



This guidance is for the friends, family, co-workers, or carers of the person applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Adult Disability Payment (ADP).

What is PIP or ADP?

- The benefit is for adults aged 16-64 with a long-term health condition or impairment, whether physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, intellectual, or any combination of these to live an independent life. It is paid by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to make a contribution towards the extra costs that disabled people may face, to help them lead full, active, and independent lives. It can be paid to those who are in full or part-time work as well as those who are unable to work.

How will my supporting letter help?

- Supporting letters can be powerful and persuasive. A statement from the people who know the claimant best can provide valuable insight and further evidence to support how their health condition affects them. The statement should explain how their disabilities or health conditions affect them throughout the day and the impact doing them may have.
- You can write the statement or letter in any format you are comfortable with, but we have created a template with useful prompts that you can use to provide the DWP with insight into the specific activities they assess, and we recommend using this as a starting point.

What essential information needs to be included?

The information in your supporting statement should be specifically focused on the 12 daily living and mobility activities that the DWP will assess, such as preparing food, communicating verbally, and planning and following journeys.

Write a statement for each of the 12 activities you have knowledge of and where possible include a specific example that supports your statement.

You should think about and include the following:

- Whether they can complete an activity reliably
- Any prompting or reminding they need to carry it out
- Any specific physical help or support you provide, if any
- Any specific emotional help or support you provide, if any. This might include encouragement or reassurance
- Any aids or adaptations they need to use to carry it out
- Any compensatory behaviours they don't realise they make
- Any distress or negative impact the activity causes (for example, anxiety, fatigue, pain)
- Any risk or safety concerns related to completing the activity
- Any additional time it takes them to complete, whether they must do it in stages or whether they would be able to repeat it again whenever they needed.

What are the four components of reliability? Think STAR!

It is important to understand that in the assessment the DWP will be looking to decide if the claimant can do an activity reliably. They will only score points if they cannot do the activity reliably. Your letter will be used as supporting evidence to explain what they can and cannot do reliably.

Reliability has four components. For someone to be considered able to do activity reliably they must be able to satisfy all four components for each activity. If they cannot satisfy all four components, then you need to make this explicitly clear in your statement and explain why, with examples.

Think STAR. You should only say they can do something if they can do it:

1. **Safely** - This means they must be able to undertake the activity in a way that is unlikely to cause harm (including making their symptoms worse) to themselves or anyone else. This could be either during or after they have done the activity.
2. **Timely** - This means can they complete the activity, taking no more than twice as long as the maximum amount of time that a person without their health condition or impairment would normally take to complete that activity.
3. To an **Acceptable standard** - This means they must be able to undertake the activity in a way that is unlikely to cause harm to you or anyone else. This could be either during or after you have done the activity.
4. **Repeatedly** - This means they can undertake the activity as often as reasonably required. For example, preparing three meals a day or showering daily.

S

Safely

T

Timely

A

Acceptably

R

Repeatedly

How do I know what examples to include?

It is helpful to talk with the claimant to gather specific information from them so that your letter supports their own experience of managing their condition. You will likely already have a good understanding of how they undertake many of these activities and any support they need. Talk through each specific activity, making notes of examples of how they might approach or complete certain tasks and what aids or support they currently use. You can add any prompting or additional support you might be helping with too.

How else can I be supportive during this process?

Please be aware when helping someone that the benefits application process can be incredibly long, difficult, and overwhelming for many people. The purpose of your letter and the application form that they complete is to highlight all of their challenges and difficulties. It focuses on the negatives of their condition and all the problems they experience. This can be particularly hard and confronting for people to face, so try to be extra patient and kind as you support them.

While you cannot include details in your letter, it can be helpful to remind the claimant of their strengths and capabilities and that their condition doesn't define who they are. It might be nice to make a plan with them to do something fun together once they submit their application. It can be really positive to have something to look forward to once it's done.

If it feels appropriate, you may wish to consider offering to attend the face to face or video consultation stage of their assessment with them so you can provide support or advocate for them. An advocate can help by providing personal support, helping to clarify questions, prompting if they have forgotten something important or helping to recognise when a break might be needed.