

PIP Guide
By The Asperger Service, SEPT

PIP has two areas where people can be eligible for a payment. These are 'Daily Living' and 'Mobility'. The following link has an excellent example of how the scores are broken down:

<http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/personal-independence-payment-pip/pip-points-system>

The telephone number to call to start a new claim is 0800 917 2222. They take some details (such as name/address/GP/National Insurance Number/Bank Details) and then send you a form to complete.

When you receive the form, you get a generic guide with prompts, but we have added in bits that are common issues for people on the Autism Spectrum. You need to think about how things are when they are at the most difficult. Obviously you mustn't lie, but stating that you can manage a task when it is a challenge at times won't get you any support.

DAILY LIVING ACTIVITIES

1. Preparing Food.

Think about preparing fresh food from scratch, not microwave meals.

Do you feel hungry or does someone have to remind you to cook?

Think about things like knowing how to get started on the task, your ability to organise yourself and get all the ingredients and utensils you need. What is your memory like? How are you with multi-tasking, and do you get distracted? How are you when you get interrupted - do you completely lose where you are?

Are you able to tell if food is cooked? Also think about clumsiness - ability to chop, use of hot pans etc. Are you aware of safety issues? Do you need someone to supervise to make sure you are safe?

2. Taking Nutrition.

Do you forget when to eat? Often people don't feel hungry as part of their sensory differences, so won't think to eat.

Do you get so absorbed in task that you miss meals?

Are you fixated around certain foods – what you can and can't eat or maybe calorie counting?

3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition.

Can you remember to take any medication?

Are you able to manage your time and remember any appointments? Do you need someone to remind you to attend appointments?

4. Washing and Bathing.

Think about any sensory differences - some people really struggle with the feel of water, washing their hair, shaving, cutting nails etc.

Are you aware when you need to wash, or do you wash as part of your routine?

I.e. Some people wash in the morning as they know that is what they have to do, but aren't aware of when they need an additional wash - e.g. when it is hot in the summer.

5. Managing Toilet Needs.

When filling in this form, just describe any issues you may have with toileting. Also for ladies, this would include managing your menstrual cycle.

6. Dressing and Undressing.

Do you recognise when your clothes are dirty and need changing?

Do you dress appropriately for the weather? Do you feel the cold? Are you ok wearing a coat?

Do you have any difficulties around managing zips or buttons?

7. Communicating Verbally.

Often the assessor asks if you can understand what they are saying, to which people normally reply 'yes' and so they score zero points!

When filling out the form, the following line is likely to be applicable:

I have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, which involves having difficulties with social communication and social interactions.

Or

I have an Aspergers Syndrome, which involves having difficulties with social communication and social interactions.

Think about how a person talks to you and how much you understand of everyday conversation. What about if they give you too much information in one go? Think about when they talk fast or about something unfamiliar. What about if they use

language with jargons, technical language or idioms (such as has a cat got your tongue?).

How are you with body language and picking up subtleties or subtexts (hidden meanings) in conversation? Do you often miss what other people are trying to communicate?

What about when you talk to others. Do you get fixed on a special interest, do you go on and on about the same thing? Do you often get a negative reaction when you are communicating with others? Are you aware of why?

Do you get anxious communicating with others? Is it emotionally/mentally draining or stressing? Do you avoid communicating with certain people/being in certain situations due to these difficulties?

Do you need extra time to process what people are saying?

8. Reading and Understanding Signs, Symbols and Words.

Reading is a form of communication, so people on the spectrum are likely to have difficulties in this area. Unfortunately, people often score 0, as the assessor simply asks them if they can read!

This is about interpreting written form and understanding what it means. Think about when you receive an important email or letter, and any support you might need to understand what it means and what you have to do. How are you at filling in forms?

Think about how it is when you have a lot of information to understand and picking up on the important pieces of information. How about reading the instructions on the back of a ready meal and making sense of it to cook your dinner?

Is understanding written information stressful? Do you tend to avoid activities where you have to deal with written communication? Are you dependent on someone to support you?

9. Engaging with others face to face

Do you experience anxiety when mixing with people? People with autism can dislike mixing with others, particularly strangers. Often this is because of difficulties with communicating with others, and the stress it causes.

Think about situations where you might have to mix with others and then how you feel and what you do.

Do you avoid situations because of possibly having to interact with other people? Think about what you need in order to be able to be with others - do you need someone with you for reassurance? Do you need strategies such as headphones to avoid possible interactions? Are you drained emotionally and mentally? Do you need time alone afterwards to recuperate?

How are you with crowds and confined social spaces, such as cinemas and buses?
Do you make/change arrangements around whether you will need to mix with others?

10. Making budgeting decisions

Think about impulsivity - do you see something you like and immediately buy it?
Can you manage your bills? Can you understand the value of money and how to budget it?

MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

1. Planning and following journeys.

Are you able to use public transport or do you walk everywhere? Do you need any support from others to go out or use transport?

Think about sensory differences - do you get overwhelmed when you go out? Do you struggle with noise, lots of people, the possibility of being bumped into or knocked? Some people manage this by only travelling at certain times of the day.

Think about unfamiliar places and planning your journey to go somewhere new. A lot of people struggle going somewhere new due to anxiety, so planning an unfamiliar journey can be overwhelming. Do you need any support from others to go out?

What about if you are out and feeling worried? How do you manage this?

2. Moving Around

This part is if you have difficulties with physical mobility.