

Derbyshire Welfare Rights Service

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

FILLING IN THE 'HOW YOUR DISABILITY AFFECTS YOU' FORM

PIP is payable if you have 'limited' or 'severely limited' ability with 'daily living' activities, mobility, or both. The claim form is a chance to explain your situation in detail.

The assessment

The assessment considers whether you have 'limited' or 'severely limited' ability to carry out daily living or mobility activities, as a result of a physical or mental health condition. This is assessed upon your ability to carry out certain activities on the basis that you:

- carry out the activity whilst wearing or using any aid or appliance which you would normally wear or use; or
- were wearing or using any aid or appliance which you could reasonably be expected to wear or use.

The assessment should also take in to account whether you can do the activity

- **safely** – that is, in a way unlikely to cause harm to you or to another person, either during or after completion of the activity
- **repeatedly** - which means as often as the activity being assessed is reasonably required to be completed;
- in a '**timely manner**' – no more than twice the maximum time that someone without your condition would take over the activity.

The assessment should also include if the task can be carried out to an 'acceptable standard'.

So if you can do a task but it is difficult for you, possibly harmful to you or to someone else, hard to do repeatedly, can't be done to an acceptable standard or takes an unreasonable amount of time, it's important for you to make this clear on the form.

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The points system

The PIP claim forms ask you questions about your ability to carry out a series of tasks:

Daily living activities

- preparing food
- taking nutrition
- managing therapy or monitoring a health condition
- washing and bathing
- managing toilet needs or incontinence
- dressing and undressing
- communicating verbally
- reading and understanding signs, symbols and words
- engaging with other people face to face
- making budgeting decisions

Mobility activities

- planning and following journeys
- moving around

Your answers will be checked against a set of 'descriptors', each of which has a set of points attached to it – 0 points if you have no problems, 2 points if you need a certain amount of help, 4 points if you need more help, 8, 10 or 12 points if your needs are greater.

You need to score at least 8 points to get the Standard Rate of PIP for daily living and/or mobility and at least 12 points to get the Enhanced Rate.

Details of the points system are given below.

Your needs are assessed over a 12-month period (but PIP can be paid once you have satisfied the rules for 3 months and the DWP is satisfied that you are likely to need the help for at least a further 9 months).

If you cannot carry out the relevant task for more than six months in total during that twelve month period, you should be awarded the appropriate points.

For variable conditions, points will be awarded for the 'descriptor' which is likely to apply to you for the greatest amount of that time.

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If you are awaiting further treatment, descriptor choices will be based on the likely continuing impact of the health condition or impairment as if any treatment etc. hasn't taken place.

Once again, this means that the more information you can give, the better.

What is the form asking about?

There are fourteen questions about the different activities.

Always give as much detail as you can, including examples of what happens– don't just tick the boxes.

The form asks questions and provides tick-boxes for you to indicate if you have problems with different activities. The tick-boxes offer the options **YES**, **NO** and **SOMETIMES**.

Although you should tick the box that applies to you for each question, **do not just leave it there** – you need to give more details in each case where you do have difficulties, and ticking a box will not be enough, especially if you have problems 'sometimes'.

The forms provide extra space for you to give further details relating to each question – use this space, and if there isn't enough space you can use the further pages provided for additional information - or you can add pages, providing you remember to put your name and National Insurance Number on them.

Read the questions and the DWP guidance notes carefully: seek advice if you are in doubt about what to say.

Always consider not just if you can carry out the activity that is described, but whether you can do it safely, as often as you need to do it and also think about how long each task takes you – if you can do something but it takes longer than it would for someone without your condition, make this very clear.

With each question, consider if you need someone else to intervene directly to help you (such as helping you to get dressed or to bathe), or to remind, encourage or prompt you to do something (perhaps because you get confused or demotivated, or you forget easily without this help).

If you have a condition that varies, give as much information as you can about its day-to-day effects upon you: the more information you can give about this, the better your chances of a successful claim.

You may need to consider **timing yourself** when you try certain activities such as walking or dressing – they may take you longer than you think; just because you have got used to doing things differently because of your disability doesn't mean that you should not be seen as requiring help.

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You may even wish to keep notes or a diary for a time to show what a typical day is like for you and how you manage your daily living and mobility tasks. This may help you to answer some of the questions more clearly.

When you think about the help that you need, it doesn't matter whether or not you have someone there to provide the help. If you have someone who helps, give details in reply to each question of how they do help. If you haven't got help, give details of how another person *could* help you in each case.

It will also be useful to say how much help – how many hours per day or per week – you need from another person.

In each case, think not just about carrying out the task, but whether doing that task is painful or difficult to do, or if it leaves you with problems afterwards such as being in pain, breathless or tired.

If you have a condition which means you are compelled to take a long time over a task owing to obsessive behaviour for instance, this is also relevant.

If you use aids or appliances to help you with tasks (e.g. cooking or moving about) give details of these: you can still score points for PIP if you can do a task, but only when using aids or appliances.

If you have a mental health problem, you need to give details of your condition's effect upon your daily life, to show the barriers that you face (for instance not being able to leave your home on your own owing to anxiety) and what help you need to overcome them, such as someone being with you to support and motivate you. This is of course very personal information, but the more you can say on the PIP form, the better the result will reflect your situation.

The documents you are sending with the form

If you have evidence to support your claim from your GP or another professional, you may include it with the form. There is space to list the documents that you are sending.

If you are waiting for supporting evidence, don't delay your claim: send the claim in, and then send the supporting evidence to the DWP as soon as you can afterwards.

If possible, keep a copy of the form and any supporting evidence that you send.

How long have I got to fill the form in and send it back?

One month from the date it was sent out. If you do not return the form within that time, your claim could be disallowed – but if you have good reason, e.g. you need help and can't get it in time, contact the DWP, they can allow you more time. Seek advice if you have any problems with getting the form back in time.

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Each Question in detail

Question 1 – Who is best placed to advise about your health?

The examples given are your GP, hospital doctor, specialist nurse, community psychiatric nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, counsellor or support worker.

Give the details of the professional who knows you and your condition best, and who has been helping you recently.

There is room to put in three sets of names, addresses and telephone numbers. Don't hesitate to add more, if the professionals concerned can give more information that will help your claim.

The DWP may contact these professionals for more details.

Question 2 – What are your health conditions or disabilities?

This page asks you to list your conditions or disabilities and to say approximately when these started. There is room on the page to list about 12 conditions/disabilities but if you need more space you can write in the 'additional information' section at Question 15.

Any tablets or other medication you're taking or will be taking

This means medication you take at home, prescribed or recommended by a doctor, nurse or pharmacist - it includes treatments such as chemotherapy, physiotherapy or dialysis – you should also give information on any side effects that medication or treatment has on you.

Putting in a copy of your current prescription form is helpful here.

Question 3 – Preparing food

The questions under this heading ask if you have problems such as:

- peeling or chopping food, or opening cans
- using a cooker hob or microwave safely (not an oven below waist-height, for instance: your ability to bend is not taken in to account)
- whether you use any aids or appliances to help you prepare food and cook
- whether you need supervision or assistance from another person, including prompting and reminding you to complete the task

It is very important to provide details in the 'Extra information' section for this question. The question is trying to establish how you can manage making a 'simple (cooked) meal', which is a meal for one, using fresh ingredients. If you can only cook using pre-chopped vegetables, mention this.

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Think about how long it may take you to do this, what dangers there may be if you are managing pots, pans, kitchen utensils and a cooker or microwave, whether you need someone to help you with the task or even to be with you to supervise so you can plan and carry out your preparation and cooking of food. This includes checking that food is fit to eat and within date.

It's not just the actual preparation and cooking, but the need to plan the meal and concentrate on and complete the task that matters.

If you cannot cook at all because of your disability, make this clear.

Question 4 – Eating and drinking

This question asks about problems you may have eating, such as cutting food up, being able to place food and drink in your mouth, and chewing and swallowing.

It also asks if you need help with any of these, or prompting to remind you to eat, or someone to watch over you while you eat in case of choking etc.

It is also relevant to mention problems such as dropping food, causing spillages etc if this happens because of your condition.

If you use aids or appliances or a 'therapeutic source' such as a feeding tube, give details, including what help you need to manage this.

Question 5 – Managing Treatments

This question asks for details about your ability to take medication, manage treatments that you carry out at home, and also if you can monitor your condition, such as blood sugar levels, pain levels or changes in your mental health.

Does anyone have to help you take medication – or to prompt or remind you to do it? Does medication need to be taken at specific times?

Do you have a condition which means you cannot take action or call for help if it suddenly gets worse?

If you receive therapy at home as recommended by your GP, a nurse, a pharmacist or another health professional, give details of this, including what help you need from someone else and how many hours a week of therapy you undertake.

If a failure to manage your medication etc properly would lead to deterioration in your health, make this clear.

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Question 6 – Washing and bathing

This question refers to washing and also to using an un-adapted bath and/or shower. If you use adapted equipment, state what it is and how it helps.

You should think about not only the physical tasks of washing and bathing and what help you may need from another person, but also tasks such as getting in and out of a bath or shower (does someone need to give you a hand to do this?) and whether you need anyone to prompt or encourage you to wash or bathe or to make sure you are safe.

Question 7 - Managing toilet needs

This asks about your ability to get on and off an un-adapted toilet, whether you can clean yourself after using the toilet, and what help you may need if you have incontinence problems.

This is a very personal subject, but again as much detail as possible is needed about how far you can manage the task, how long it takes, and what help or support, including prompting and reminding, you may need from someone else.

Remember to mention if it takes a long time, or you need help in cleaning yourself and cleaning or changing any aids that you may use, after you have used the toilet.

Question 8 – Dressing and undressing

This asks about your ability to put clothes on and take them off, but also includes selecting appropriate everyday clothes (including what's appropriate for different sorts of weather), dealing with zips and other fastenings.

If you can dress, for example, your upper body but need help with your lower body, or vice versa make this clear.

If you cannot dress at all without help, make this clear.

Think about how many times a day you may need to dress or undress or change clothes (especially if you have bowel or bladder problems and your clothes become soiled), how long it takes you, what difficulties you have, what help you may need from someone else etc. including choosing the correct items and colours if your disability prevents you from doing so.

If your disability means that you need to be reminded when to keep your clothes on (e.g. not undressing in public owing to mental health problems) mention this – it is extremely personal, but it will help your claim.

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Question 9 – Communicating

This question concerns verbal communication - your ability to speak to others (in your own first language) and to hear and understand what other people say to you.

Do you use aids or appliances (for instance hearing aids?) Do you need support from someone trained or experienced in communication needs – such as sign language? An ‘experienced’ person could be a member of your family.

Can you understand a simple sentence or a complicated sentence in your own language? Can you make yourself understood by another person – and how difficult is it to do so?

Question 10 – Reading

This concerns your ability, indoors or out, to read signs, symbols and words in your own language, in standard-sized text.

The questions are aimed at finding if you can understand basic written information (signs, symbols, words, dates) or more complex information (more than one written or printed sentence) and whether you need aids other than glasses or contact lenses, or if you need prompting to understand written information.

If you are not literate this will only count if it is owing to your condition or disability.

This question does not include using Braille, so you will not lose out if you are reading Braille.

Question 11 – Mixing with other people

This concerns your ability to socialise with other people (both those you know and those you don’t), to understand their behaviour and body-language and to behave appropriately to them in return – for instance if you suffer ‘severe anxiety and distress’ in company or you can only mix with people you know.

If you are likely to be verbally or physically abusive with others because of your disability, it is important to mention this even though it is very personal.

If you need support from a trained or experienced person in order to manage social situations, give details. An ‘experienced’ person could be a family member.

Question 12 – Making decisions about money

This question looks at your ability to make household financial decisions – basic tasks such as working out what goods costs in a shop, working out change, or more complicated decisions such as weekly or monthly budgeting, paying bills, making sure you have enough money to last you, and planning what you want to buy in future.

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If you need to be prompted to make money decisions, or you need someone's help, give details, including how often you need this help.

Question 13 – Going out (mobility activity)

This question is concerned with your ability to work out and follow a sensible local route when going out (including using public transport) and is aimed at finding out if you suffer severe anxiety or stress which interferes with your ability to move around – if you may suffer panic attacks, get lost, get in to danger etc. when going out, mention it here.

If you need someone to help you plan your route, accompany you, prompt and encourage you, provide reassurance and guidance, it is also important to mention this.

The question also covers whether you can manage on a familiar or an unfamiliar route, and also whether you need to use 'orientation aids' (meaning specialist aids designed to assist disabled people to follow a route safely) to help you, or you use an assistance dog (guide dog).

The form refers mainly to the effects of stress and anxiety – but if you have a disability such as sight impairment which affects your ability to plan and follow a route, mention it here.

Question 14 – Moving around (mobility activity)

This question asks about physical problems that you have when moving around – it asks how far you can stand and then walk, whether you need any aids to walk, or if you use a wheelchair.

If you can stand and walk to a limited degree but cannot do this in an upright position, make this clear. If you are a double amputee, you will not be considered able to 'stand' and should be given the maximum points for this activity.

Think about what hazards you encounter when moving around – steps, kerbs, uneven ground etc, and how you cope with these, as well as the possible effects of walking such as pain, dizziness or breathlessness.

It is especially important to be clear how far you can walk 'safely, to an acceptable standard and in a reasonable time' – you may need to time yourself, and if your ability varies, decide how far you can walk most of the time.

The way you walk– your gait – is also taken into account as well as the time you take to walk, pain and discomfort etc.

Question 15 - Additional Information

Use this box to add anything that didn't fit elsewhere on the form – but don't hesitate to add extra sheets if you need to give more details, especially as the box provided on the page is not very big.

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Declaration - You need to complete and sign the declaration that the information you have given is correct and complete as far as you know and believe. PIP cannot be paid unless this part is completed.

What happens next – medical assessment

An 'independent health professional' (working for DWP) will look at your claim form and any medical evidence that you provide from your GP or consultant and in most cases, you will also be asked to undergo a face-to-face medical assessment with the health professional (or possibly to do so by telephone) - after which that professional will give advice to the Case Manager (decision maker) at the DWP who will decide on your entitlement to PIP.

If the details that you have already provided are sufficient to make your situation clear, you may not have to attend a face-to-face examination. Seek advice if you have requested that the decision be made on 'papers only', for instance because the face to face meeting may cause you distress, but you are told you still need a face to face examination.

If you are terminally ill and claiming under the special rules, you will not have to attend a medical examination.

You must be given at least 7 days' written notice (including text or email) of the consultation (time, date and location) unless you agree to a shorter period.

You may also be asked to provide additional information – you will have one month to provide this, but more time can be allowed if it is reasonable to do so.

Failure to provide information or to attend or participate in a medical examination without good cause may lead to the refusal of your claim

'Good reason' includes your state of health at the relevant time and the nature of any disability you have – so if you have been unwell and unable to attend an examination, this should count – but 'good reason' is not confined solely to reasons of health.

If you are not going to be able to attend, contact the company that offers the examination (see below) as soon as you can.

If you do not attend, you will be given a chance to explain why, but it is best not to wait for the DWP to contact you: if your benefit is stopped, you may appeal against the decision. Seek advice at once.

Who will perform the examination?

Capita perform examinations in the DE, LE and NG post code areas.

Atos perform examinations in the SK and S post code areas.

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Where?

Examinations may take place at a medical centre or you may request to be seen in your home, if attending a centre would cause you difficulties because of your condition.

To request a home visit you will need evidence from your GP to say why you need a visit. The letter needs to be as specific as possible about the reasons for needing a home visit.

Will I get a reminder of the examination date?

Atos and Capita send reminders prior to the examination.

Can I take someone with me?

Yes – you should be able to go with a companion, be it a friend, carer, support worker, mental health advocate.

What will happen?

Whether the interview is at a medical centre or in your home, you should be treated in a polite, professional manner - and in a way that is appropriate to your illness or disability. If you have someone with you who knows how your condition affects you, the health professional should listen to them as well as to you.

The health professional will ask you questions relating to your daily activities and mobility needs - you may be asked about your home (and, for instance, any problems you have moving about at home, any adaptations to your home to help with disability) your work (especially if what you can do is now limited, or you have had to change jobs owing to disability problems) and hobbies or social activities – remember to mention if you have had to give any such activities up because of illness or disability.

You may be asked to give a description of your typical day, including when you get up, washing, dressing, cooking and what difficulties you have with these.

You can explain the health conditions you wrote about in your claim, and how they affect your daily life; if someone is with you, they cannot speak for you in most cases (but if you cannot make yourself understood, or cannot understand what is said to you without help then a common-sense approach should be taken) but they should be encouraged to add any useful information.

Remember to add any information that you think has been missed by the professional.

Remember to stress if you cannot do certain tasks safely, or if doing them repeatedly would cause you difficulties, or if you have to take a long time over them or cannot do them to an acceptable standard.

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If the effects of your condition are variable over time, make this clear. If you are able to say how many 'good' or 'bad days you have, this will help.

If a physical examination is needed, the professional needs to explain this to you and also needs your consent to proceed. You should not be asked, as part of any physical examination, to do anything that will cause you pain or discomfort, or which will affect you later.

The health professional will also make notes of how you walk, sit, stand, bend down get on and off an examination couch, and how you use any aids or appliances. The professional should summarise their findings to you and invite any questions from you, but their findings are not the final decision on your entitlement to PIP.

What should I do when I get my PIP decision?

Seek advice. If your claim is refused or you don't get the rate of PIP you were expecting it is possible to challenge the decision; we will advise you further on the new system of 'mandatory reconsideration' and appeal.

You have one calendar month to challenge a decision – please seek advice straight away. It is possible to make a late challenge, but seek advice as quickly as possible.

The point-scoring system from the law

We mentioned earlier in this factsheet that the amount of benefit awarded is based on a point-scoring system - this is set out below.

Remember you need to score at least 8 points to get the standard rate of PIP for daily living and for mobility and at least 12 points to get the Enhanced Rate.

The answers in your form and information from your medical assessment will be compared with the following criteria as out set out in the law.

Additional information can be found on our website, visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/welfarebenefits

To keep up-to-date with benefit changes in Derbyshire go to
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/benefitnews

Benefits Helpline – 01629 531535 or email
welfarebenefits@derbyshire.gov.uk

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

11.00am – 4.00pm

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This leaflet is for information only, it is not a claim form

DAILY LIVING ACTIVITIES

<i>Column 1 Activity</i>	<i>Column 2 Descriptors</i>	<i>Column 3 Points</i>
1. Preparing Food	a. Can prepare and cook a simple meal.	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 –	2
	(i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or	
	(ii) supervision to be able to take nutrition; or	
	(iii) assistance to be able to cut up food.	
	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

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3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition	a. <i>Either –</i>	0
	(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.	
	b. <i>Needs any one or more of the following:</i>	1
	(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.	
	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

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	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 to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage toilet needs or incontinence.	2
	c. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs.	2
	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 –	2
	(i) prompting to be able to dress, undress or determine appropriate circumstances for remaining clothed; or	
	(ii) prompting or assistance to be able to select appropriate clothing.	
	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

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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 read or understand basic written information.	4
	e. Cannot read or understand signs, symbol 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 –	8
	(i) overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant; or	
	(ii) the claimant to exhibit behaviour which would result in a substantial risk of harm to the claimant or another person.	

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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

<i>Column 1 Activity</i>	<i>Column 2 Descriptors</i>	<i>Column 3 Points</i>
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. Cannot plan the route of a journey.	8
	d. 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. Cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, assistance dog or 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 an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	10

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| 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 – | 12 |
| (i) stand; or | |
| (ii) move more than 1 metre | |