

PIP – making a claim

epilepsy
society

benefits guide

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Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a UK benefit for people over the age of 16, to help with any additional costs due to having a long-term disability or health condition. This guide is designed to help you with the first stage of applying for PIP – making a claim.

who can claim PIP?

To be eligible for PIP you must be aged 16 or over and have been born after 8 April 1948, have a long-term disability or health condition, and need help or support with daily living, or with mobility, or both. You must have needed this help or support for at least three months, and expect to need this for at least another nine months in the future. Making a claim for PIP can take a long time – up to four months. If you are terminally ill, your claim will be processed more quickly.

Whether or not you are eligible for PIP depends on how your health condition affects you (not on what your condition is). So your eligibility does not rely on a diagnosis of epilepsy, but on how your epilepsy affects your daily living and mobility. This includes how it affects you physically, and any effects it has on your thinking, understanding and being able to cope with daily life. It includes any help you need, whether or not you currently get that help.

PIP started to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) from April 2013, and DLA will be stopping for people born after 8 April 1948. PIP will not replace Attendance Allowance (which will continue). You will not be asked to apply for PIP if you were born before 8 April 1948 and are claiming DLA, and children can claim DLA until they are 16. You can claim PIP whether or not you are in work and it is not means-tested (so does not depend on income or savings).

when to apply for PIP

- If you are applying for the first time for a benefit to support your needs due to a disability or long-term health condition, you will need to apply for PIP (rather than for DLA) and you can apply at any time.
- If you have been getting DLA and were born after 8 April 1948, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will write to you to explain how to apply for PIP (you will not automatically be moved to PIP).
- If you have been getting DLA, and there has been a change in how your condition affects you, you need to contact the Disability Service Centre on 0800 121 4433 (textphone 0800 121 4493) to tell them about this change. You may be asked whether you would like to claim PIP straightaway.

how to apply for PIP

Most people who apply for PIP need to do so by calling the DWP on 0800 917 2222 (textphone 0800 917 7777). You can ask for a paper form to complete if you are unable to claim by phone, although this may delay your claim. Someone else can call the DWP for you, but you will need to be with this person when they call so that the DWP can check that you have given them permission to call on your behalf. You'll be asked if you have any conditions relating to your mental health, a learning difficulty, or behavioural condition to see if you need any additional help or support with your claim. If you need help to claim PIP, you can ask DWP for a support visit. They will arrange for a member of their team to visit you at home to help with your claim. Some organisations, such as Citizens Advice, can also help with your claim or they can act as your representative.

 For help applying for PIP visit [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or ring 03444 111 444

questions you will be asked

When you call the DWP, you will be asked to provide information to check that you can claim PIP. The call should take about 20 minutes, and it may help if you have this information prepared before you make the call. You will be asked:

- for your contact details; date of birth; National Insurance number; GP or neurologist's name, address and postcode; and your bank account details so that you can be paid directly into your account if you qualify for PIP;
- whether you have spent any time living abroad (your 'residency'). To qualify for PIP you must have been in Great Britain for at least two of the last three years, and you must usually live in Great Britain; and
- about any time you have spent in hospital or a care home in the last year, as this may affect your claim.

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what happens next?

- If you are eligible to apply for PIP, you will be sent a form to complete called 'How your disability affects you'.
- If you are not eligible to apply for PIP, the DWP will write to you to say that you do not meet the criteria and cannot apply for PIP. This is called a 'disallowance letter'. If you have been getting DLA, this will stop.

'how your disability affects you' application form

This form asks about how your health condition or disability affects you, in relation to 12 different daily activities. This is your opportunity to explain fully and honestly how your condition affects your daily life.

Along with the form, you also need to provide any supporting information as 'evidence' for your claim.

For example, this might be a letter from your doctor or social worker, explaining how your condition affects you.

Send photocopies of this information, **not the original documents** and keep a copy of your claim form.

Throughout your application for PIP, it is important that you respond to the DWP quickly. You need to return your PIP application form **within one month**. The deadline will be shown on the DWP letter that comes with the form. If you do not apply for PIP within this time your claim will end. If you are receiving DLA, your DLA will stop.

For more information about the assessment criteria and completing the form, see our guides *PIP – the assessment criteria and completing benefits forms*.

face-to-face consultation

After completing the 'how your disability affects you' form, most people will also be asked to have a 'face-to-face consultation' (assessment) which looks at how your condition affects you, and your ability to carry out the daily activities included in the form. This consultation will be with a healthcare professional chosen by the DWP, not with your own doctor. The DWP will write to you to tell you when and where to go for the face-to-face consultation.

how your claim is assessed

The PIP assessment looks at 12 activities under two different categories: daily living and mobility.

- The 'daily living' activities include preparing or eating food; washing, bathing and using the toilet; dressing and undressing; reading and communicating; managing your medicines or treatments; mixing with other people and making decisions about money.
- The 'mobility' activities include going out (planning and following journeys); and physically moving around.

For each activity, there is a list of descriptions of how your condition affects you. Each description has a score, which is added up to a single total for daily living, and a total for mobility. For each category, if you score 8 – 11 points you will be awarded PIP at the 'standard rate', and if you score 12 or over, you will be awarded the 'enhanced rate'. For example, someone could get 'standard rate mobility' and 'enhanced rate daily living'.

PIP payment rates

PIP is usually paid every four weeks. Currently, the weekly rates for PIP are, for daily living either £58.70 or £87.65 and, for mobility either £23.20 or £61.20

decisions about your claim

Your claim will be assessed by DWP, who will decide whether you will receive PIP, at what rate and for how long. You will receive a letter about this decision. If your claim for PIP is unsuccessful, or if your situation has changed, you can challenge this **within one calendar month** of the date of the decision by asking for 'mandatory reconsideration'. If you are not happy with this reconsideration outcome, you can appeal, and you need to do this **within one calendar month** of the 'mandatory reconsideration' decision letter. The latest government statistics show that more than half of PIP decisions are changed after mandatory reconsideration or an appeal.

For more information see our guide *benefit decisions and appeals*.

For more information about PIP visit gov.uk/PIP or call 0800 917 2222 (textphone 0800 917 7777).

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01494 601 400

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