

The health professional will ask a series of questions and submit a report to the Department of Work and Pensions, giving their medical opinion and also suggesting how long it is likely to be before you are fit to go back to work. The Department of Work and Pensions make the decision about entitlement, although their decision is often based largely on the medical report provided by Maximus. Maximus have announced that you can now ask for your assessment to be recorded, as they have facilities for this at every assessment centre.

People have had very mixed experiences of their medical assessments, and this is partly because they don't know what to expect. For example many people think they will be physically examined, but the process is mainly based upon the health professional's observations of you and relies on your answers to their questions. You may be asked to do certain tasks, for example to show what range of movement you have in your joints, but you should not be asked to perform any action that you find physically painful (and you are allowed to refuse such a request).

If you are not happy with anything to do with your assessment, you can make a complaint. Details are at: <https://www.chdauk.co.uk/contact-us>

It might be helpful if you have a look at the activities and 'descriptors' that you will be assessed on – this is a list of tasks you might find difficult, and each one is given a score from 0-15. The activities cover both physical and mental function difficulties.



originals to you. This will help them when they write their medical report. See our Factsheet about Getting Medical Evidence.

It will not be helpful for you to take information that you have printed out from the internet which is just general information about your diagnosed condition.

We recommend that you attend your assessment with a companion. The Department of Work and Pensions has said this is to be encouraged. The companion will not be able to answer questions for you, but will be able to take notes and also to help you if you struggle to remember things.

It is helpful to give detailed explanations of the activities that cause you difficulty, rather than giving just 'yes' or 'no' answers. If you can explain why you have a problem, and also what the after-effects of attempting a task might be, and how long the after-effects can last, it can help the health professional get an accurate picture of your problems. Otherwise they may make some false assumptions about your abilities.

Other benefits that may require a medical assessment are **Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment** and **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**. The same general rules apply, although your assessment may take place in a different location.

For **Personal Independence Payment**, anyone living in Norfolk may be assessed by one of two different companies, Atos Healthcare (who run the



Independent Assessment Service, or IAS for short), or Capita, depending on your postcode. Capita just cover the PE postcode area.

Most people will be asked to go to a face to face assessment. The only exceptions are for anyone with a terminal illness, or where there has been enough medical and other evidence provided with the claim form that a decision can be made just using the written evidence.

Atos have four assessment centres for Personal Independence Payment in Norfolk (although they will offer a home visit if required):

- St Francis House on Queens Road Norwich
- 11 Prince of Wales Road Norwich
- TICCS in Great Yarmouth Business Park or
- Laird Health & Business Centre at Croxton Road in Thetford.

Capita will tend to offer a home visit first, and their one assessment centre in Norfolk Kings Lynn, at West Norfolk Deaf Association.

Neither of these companies should ask you to travel for longer than 90 minutes, assessed by how long the journey would take by public transport.

Personal Independence Payment is assessed using a scoring system that is similar in style to the one used for Employment and Support Allowance. If you want to have a look at the activities and descriptors that you will be assessed on, look at our separate Factsheet about Personal Independence Payment (which will give you more detail about how the scores are added up).



You can also look at the activities and descriptors online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/725533/pip-assessment-guide-part-2-assessment-criteria.pdf (pages 83 to 116 show the scoring system). You can telephone and ask for a printed copy.

The most important thing to remember is that you need to provide enough detail about your difficulties for the assessor to see how you could meet the points. Don't allow them to rush you, and don't agree to do any movement that is too painful.

If you have additional supporting evidence, make sure you give it to them (they will take a copy). Do try to go with a companion, who might be able to help with your answers. Also please see our Factsheet about Getting Medical Evidence.

There is information available from the two PIP Assessment Providers on these websites: <https://www.mypipassessment.co.uk/> and <http://www.capita-pip.co.uk/en/assessment-process.html>. If you are not happy with anything to do with your assessment, you can make a complaint at: <https://www.mypipassessment.co.uk/feedback/> or <http://www.capita-pip.co.uk/en/complaints.html>

If you require further information or would like this Factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: info@equallives.org.uk, or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ.

