

How to Prepare a PIP Mandatory Reconsideration: A Step-by-Step Guide

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A mandatory reconsideration is normally the first formal step in challenging a Personal Independence Payment decision.

The way you prepare your request matters. Rather than simply telling the Department for Work and Pensions that you disagree with its decision, you should explain which parts of the decision you are challenging, why you believe they are wrong and what evidence supports your position.

This guide explains the key steps.

AT A GLANCE

Deadline: Normally one calendar month from the date on your decision letter.

Late requests: May sometimes be accepted for up to 13 months where there is a good reason for the delay.

Cost: There is no charge for requesting a mandatory reconsideration.

How to request one: By telephone, letter or using form CRM1.

What you receive: A Mandatory Reconsideration Notice confirming whether the original decision has been changed.

Important: The DWP reconsiders the decision as a whole. An existing award can increase, decrease, remain unchanged or be stopped.

STEP 1: PROTECT YOUR DEADLINE

Check the date printed on your PIP decision letter.

You will normally have one calendar month from this date to request a mandatory reconsideration.

If you are close to the deadline, register your request immediately rather than waiting until you have collected all of your supporting evidence.

You can explain that detailed grounds and further evidence will follow.

Your checklist

- Note the date of the PIP decision.
- Calculate the mandatory reconsideration deadline.
- Register the request before the deadline.
- Keep a record of when and how you contacted the DWP.
- Keep copies of anything you send.

STEP 2: REQUEST YOUR ASSESSMENT REPORT

Ask the DWP for a copy of the health assessment report, commonly called the PA4.

Your decision letter tells you how many points you received. The assessment report can help explain why particular scores were recommended.

When reviewing it, focus on the activities that could affect your entitlement.

Avoid becoming distracted by every disagreement within the report. Concentrate on the findings that affect the descriptors and the award.

Ask yourself:

- Which activities did I score points for?
- Which activities received no points?
- Which descriptors do I believe should apply?
- What explanation has been given for refusing those points?
- Is the report based on facts, assumptions or both?
- Is relevant information missing?

STEP 3: UNDERSTAND THE ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIPTORS

PIP assesses 10 daily living activities and two mobility activities.

Points are awarded according to the descriptor that best reflects the claimant's circumstances.

For both daily living and mobility:

- 0 to 7 points: no award
- 8 to 11 points: standard rate
- 12 points or more: enhanced rate.

Work out your existing score and identify what difference the disputed descriptors would make.

A focused challenge to one or two important activities can sometimes be more effective than a general challenge to the entire assessment.

STEP 4: CONSIDER WHETHER YOU CAN CARRY OUT AN ACTIVITY RELIABLY

PIP does not simply ask whether you can perform an activity at all. The relevant regulations require consideration of whether you can perform it:

Safely - Can you complete the activity without an unacceptable risk of harm during or afterwards?

To an acceptable standard - Can you complete it properly?

Repeatedly - Can you repeat the activity as often as reasonably required?

Within a reasonable time - Can you complete it without taking more than twice as long as somebody without your impairment would normally take?

These questions are particularly important where an assessment focuses on something you managed to do once.

For example, being able to prepare a meal on one occasion does not necessarily establish that you can prepare and cook food safely and repeatedly throughout an ordinary week.

STEP 5: THINK ABOUT FLUCTUATING CONDITIONS

PIP looks at your functioning over time.

If your condition varies, explain how often particular difficulties occur and what happens on better and worse days.

Avoid descriptions such as: "Sometimes I struggle."

Instead, provide greater detail:

"On four or five days each week I need assistance to prepare food because..."
Specific information helps the decision maker understand the pattern of your condition.

STEP 6: GATHER USEFUL EVIDENCE

More evidence does not automatically produce a stronger case.

The most useful evidence is evidence that helps demonstrate how your condition affects the relevant PIP activities.

This might include:

- GP records or letters
- consultant or specialist evidence
- occupational therapy assessments
- physiotherapy assessments
- care or support plans
- evidence from a carer, partner or family member
- symptom diaries
- activity diaries
- relevant prescription information.
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Where possible, explain why you are including each document.

For example: "My occupational therapy assessment records that I require assistance when getting in and out of the bath."

This is more useful than simply sending a large volume of records and expecting the decision-maker to identify the relevant evidence.

STEP 7: ADDRESS EACH DISPUTED ACTIVITY SEPARATELY

For every activity you want reconsidered, use the same basic structure.

Activity

State which PIP activity you are discussing.

Descriptor sought

Identify the descriptor and number of points you believe apply.

Finding disputed

Explain what the assessment report or decision says.

Why it is wrong or incomplete

Describe what actually happens when you attempt the activity.

Use specific real-life examples wherever possible.

Reliability and frequency

Explain whether you can complete the activity safely, repeatedly, to an acceptable standard and within a reasonable time.

Explain how often the difficulty occurs.

Supporting evidence

Identify the evidence that supports what you have said.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID



Simply saying that the assessor was wrong

Explain precisely what was wrong and why.

If the report contains an inaccurate statement, identify it and provide the correct information.



Focusing only on your diagnosis

PIP considers the impact of the condition on your daily functioning.

Explain what you cannot do, what help you need, and why.



Challenging everything

Focus particularly on the descriptors that could affect the award.



Using vague examples

Specific examples are generally more helpful than broad statements.

Explain what happened, what assistance was required, and whether there were consequences afterwards.



Missing the deadline while waiting for evidence

Register the mandatory reconsideration first if the deadline is approaching. Further evidence can follow.

SUGGESTED MANDATORY RECONSIDERATION STRUCTURE

Re: Request for Mandatory Reconsideration – Personal Independence Payment

Decision dated: [insert date]

I am requesting a mandatory reconsideration of the above decision.

I believe that a number of activities have been assessed incorrectly. For each activity below, I have identified the descriptor that I believe applies, the finding I disagree with, and the evidence supporting my position.

Activity:

[Insert activity]

Descriptor sought:

[Insert descriptor and points]

Finding I dispute:

[Summarise the relevant part of the decision or assessment report]

Why I believe this is incorrect:

[Explain your functional difficulties and give specific examples]

Reliability and frequency:

[Explain how the safety, acceptable standard, repetition and reasonable time requirements apply]

Supporting evidence:

[List the evidence and explain what it demonstrates]

For these reasons, I ask the DWP to reconsider the decision and award [insert outcome sought].

I enclose the following supporting documents:

1. [Document]
2. [Document]
3. [Document]

Please confirm receipt of my request and provide a written explanation if the decision is not revised.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The DWP will review the decision and any additional evidence.

A decision maker may contact you for further information.

You will eventually receive a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice.

The original article records a median waiting time of 79 calendar days in January 2026, although individual cases may take more or less time.

If the decision remains unchanged and you want to continue challenging it, you will normally have one calendar month from the date of the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal.

IF YOU NEED TO APPEAL

The First-tier Tribunal is independent of the DWP.

The tribunal considers whether the PIP decision was correct at the relevant time and can hear evidence directly from the claimant.

The work completed during the mandatory reconsideration can therefore become an important part of your appeal.

Preparing the reconsideration carefully from the beginning means that your arguments, examples and supporting evidence are already clearly organised if the dispute continues.

PIP MANDATORY RECONSIDERATION CHECKLIST

Before sending your submission, check that you have:

- ✓ requested the mandatory reconsideration within the relevant deadline
- ✓ obtained or requested the assessment report
- ✓ identified the activities and descriptors you dispute
- ✓ explained why the existing findings are wrong
- ✓ provided specific examples from everyday life
- ✓ addressed safety, acceptable standard, repetition and reasonable time
- ✓ explained the frequency of your difficulties
- ✓ included relevant supporting evidence
- ✓ explained what each item of evidence demonstrates
- ✓ clearly stated the outcome you are asking the DWP to reach
- ✓ retained a full copy of your submission and evidence.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need new medical evidence?

Not necessarily.

Relevant medical or functional evidence may strengthen the case, but you should not miss the mandatory reconsideration deadline while waiting for it.

Will I have another assessment?

Not routinely. A mandatory reconsideration is normally a review of the existing evidence and any further information you provide, although the decision maker may contact you.

Can my existing PIP award be reduced?

Yes. The DWP considers the decision as a whole, meaning an existing award could increase, decrease, remain unchanged or be stopped.

How long does a mandatory reconsideration take?

There is no statutory deadline. The original article records an official median waiting time of 79 calendar days in January 2026.

What happens if the mandatory reconsideration is unsuccessful?

You can normally appeal to the independent First-tier Tribunal within one calendar month of the date on your Mandatory Reconsideration Notice.

SPEAK TO PRAKASH RUPARELIA

Preparing a PIP mandatory reconsideration can involve detailed analysis of the assessment report, the relevant descriptors, the reliability rules and supporting evidence.

Prakash Ruparelia is a specialist welfare benefits solicitor with approximately 25 years' experience representing claimants in mandatory reconsiderations, First-tier Tribunal appeals and Upper Tribunal proceedings.

He can advise on the decision and assessment report, identify the descriptors that may be in dispute, review supporting evidence and help prepare the written case.

If you need advice about challenging a PIP decision, contact Prakash to discuss your circumstances.

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