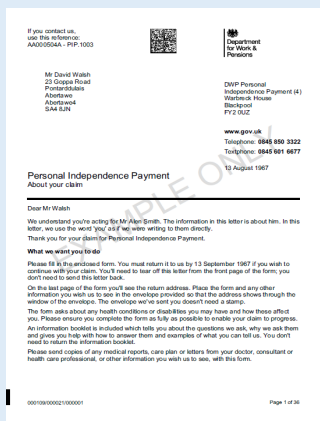


CARERS TRUST

St Helens Carers Centre

Self Help Guide



PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)

This guide has been produced by St Helens Carers Centre to help you in completing your Personal Independence Payment form (PIP form)

If you are a Carer and care for someone in St. Helens and feel you still require support with completing your form, then please call us on

01744 675615

St Helens Carers Centre, 31-35 Baldwin Street, St Helens, WA10 2RS Tel: 01744 675 615

Email: info@sthelenscarers.org.uk Web www.sthelenscarers.info



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Introduction and welcome

Welcome to our self help guide. This will guide you through your Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim form giving you advice on how to complete it.

We hope you find this guide useful but note that if you need any further help or advice around filling out this form, and you are registered with St Helens Carers Centre, you can contact us on 01744 675615, or you can pop online to chat to us by logging on to our website at www.sthelenscarers.info Monday to Friday 10 a.m. till 3 p.m.

If you are not registered with us and are a Carer, caring for someone residing in St Helens, contact us and we can help you.

If the above does not apply and you still need help, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Let's get started

At this point, you should have received your PIP form. The PIP form is the form also known as a PIP2 form or 'How your disability affects you' form.

If you haven't received this form, you may need advice on eligibility around PIP so give us a call on 01744 675615 and ask to speak to one of our Welfare Benefits advisers, or pop online at www.sthelenscarers.info

If you haven't ordered a PIP form yet, and you have spoken to one of our Welfare Benefits advisers who have advised you to claim, you will need to ring PIP on



0800 917 2222

If you have got the PIP form, it should look something like this:

If you contact us,
use this reference:
AA000504A - PIP.1003




Department
for Work &
Pensions

Mr David Walsh
23 Goppa Road
Pontarddulais
Abertawe
Abertawe4
SA4 8JN

DWP Personal
Independence Payment (4)
Warbreck House
Blackpool
FY2 0UZ

www.gov.uk
Telephone: **0845 850 3322**
Textphone: **0845 601 6677**

13 August 1967

Personal Independence Payment

About your claim

Dear Mr Walsh

We understand you're acting for Mr Alen Smith. The information in this letter is about him. In this letter, we use the word 'you' as if we were writing to them directly.

Thank you for your claim for Personal Independence Payment.

What we want you to do

Please fill in the enclosed form. You must return it to us by 13 September 1967 if you wish to continue with your claim. You'll need to tear off this letter from the front page of the form; you don't need to send this letter back.

On the last page of the form you'll see the return address. Place the form and any other information you wish us to see in the envelope provided so that the address shows through the window of the envelope. The envelope we've sent you doesn't need a stamp.

The form asks about any health conditions or disabilities you may have and how these affect you. Please ensure you complete the form as fully as possible to enable your claim to progress.

An information booklet is included which tells you about the questions we ask, why we ask them and gives you help with how to answer them and examples of what you can tell us. You don't need to return the information booklet.

Please send copies of any medical reports, care plan or letters from your doctor, consultant or health care professional, or other information you wish us to see, with this form.

000109/000021/000001

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You can see on the first page there is a return date on the form. If for any reason you will be late in sending the form back, you must give PIP a call and request an extension. There is an initial mandatory extension of 2 weeks and anything in addition to this is discretionary so detail reasoning as to why the form is late, where appropriate.



0800 121 4433

On the next couple of pages, there are some notes and guidance. You will then come to a page where you will see the first box where you can enter information. The page looks something like this:

- Don't delay sending any evidence to us as this may mean:
 - We may not be able to get all the information we need on which to make a decision on your claim which accurately reflects your daily living or mobility needs.
 - We may need longer to assess your claim.
 - You may be required to see a health professional to be assessed when it may not have been necessary.

Please list below the documents you're sending with **this** form.

Tear off the letter on the front page; you don't need to send it back. On the last page you'll see the address to return this form. Place this form in the envelope provided so that the address shows through the window. It doesn't need a stamp.

We may also need to seek additional information and evidence from professionals who know you.

Q1 Please tell us who are the professional(s) best placed to advise us on your circumstances. For example, a GP, hospital doctor, specialist nurse, community psychiatric nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, counsellor, or support worker?

Name

Address

 Postcode

Profession

Phone/textphone number
 Include the dialling code

When did you last see them? (approximate date)

The top box is asking you to list what documents you are sending with the form. You might be wondering if you should contact a doctor and ask them to write a report for you. Often such reports can be chargeable and may not 'add' anything or support your claim in terms of what your needs are. Any evidence you send is to support your claim and so appointment letters and reports that do not give detail around your condition, and how it affects you may not be beneficial to your claim. What would be beneficial is to send any reports that detail your health condition and how it affects you, or a report that shows the severity or impact of your health condition. You might also want to send in a prescription list. It is no problem sending a photocopy of such reports/documents.

Q1



Health Professionals

This is asking about health professionals involved in your care. This can include psychiatrists, counsellors, G.P., specialist nurses, consultants, physiotherapists, and so on.

We would advise to put the person (health professional) that is most appropriate first and work your way down. You may have numerous healthcare professionals involved in your care/treatment but put the one that knows you best and how you are affected by your health conditions first. If you have multiple health conditions, then put the healthcare professional associated with the health condition that affects you the most first. In many cases, your GP may be the best person so have a think about who you would prefer to be contacted in the first instance and put them at the top of your list.

Q2a



Health Conditions

This question is asking you to list all of your health conditions. Again, start with the one that affects you the most first, and work your way down. It doesn't have to be in any specific order so don't worry if you miss one out – just add it on to the end. You may not have a diagnosis for your health condition for whatever reason. If you are being investigated for a condition and don't yet have a diagnosis, still add it on and if there is something that is suspected then pop this on as 'suspected....and under investigation'. It may be you have no idea what it may be, just write the symptoms as a summary, e.g. bad back, restricted movement in all fingers on left hand etc. In terms of the start date, if you are not sure just pop on the year – don't worry!

Q2b



Medication & Treatments

Here they are asking about medication and treatment so add on any medication. You might not have been prescribed such medication but you have been recommended to take it by health professional. For example, you may be taking paracetamol for pain relief but buy this yourself – still add this on. Add on any treatment such as dialysis, or counselling etc. that you are undergoing or due to start – again this may be privately arranged by you.

You should add on any side effects to any treatment or medication. For example, you may experience frequent headaches or nausea due to your medication. You may experience difficulties in attending treatments due to your physical or your mental health. You may experience side effects of treatment such as nausea or lethargy so if you do explain this in this section.

Useful tips!

Be Honest!

The next questions are asking about how your health condition affects your ability to manage some everyday tasks. It is important to be honest! Many people will think it is ok to talk as if it is your worst day. Whilst this is important, it is important to show how your condition varies. For example, someone may have rheumatoid arthritis. On a good day they may be able to manage all these tasks without help or difficulty. On a bad day they may not be able to do them at all – if this is the case explain how many days can be a bad day/how many flare ups etc.

It may be that you condition affects you every single day but can vary in terms of the help you need each day. Explain this so start off with how it can be on a bad day and then detail the help needed/difficulties when it is a good (or better) day. For example, you may have osteoarthritis. On a bad day you might not be able to walk outdoors at all and may need to use a wheelchair. On a better day you may be able to walk but only a short distance and would need physical support from another person.

Help needed!

Another reason to be honest is that often people's first response can be 'I manage' or 'I am ok with that'. You might be managing because you have to and have no one to help you. In carrying out an activity it may be unreasonable what you have to do – for example, it may take you a long time to get dressed because you have to stop and rest for a long time due to symptoms of your health condition, i.e. breathlessness or pain. It may be that you are managing to have a shower but are prone to falls and have fallen a few times when trying to get a shower so it is not safe and you need help to steady yourself. Be as honest and descriptive as you can. It is important to paint a true picture of the difficulties you face and the help you **need** – even if you do not get the help.

Explain why!

Always explain the difficulties in detail and explain **why** you have the difficulties. An example for someone with restricted movement in their back may need help to wash their lower body as they are unable to bend to reach due to stiffness and pain. Their back may lock and so it is not safe so they need help with this activity.

It is not enough to say you cannot do something – tell them why you can't – remember, paint the true picture!

Describe and explain

Consider can you do it **safely**? Can you do it to an **acceptable standard**? Can you do it **repeatedly**? Can you do it in a **reasonable time**? If you answered no to any of the above questions, then go on to describe the difficulties you face and explain why you face them.



If you use an aid for any activity, make sure you tick the appropriate box and go on to tell them what aid you require.

Below we have given a brief outline of each activity to prompt you to think about it and what difficulties you may have and then there will be examples* around physical and mental health (where appropriate).

***Please note these are examples only and are to act as a guide only – it is important you detail YOUR health conditions and how they affect you.**

Q3



Preparing a meal

This is asking if you can prepare a simple meal for one person using fresh ingredients so think about some potatoes, carrots and some raw chicken. Think about peeling and chopping vegetables, using knives and other utensils. Think about picking up and transferring pans and draining vegetables. Think about using both an oven and a microwave and following a logical order, dealing with timings.

Remember describe and explain. Detail what difficulties you have and why you have them.

Examples:

Physical: I need help to peel and chop vegetables due to arthritis in my hands. My fingers are misshapen. They are stiff and I have restricted movement. When I try to grip my fingers often lock and the pain is agonising. My grip is very poor and my hands are weak. This means I am unable to grip utensils such as a knife as my grip is too weak and I often drop things. It hurts to try to grip and my fingers can lock so I am unable to move them at all when this occurs. My hands are very weak and I lack the strength to lift pans to transfer

them around the kitchen, i.e. from stove to sink, and I do not have the strength to drain vegetables. It is not safe for me to even attempt this as I would be at risk of dropping the pan and there is a high risk I would burn myself.

Mental impairment: I need help as I have no concept of time due to learning difficulties. I am not able to follow a logical order or process and I am not able to retain information so could not follow a method or recipe. I cannot read to follow instructions or follow a recipe so would not be able to prepare a meal. I also have no awareness of danger and would need constant supervision and could never be left alone around potential dangers such as hot items or sharp objects.

Q4



Eating and drinking

This is looking at once you have a meal and a drink in front of you. Think about cutting it up and picking up utensils. Think about then conveying it to your mouth and any difficulties you may have – do you spill it over your clothes, drop things on the floor? Do you need to be prompted to eat or drink? If you use feeding equipment, do you need help to use it? Think about the desire to eat – do you need to be prompted due to depression or an eating disorder? Do you need to be supervised to ensure you eat or drink – what are the consequences you have experienced of not eating- poor teeth?, dehydration?, malnutrition?, weight loss? etc.

Examples:

Physical: I am unable to grip utensils as I have Dupuytren's contracture. 3 fingers on my right hand and 2 on my left hand are completely contracted and I am unable to straighten them so I cannot grip a knife and fork. I therefore need someone to cut up food for me. I struggle to even pick food up with my hands and often drop things so I need help to convey food to my mouth to eat.

Mental Health: I need to be constantly prompted to eat as I have chronic depression. I lack the motivation to even want to eat. I feel very low and have little regard for myself and this means I neglect myself. I have no desire to want to eat and so need continual prompting with this activity, because of having depression. I have lost weight of around 2 stone over the last few months because I have not been eating enough.

Q5



Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition

Have a think about how you manage your medication. Can you remember what to take and when to take it? Do you understand what you are taking and what it is for? Can you read and follow the instructions? Can you manage to get pills out of packets, or manage injections? Do you need help with therapy such as dialysis, massage treatment? Think about help you need to set up any medical equipment Remember the help needed should be as a result of your disability/health condition. It might be you needs a TENS machine for pain but cannot set it up or figure out how to work it due to learning difficulties. Also remember to include any difficulties in monitoring your health condition. It may be you are unable to or you may neglect yourself due to a health condition and so cannot recognise signs or understand the consequences of not taking medication or monitoring your health condition.

Examples:

Physical: I am unable to physically get the pills out of their packaging and cannot administer them to my mouth due to poor manual dexterity. This is because I have multiple sclerosis and I have weakness in both hands and experience uncontrollable muscle contractions causing me to drop things. I have poor coordination so cannot manage to pick them up and then I am unable to administer them so need help from another person.

Mental Impairment: I need my medication to be monitored as I have dementia. I have memory loss and confusion and would not know what to take and when to take it. I cannot recall what I have taken so would be at risk of not taking my medication and this can lead to the symptoms of my dementia worsening. I could also be at risk of taking too many as I am unable to monitor this myself due to memory loss and confusion and this could be dangerous.

Q6



Washing and Bathing

Firstly, think about having a bath. You may not have a bath at home as you have had a walk-in shower or a wet room. Still explain the help you would need with a bath or why you might

be unable to use a bath. Then go on to detail any help needed with a shower or a wash. Think about running a bath, turning on the shower, regulating the temperature of the water and checking to ensure it is ok to get in. Details any aids you have and difficulties you face. Remember to think about doing it and is it reasonable – you might get in the shower and be unable to bend to wash your feet or lower legs. You might not be able to wash your hair properly. Are you steady. Do you wash every part of your body to the point where it is 'clean'? Do you need to be prompted to get a bath or shower?

Examples:

Physical: I am unable to use a bath at all. I am unable to get myself out of a bath, and the last time I got a bath around 2 years ago I got stuck. I lack the physical strength due to having COPD and arthritis (widespread). I am weak and get breathless upon minimal exertion. When I try to get myself up out of the bath I experience chest pain and I lack the strength to get myself out. I now have a walk in shower but still need help. I have a shower stool but it is not safe for me to bend to wash my feet and lower legs. When I try to bend my back hurts due to arthritis and I struggle to breathe due to having COPD. The steam from the shower exacerbates my condition causing me to feel even more breathless when not even exerting myself. I avoid having a shower as it is too difficult for me. Even trying to wash my upper body causes me to become breathless and it is painful due to restricted movement. I cannot raise my arms up to wash my hair so need help from another person.

Mental Health: I have chronic depression. I am unable to motivate myself to have a wash and will go for long periods of time without washing to the point where my close family have pointed it out to me. I need to be prompted and motivated and need this help from another person.

Q7



Managing toilet needs or incontinence

Think about getting on and off the toilet and the difficulties you have. Think about wiping yourself and reaching around. Are you able to apply enough pressure to wipe properly?

Examples:

Physical: I need help to get on and off the toilet. I need help as I have arthritis in both knees and in my right hip. I am unable to control my movements to simply sit down and have to hold onto a grab rail at the side of the toilet to help steady me and lower me down but I often drop onto the toilet as I am too weak and it is too painful so I need help. When trying to get off my knees hurt and are weak and can give way from under me causing

me to fall or stumble. I try to use the grab rail but I lack the strength and it is painful in my knees and my right hip. My joints are weak and so I need help from another person as I will often try to get up and just fall back down.

Mental Impairment: I need help as I am in the end stages of dementia. I have become incontinent and am unable to control bladder or bowels. I do not recognise when I need to go to the toilet and that I have had an accident of the bowel or bladder.

Q8



Dressing and undressing

Think about the process and note that you only need to have difficulty with dressing OR undressing, not both. Think about how long it takes and whether how you dress/undress is reasonable. Are there days when you cannot manage getting dressed because of your health condition? Do you need help with socks, shoes fastenings, getting clothes over your head or putting your arms through? Does it take you a long time as you have to stop and rest frequently due to pain or breathlessness?

Examples:

Physical: I need help to get dressed on a daily basis. I cannot bend to reach my lower legs and feet due to severe osteoarthritis in both hips. I also have osteoarthritis in both knees. My movements with these joints are severely restricted and so I am not able to bring my feet up to my body to reach them either so need help with dressing and undressing my lower body and this is every day. I need someone to put on and take off shoes, socks, pants and underwear and get them over my feet and up past my knees. I am sat down and then I need someone to help me up off the bed and I hold on to something to steady myself whilst they pull them up over my bottom.

Mental Impairment: I need clothes to be picked out for me due to having dementia. I will wear clothes back to front, inside out, buttoned up incorrectly, etc. I am unable to identify appropriate clothing in terms of occasion or weather and will wear clothes that do not match or may wear a thick coat in the middle of a heatwave. I will wear the same clothes over and over without recognising they are dirty as I have lost all concept of hygiene. I need to be prompted to change my clothes and need all clothes to be picked out for me

Q9



Communicating verbally

Do you need help to communicate? This might be because of deafness and you need an interpreter conversant in British Sign Language. It may be you have difficulties with your speech to the point people find it difficult to understand you. Do you have difficulties understanding other people because of cognitive impairment?

Examples:

Physical: I need help as I am profoundly deaf and need a BSL interpreter to enable me to communicate verbally. I am unable to lip-read or hear what people are saying.

Mental Impairment: I have learning difficulties and am unable to comprehend/understand what people are saying to me. I need someone with me at all times to answer on my behalf. I need help with communicating at all times and my mum has to deal with all my affairs for me.

Q10



Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words

Think about both basic and complex written information. Think of signs, symbols and dates and being able to read and understand them.

Examples:

Physical: I need help as I am blind and can only read using Braille. I would not be able to read a sign or check a date or read anything that was not in Braille format.

Mental Impairment: I have learning difficulties and am unable to read anything other than a few basic words. I cannot interpret sentences and am unable to read most words.

Q11



Engaging with other people face to face

Do you struggle to socialise? Do you struggle to leave your home? Do you experience anxiety or panic attacks? Think about how you engage with strangers and those who you know. Can you make friends? Can you engage in conversation and interact well with others?

Examples:

Mental Health: I have anxiety and depression and often cannot even leave my own home. I have no friends as I cannot engage with people and often cannot even leave my bedroom. I withdraw myself and there are many days when I don't even with speak with my immediate family members. If a family friend comes around I will go upstairs as I become very distressed and experience panic attacks. I will start sweating and shaking and feel unable to breathe if I know someone is due to come to the house. I need someone with me at all times to help calm and reassure me as I get very anxious and my thoughts become irrational. I feel consumed by my anxiety and this affects my ability to engage with other. I cannot open the door to a stranger and will just ignore people.

Q12



Making budgeting decisions

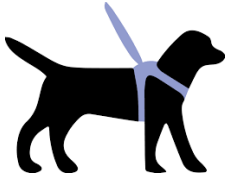
Think about the ability to calculate how much things cost and what change should be given. Think about dealing with household bills and managing a budget. This means planning and ensuring money is available for bills (prioritising) and that money is left to buy for food and to ensure this can last till the next payment.

Examples:

Mental Impairment: I have learning difficulties and am unable to deal with money. I cannot perform simple maths calculations to add up two amounts and would not know how much things cost or how much change to expect. I would not be able to manage a budget as I do not understand bills and would not know how to respond. I do not understand the

importance of paying bills and am very vulnerable. I would not be able to live independently and manage a household budget.

Q13



Planning and following journeys

Do you struggle to leave the house because of your mental health? If you can go out, do you need someone to go with you? Do you have learning difficulties and need supervision and guidance when outdoors? Can you find your way around, following directions? Do you need guidance from an assistance dog due to blindness? Think about leaving your home and going on a journey both familiar and unfamiliar and how this would make you feel on any given day.

Examples:

Physical: I am blind and need an assistance dog at all times when outdoors, or I require a guide cane due to being severely sight impaired.

Mental impairment: I have agoraphobia and due to this I am unable to leave my home and have not left my home in over 9 months.

Or

I have learning difficulties and am unable to plan or follow a route. I am unable to understand signs or follow directions and do not know my left from my right. I would not be able to communicate with others to ask for help. If someone approached me I would not know how to engage with them and this would cause me to become very anxious and distressed and I would not know how to cope with this situation. I need someone with me at all times when I leave my home.

Q14



Moving around

Think about going out of your home and walking outdoors at any time. You may think there are days when you cannot leave the house well this is relevant. Why is this the case. Then think about standing and walking. Does this make your symptoms worse? Describe your walking ability. Explain if it hurts or causes breathlessness. Is it difficult due to muscle wastage, weakness, lethargy? Describe your gait and the speed of your walking.

Examples:

Physical: I have osteoarthritis and COPD. I am in constant pain in my back and knees due to arthritis and there are many days when I am unable to walk at all outdoors as it is too painful for me. I rarely go out now and if I do it may only be once a week due to my current health conditions. It is also not safe as I often fall and stumble as my knees give way on me without any warning. When I do manage to go out the pain increases with every step and I get breathless very easily due to having COPD. I walk with a shuffle keeping my feet close to the ground as I am weak and tire very easily and my knees hurt and are extremely stiff. I do not have a lot of movement in my knees. I need to walk holding onto another person but still get breathless and experience pain which worsens as I walk. I have to walk very slowly as I get out of breath and I stop frequently. I can only walk a few metres and the time I have to spend resting is unreasonable as it can take me a long time (approx. 20-30 minutes) to be able to get back up and walk and there are many occasions where I have to go back home as I am in too much pain and feel too weak.

So there we have it! – this is the majority of the form. The form gives you an opportunity to add on any information you feel is relevant in the section ‘additional information’. If you feel you have covered everything on the form, then do not worry about this part. You can use this as a continuation sheet for any questions – just clearly mark which question it relates to. You can also use additional sheets but make sure you put your name and national insurance number on every sheet.

It will then ask you about the face-to-face assessment. Make sure you put what help you would require or difficulties you would face. If you require a home visit, then state this and acquire a supporting letter from your doctor. If you would not be able to manage stairs or would need someone to attend then state this here.

You then need to read the declaration and if happy with this sign it and send it off in the envelope supplied.



We hope you have found this guide useful and that it has helped you to think about how you would manage these activities yourself (or for someone you care for if you are completing the form for them).

Remember, put as much detail in as possible in regard to the difficulties you face and explain why you have them. If you have any more questions or need further advice, please call us on 01744 675615 or why not pop online and chat to us at www.sthelenscarers.info

Check out our opening times and online chat times on our website.