

Attendance Allowance (AA), Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

- If this is your first application you will probably have been given 4 or 6 weeks to complete the form and send it back. This is so that any award can be back-dated to the date the form was requested. But if you miss the date they will back-date to when they receive the form.
- If this is a review then they just say send it back as soon as possible. But if you do not send it back in good time to be considered before your original award runs out then your current benefit may stop until the review has been completed and a new award made. This might affect other benefits such as Carers Allowance, so don't put it off!
- Use the form to give as clear a picture as possible about how you are affected by your condition and what sort of help you need to manage daily life.
- For the mobility elements of DLA and PIP it helps if you measure how far you can walk before you have to stop because of pain or breathlessness. Get someone to pace out the distance and time how long it takes you.
- If you are applying on behalf of a child remember that you have to describe what is extra care needed compared to another child of the same age without your child's condition.
- You will need full details of your GP and any medical consultants, teachers, therapists or other professionals involved with you and an up to date prescription list. If you have reports or letters which support your case send in copies with your form.
- Give as much detail as possible. Where there is a tick box and a space for further details always use both so that you explain what the difficulties are and why you need help with something.
- It may help to keep a diary for a week or so to see how often you need help with something or how often something happens (e.g. a fall, a seizure).
- Be realistic – avoid the temptation to say you can manage if in fact you ideally need help with something. Help includes prompting, reminding, encouraging and reassuring.
- Don't worry about writing too much – if you run out of space you can use a separate sheet of paper but don't forget to put your national insurance number on it.
- Don't worry about spelling mistakes or perfect grammar – the important thing is to get down what you want to say.
- Don't feel you have to do it all in one go – have a break and go back to it if you need to.
- Keep a copy in case it gets lost in the post or you need it for an appeal.

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