

## Advice Link - Basic additional information on how to use the PIP descriptors

There is more detailed explanation in the DWP regulations.

### Variable and fluctuating conditions

Taking a view of ability over a longer period of time helps to iron out fluctuations and presents a more coherent picture of disabling effects. Therefore the descriptor choice should be based on consideration of a 12 month period. Descriptors will apply to individuals where their impairment(s) affects their ability to complete an activity on more than 50 per cent of days in the 12 month period.

### Awaiting treatment

If someone is awaiting treatment or further intervention it can be difficult to accurately predict its level of success or whether it will even occur. Descriptor should therefore be based on the likely continuing impact of the health condition or impairment as if any treatment or further intervention has not occurred.

### Reliably, in a timely fashion, repeatedly and safely

An individual must be able to complete an activity descriptor:

**Reliably** means to a reasonable standard. In a timely fashion means in less than twice the time it would take for an individual without any impairment.

**Repeatedly** means completed as often during the day as the individual activity requires. Consideration needs to be given to the cumulative effects of symptoms such as pain and fatigue – i.e. whether completing the activity adversely affects the individual's ability to subsequently complete other activities.

**Safely** means in a fashion that is unlikely to cause harm to the individual, either directly or through vulnerability to the actions of others; or to another person.

### Unaided / Aids and appliances

'**unaided**' means without use of aids or appliances or assistance/prompting/supervision from another person.

**Aids** are devices that help a performance of a function, for example, walking sticks or spectacles.

**Appliances** are devices that provide or replace a missing function, for example artificial limbs, collecting devices (stomas) and wheelchairs.

Assessment takes into account aids and appliances individuals normally use and low cost, commonly available ones which someone with their impairment might reasonably be expected to use, even if not normally used.

### Support from other people

**Assistance** is support that requires the presence and physical intervention of another person i.e. actually doing some or all of the task in question. This specifically excludes non-physical intervention such as prompting or supervision which are defined below. To apply, this only needs to be required for part of the activity.

**Prompting** is support provided by reminding or encouraging an individual to undertake or complete a task but not physically helping them. To apply, this only needs to be required for part of the activity.

**Supervision** is a need for the continuous presence of another person to avoid a serious adverse event from occurring to the individual. There must be evidence that any risk would be likely to occur in the absence of such supervision. To apply, this must be required for the full duration of the activity.

### Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a marked example of a fluctuating condition where an individual can have no functional limitation one minute and considerable limitation the next. Assessment should be based on the impact this causes.

Key to assessing individuals with epilepsy is the consideration of risk. Within each activity, the relevant descriptor should apply to a person with epilepsy if there is evidence that a serious adverse event is likely to occur if the person carried out the activity in that descriptor. It is essential to consider the likely effects of any seizure – type and frequency of fit, associated behaviour, the post-ictal phase and whether there is likely to be sufficient warning to mitigate any risk of danger.