# Your PIP assessment: top tips

This factsheet contains useful tips to help you prepare for your face-to- face assessment. Also known as the consultation, the assessment is frequently required as part of the decision-making process for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The information here may apply to face-to-face assessments held at an assessment centre or at home, and to telephone or video assessments.

If you have been invited to attend an assessment and would like to change the way it is carried out, for instance to have your assessment carried out face-to-face assessment rather than by telephone, please contact the assessment provider who has contacted you to ask that it is changed to your preference.

## What to do before the assessment

We recommend that you review what you have written in your PIP claim form as well as read through the top tips from our PIP toolkit. You can visit our toolkit online at **rnib.org.uk/pip-toolkit** or request a copy through our Helpline.

## What to take to your assessment

* Some form of **identification** – your assessment appointment letter tells you what you can use as ID
* A list of the **aids or appliances** you use such as: a long cane, guide dog, monocular, talking navigation app on your mobile phone, low vision aids, magnifier, software packages that read text, liquid level indicator, adapted chopping boards, finger guard, electric chopper, PenFriend labels, bumpons, shower seat, grab rails etc.

And if you have not already provided or submitted these:

* A copy of your Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) or BP1 if you live in Scotland and A655 if you live in Northern Ireland. If you have only an old certificate such as a BD8 bring that with you
* A list of medication that you take
* Additional evidence from your healthcare professional about how your condition affects you that you didn’t already include in your PIP claim form, such as a letter from your eye consultant, GP, carer, support worker etc.

If you have a telephone assessment you may be asked to send copies of this evidence to the assessment provider.

### Take someone with you for support

You can take a companion with you into a face-to-face assessment. This could be anyone who makes you feel more comfortable, like a friend, relative or carer (they must be age 16 or over). If you want, they can take part in discussions and take notes for you. This also applies if you have a telephone or video assessment. Remember to introduce the person accompanying you to the assessor at the start and state you have asked them to assist you.

If the assessor says the person cannot take part, you should refer them to DWP’s PIP Assessment Guide for Assessment Providers. Your right to have a companion during the assessment is at paragraph 1.6.51 and can be found by visiting **gov.uk**.

### Ask for your assessment to be recorded

You may find it reassuring to have your assessment recorded so there is a formal record of what you said, and you can easily raise any inaccuracies if the assessment report does not reflect what you said during the assessment.

You should try to make this request at least 3 days before your assessment takes place. However, if your assessment is being carried out by Capita, you do not need to let them know in advance; just let the assessor know at the beginning of the appointment and they will start the recording process. This facility may not be available for video assessments so you might want to check this if it applies to you.

You can ask to stop the recording at any point. After the assessment you will receive a digital link and password to access and download the recording. Please note: this link expires after 24 hours for data protection purposes. If there are any issues accessing a recording, or if a CD copy is required, you can contact the enquiry centre using an online form or by telephone. See **capita-pip.co.uk/en/contact-us**.

## During the assessment

### Do:

* Tell the assessor everything you can that’s relevant to your condition, even if it’s already on your PIP claim form.
* Talk about how your condition affects you and the kind of things you have difficulty with or can’t do at all without guidance or assistance This includes difficulties the assessor should but might not raise with you, including your ability to dress, to wash and to mix with others.
* Do wait for the assessor to finish typing before speaking again; this will ensure that information you give does not get missed.
* Take your time – don’t let the assessor rush you.

### Don’t:

* Exaggerate your condition, but also don’t downplay it and minimise its effect.
* Just answer “yes” or “no” to the assessment questions but tell the assessor how doing something makes you feel both during and after completing an activity, what assistance you need, how long it takes, and what aids you use.

### Observations on what you say and do during an assessment

The assessor will use the information you gave on your PIP claim form, but also record evidence from what you say and do on the day.

From the time you meet with the assessor, they will be making informal observations about you which can be added to the information provided in the report. This is particularly relevant if your assessment is face-to-face. For example, they might ask you how you got to the assessment centre. If you say you came on the bus, they may make a note that you can travel alone on public transport. If you walk into the examination room without guidance, they are likely to note this.

You might also be asked to carry out some physical tasks during the assessment. Don’t feel you have to do things in the assessment that you wouldn’t normally be able to do. If you do them on assessment day, the assessor may think you can always do them.

## Telephone and video assessments: additional tips

* Treat it like a normal appointment: take time to make sure you are somewhere quiet and comfortable and have a drink to hand.
* If you are able to read them, have a copy of your PIP2 application form, and any notes you’ve made, in front of you.
* If a companion is assisting you, use the speaker function on your phone (if available) so that they can hear, and contribute to, the assessment.
* Take the name of the assessor and make a note of the time that they called and the call duration.
* If you or a health professional (e.g., your GP) have already provided supporting evidence to the assessment provider, ask the assessor if they have read this.
* If the quality of the call is poor do raise this with the assessor: don’t try to guess what is being asked. Repeat your answers if necessary or ask them to repeat these back to you.
* Do not feel rushed to answer questions just because it is over the telephone: take time to consider both the question and your reply.
* While the assessor cannot make inaccurate judgments based on your appearance conversely, they cannot see how difficult things are for you to do e.g., being guided into a room. Try to explain in detail the everyday difficulties you experience, and the activities you can no longer do, or cannot do without sighted assistance.
* Before the assessor ends the call try to add any other relevant information or points that you missed before or that you have not been already asked about.

## Travel expenses for face-to-face assessments

The cost of the journey from your home to the assessment centre (and back again), parking and fuel at 25p per mile can be reimbursed. If you travel by taxi, you must get the assessment provider to approve the use of the taxi before your assessment. If you don’t, they may not reimburse the fare.

You can ask the receptionist at the assessment centre for a travel expenses claim form before you leave.

## Further information

For more information about making a claim for PIP, you can visit our website or request a copy of our factsheet by calling our Helpline.

### RNIB Helpline

If you need someone who understands sight loss, call our Helpline on **0303 123 9999**, say **“Alexa, call RNIB Helpline”** to an Alexa-enabled device, or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**. Our opening hours are weekdays from 8am – 8pm and Saturdays from 9am – 1pm.

### Sight Advice FAQ

Sight Advice FAQ answers questions about living with sight loss, eye health or being newly diagnosed with a sight condition. It is produced by RNIB in partnership with other sight loss organisations. **sightadvicefaq.org.uk**

#### Connect with others

Meet or connect with others who are blind or partially sighted online, by phone or in your community to share interests, experiences and support for each other. From book clubs and social groups to sport and volunteering, our friendly, helpful and knowledgeable team can link you up with opportunities to suit you. Visit **rnib.org.uk/connect** or call **0303 123 9999**.



**RNIB Legal Rights Service**

April 2024

End of document.