

Benefits Factsheet

Personal Independence Payment – Descriptors and Scores – April 2017

These are the scores that are used for deciding entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Our other factsheet gives more general information on the Personal Independence Payment.

The first ten activities relate to the daily living component. The remaining two 2 relate to the mobility component.

Daily Living Activities - Descriptors and Scores

Activity	Descriptor	Points
1. Preparing food	a. can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided	0
	b. needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal	2
	c. cannot cook a simple meal using a conventional cooker but is able to do so using a microwave.	2
	d. needs prompting to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal	2
	e. needs supervision or assistance to either prepare or cook a simple meal	4
	f. cannot prepare and cook food	8
2. Taking nutrition	a. can take nutrition unaided	0
	b. needs - (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or (ii) supervision to be able to be able to take nutrition; or (iii) assistance to be able to cut up food	2
	c. needs a therapeutic source to be able to take nutrition	2
	d. needs prompting to be able to take nutrition	4
	e. needs assistance to be able to manage a therapeutic source to take nutrition	6
	f. cannot convey food and drink to their mouth and needs another person to do so.	10

3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition	a. either – (i) does not receive medication or therapy or need to monitor a health condition; or (ii) can manage medication or therapy or monitor a health condition unaided.	0
	b. Needs any one or more of the following (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage medication; (ii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication. (iii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to monitor a health condition	1
	c. needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes no more than 3.5 hours a week	2
	d. needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 3.5 but no more than 7 hours a week.	4
	e. needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 7 but no more than 14 hours a week	6
	f. needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 14 hours a week.	8
4. Washing and bathing	a. can wash and bathe unaided	0
	b. needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to wash or bathe	2
	c. needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe	2
	d. needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist	2
	e. needs assistance to be able to get in or out of a bath or shower	3
	f. needs assistance to be able to wash their body between the shoulders and waist	4
	g. cannot wash and bathe at all and needs another person to wash their entire body	8
5. Managing toilet needs or incontinence	a. can manage toilet needs or incontinence unaided	0
	b. needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage toilet needs or incontinence	2
	c. needs supervision or prompting to be	2

	able to manage toilet needs	
	d. needs assistance to be able to manage toilet needs	4
	e. needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of either bladder or bowel	6
	f. needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of both bladder and bowel	8
6. Dressing and undressing	a. can dress and undress unaided	0
	b. needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to dress or undress	2
	c. needs either – (i) prompting to be able to dress, undress or determine appropriate circumstances for remaining clothed; or (ii) prompting or assistance to be able select appropriate clothing	2
	d. needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their lower body.	2
	e. needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their upper body.	4
	f. cannot dress or undress at all	8
7. Communicating verbally	a. can express and understand verbal information unaided	0
	b. needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to speak or hear	2
	c. needs communication support to be able to express or understand complex verbal information.	4
	d. needs communication support to be able to express or understand basic verbal information	8
	e. cannot express or understand verbal information at all even with communication support	12
8. Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words	a. can read and understand basic and complex written information either unaided or using spectacles or contact lenses	0
	b. needs to use an aid or appliance, other than spectacles or contact lenses, to be able to read or understand either basic or complex written information	2
	c. needs prompting to be able to read or understand complex written information	2
	d. needs prompting to be able to understand basic written information	4

	e. cannot read or understand signs, symbols or words at all	8
9. Engaging with other people face to face	a. can engage with other people unaided	0
	b. needs prompting to be able to engage with other people	2
	c. needs social support to be able to engage with other people	4
	d. cannot engage with other people due to such engagement causing either – (i) overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant; or (ii) the claimant to exhibit such behaviour which would result in a substantial risk of harm to the claimant or another person	8
10. making budgeting decisions	a. can manage complex budgeting decisions unaided.	0
	b. needs prompting or assistance to be able to make complex budgeting decisions	2
	c. needs prompting or assistance to be able to make simple budgeting decisions	4
	d. cannot make any budgeting decisions at all	6

Mobility Activities - Descriptors and Scores

Activity	Descriptor	Points
1. planning and following journeys	a. can plan and follow the route of a journey unaided	0
	b. needs prompting to be able to undertake any journey to avoid overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant	4
	c. for reasons other than psychological distress, cannot plan the route of a journey	8
	d. for reasons other than psychological distress, cannot follow the route of an unfamiliar journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid	10
	e. cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant	10
	f. for reasons other than psychological distress, cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, an assistance dog or an orientation aid	12
2. moving around	a. can stand and then move more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided	0
	b. can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided.	4
	c. can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	8
	d. can stand and then move using and aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres	10
	e. can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres, either aided or unaided.	12
	f. cannot, either aided or unaided, - (i) stand; or (ii) move more than 1 metre	12

Interpreting terms in the Descriptors

These definitions for the activities and descriptors are the legal test as laid out in the law.

“aided” means with –

- (a) the use of an aid or appliance; or
- (b) supervision, prompting or assistance;

“assistance” means physical intervention by another person and does not include speech;

“assistance dog” means a dog trained to guide or assist a person with a sensory impairment;

“basic verbal information” means information in your native language conveyed verbally in a simple sentence;

“basic written information” means signs, symbols and dates written or printed standard size text in your native language;

“bathe” includes get into or out of an unadapted bath or shower;

“communication support” means support from a person trained or experienced in communicating with people with specific communication needs, including interpreting verbal information into a non-verbal form and vice versa;

“complex budgeting decisions” means decisions involving–

- (a) calculating household and personal budgets;
- (b) managing and paying bills; and
- (c) planning future purchases;

“complex verbal information” means information in your native language conveyed verbally in either more than one sentence or one complicated sentence;

“complex written information” means more than one sentence of written or printed standard size text in your native language;

“cook” means heat food at or above waist height;

“dress and undress” includes put on and take off socks and shoes;

“engage socially” means–

- (a) interact with others in a contextually and socially appropriate manner;
- (b) understand body language; and
- (c) establish relationships;

“manage incontinence” means manage involuntary evacuation of the bowel or bladder, including use a collecting device or self-catheterisation, and clean oneself afterwards;

“manage medication or therapy” means take medication or undertake therapy, where a failure to do so is likely to result in a deterioration in your health;

“medication” means medication to be taken at home which is prescribed or recommended by a registered –

- (a) doctor;
- (b) nurse; or
- (c) pharmacist;

“monitor health” means–

(a) detect significant changes in your health condition which are likely to lead to a deterioration in your health; and

(b) take action advised by a –

- (i) registered doctor;
- (ii) registered nurse; or
- (iii) health professional who is regulated by the Health Professions Council, without which your health is likely to deteriorate;

“orientation aid” means a specialist aid designed to assist disabled people to follow a route safely;

“prepare”, in the context of food, means make food ready for cooking or eating;

“prompting” means reminding, encouraging or explaining by another person;

“psychological distress” means distress related to an enduring mental health condition or an intellectual or cognitive impairment;

“read” includes read signs, symbols and words but does not include read Braille;

“simple budgeting decisions” means decisions involving–

- (a) calculating the cost of goods; and
- (b) calculating change required after a purchase;

“simple meal” means a cooked one-course meal for one using fresh ingredients;

“social support” means support from a person trained or experienced in assisting people to engage in social situations;

“stand” means stand upright with at least one biological foot on the ground;

“supervision” means the continuous presence of another person for the purpose of ensuring your safety;

“take nutrition” means—

(a) cut food into pieces, convey food and drink to one’s mouth and chew and swallow food and drink; or

(b) take nutrition by using a therapeutic source;

“therapeutic source” means parenteral or enteral tube feeding, using a rate-limiting device such as a delivery system or feed pump;

“therapy” means therapy to be undertaken at home which is prescribed or recommended by a—

(a) registered—

(i) doctor;

(ii) nurse; or

(iii) pharmacist; or

(b) health professional regulated by the Health Professions Council;

“toilet needs” means—

(a) getting on and off an unadapted toilet;

(b) evacuating the bladder and bowel; and

(c) cleaning oneself afterwards; and

“unaided” means without—

(a) the use of an aid or appliance; or

(b) supervision, prompting or assistance.

Information about how the scoring works

The law says that the test should consider whether the claimant can carry out the activity:

- **safely**, in a manner unlikely to cause harm to themselves or to another person, either during or after completion of the activity, and
- to an **acceptable standard**, given the nature of the activity, and
- **repeatedly** – as **often** as the activity is **reasonably required** to be completed, and
- in a **reasonable time period** – this is no more than twice as long as it would normally take someone without a physical or mental condition to complete the activity.

If more than 2 descriptors within an activity apply to a person they receive the one that gives the highest number of points. A person may score on only one of the activities, or could score on more than one. If a descriptor applies most of the time (more than 50%) a person will get that score.

Where none of the descriptors applies for more than 50% of the time, but two or more descriptors are satisfied for more than 50% of the time when added together then one that will apply is the one which:

- is satisfied for the greater proportion of the days, or
- scores the higher or highest number of points where both or all descriptors are satisfied for the same period

To qualify for PIP a person must get the following number of points:

Daily living component

Standard rate – at least 8 points

Enhanced rate – at least 12 points

Mobility component

Standard rate – at least 8 points

Enhanced rate – at least 12 points

This factsheet is a general guide. It is not a full statement of the law.