefully to see where points were missed.
- Write down examples that match the descriptors you think should apply to you.
- Get support from ASD Helping Hands or another advice organisation to help you write your appeal clearly.

Challenge 6: Losing Confidence

The process can take a toll on your wellbeing. It’s important to look after yourself and seek support when you need it.

Try this:

- Take breaks from paperwork and focus on activities that help you relax.
- Reach out to trusted people for reassurance or help.
- Remember: t**he goal of PIP is to support you**, not to catch you out.
- Asking for help shows strength — it’s part of self-advocacy.

Everyone’s experience of PIP is different, but with the right preparation and support, you can navigate the process successfully.

If you need help completing forms, preparing evidence, or understanding your decision, ASD Helping Hands is here to support you at every step.

9. ASD Helping Hands: PIP Support Service

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can feel stressful and confusing, especially when you're unsure how to describe your needs or what evidence to include.

Our PIP Support Service is here to guide you through the entire process — from your first form to your final decision.

What We Offer

We provide one-to-one support, tailored to your individual needs.

Our team has experience supporting autistic people and their families through every stage of a PIP claim.

We can help you:

- **Complete your PIP** form clearly and effectively, focusing on how autism and other conditions impact your daily life.
- **Support to gather supporting evidence** from professionals, carers, or family members to strengthen your claim.
- **Prepare for your healthcare assessment**, including practical advice on what to expect and how to explain your needs confidently.
- **Understand the appeals process** and what to do if you disagree with your decision

.

Our aim is to make the PIP process **less overwhelming** and to help you give the DWP a clear picture of your everyday challenges.

Service Fees

As a non-profit charity, any fees we charge go directly back into ASD Helping Hands, helping us continue to support autistic people and their families across Norfolk.

Our pricing is simple and transparent:

- **£50.00 upfront fee** – covers your consultation, completion of your PIP form, and advice for your face-to-face assessment if needed.
- **10% of your backdated award (capped at £150.00)** – only if your claim is successful.
- Additional support for Mandatory Reconsiderations or Appeals is available for an agreed extra charge, discussed in advance.

We **can't guarantee** the outcome of any application, but we'll make sure your form and evidence give you the best possible chance of success.

Who We Help

Our service is open to anyone aged 16 to 65 living in Norfolk who needs support with a new PIP claim or review.

We welcome autistic adults, parents or carers supporting an autistic person, and anyone struggling to complete the complex paperwork alone.

Get in Touch

If you'd like our help with your PIP claim, please contact us or complete the enquiry form on our website.

🌐 Website: www.asdhelpinghands.org.uk/personal-independence-payment-support-service/

📧 Email: contact@asdhelpinghands.org.uk

📞 Phone: 01362 685860

10. Useful Contacts and Resources

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can feel complicated, but there are organisations and resources that can offer support, advice, and information at every stage of your claim.

Below are some places to go for help and support.

ASD Helping Hands

Your local autism charity provides one-to-one support, information, and advice for autistic people, their families, and professionals.

- **PIP Support Service**: Help with completing forms, gathering evidence, and preparing for assessments.
- **Other services**: Training, advice sessions, and family support across Norfolk.

🌐 www.asdhelpinghands.org.uk
✉️ contact@asdhelpinghands.org.uk
📞 01362 685860

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

The government department responsible for PIP.

- Apply for PIP, report changes, or request a Mandatory Reconsideration.

🌐 www.gov.uk/pip
📞 PIP New Claims: 0800 917 2222
📞 PIP Enquiries: 0800 121 4433

Citizens Advice

Provides independent, confidential advice on benefits, appeals, and financial issues.

🌐 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
📞 0800 144 8848

Scope

A national disability equality charity offering advice on benefits, accessibility, and independent living.

🌐 www.scope.org.uk
📞 0808 800 3333

Benefits and Work

An online resource with detailed, step-by-step guidance on claiming PIP, including sample answers and appeal advice.

🌐 www.benefitsandwork.co.uk

Motability

If you receive the Enhanced Rate Mobility Component, you may be able to use it towards leasing a car, scooter, or powered wheelchair.

🌐 www.motability.co.uk

Local Support

Your local council or support organisations may also offer help with benefits, budgeting, or transport schemes.

To find local services, visit:
🌐 www.norfolkautismdirectory.org.uk

11. Final Tips and Reassurance

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be challenging, but remember — you are not alone. Many people find the process confusing or overwhelming at times, especially when they live with autism or other hidden disabilities.

Here are a few final reminders to help you through:

Be Honest and Detailed

Don't downplay your difficulties. It's okay to explain how hard things can be, even if it feels uncomfortable. The DWP can only make a fair decision if they understand what daily life is really like for you.

Use Real Examples

When describing your needs, give clear examples of what happens on bad days. Real situations, such as missing meals, getting lost, or struggling with noise, show the true impact of your condition.

Take Your Time

You don't have to rush. Completing the forms and gathering evidence can take time, and that's okay. Take breaks, ask for help, and work at your own pace.

Ask for Support

You are entitled to support — whether that's help completing your form, having someone with you at your assessment, or guidance through an appeal.
ASD Helping Hands and other organisations are here to make the process clearer and less stress

Remember Your Worth

PIP exists to help people who need extra support — not to judge or penalise them.
You have every right to apply and to be treated with respect throughout the process.

> If you take one message away from this booklet, let it be this:
>
> **Your experiences are valid, your challenges matter, and you deserve support.**

ASD Helping Hands

Our Mission

"Empowering autistic individuals and those around them, ASD Helping Hands is dedicated to fostering confidence, independence, and inclusion at every stage of life. We provide guidance, education, and resources to help individuals, families, and professionals navigate autism with knowledge and empowerment.

We champion the rights of autistic people, striving to create a more inclusive society while ensuring our services remain accessible, reliable, and built on trust."

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Charity Number: 1175729

Updated March 2025