

The One Rule That Changes Your Entire PIP Score

A free guide for Northern Ireland claimants

Most people who apply for PIP in Northern Ireland describe what they **can** do. They write things like "I manage" or "I can do it with help" — and they don't realise that those words are working against them.

PIP isn't about whether you can *attempt* something. It's about whether you can do it **reliably**.

This short guide explains the one rule that changes how your entire PIP form is scored — and shows you exactly how to apply it to three of the most common activities.

"You're not exaggerating. You're finally being honest."

Built by an NI parent, for NI families.

The Reliability Rule

Under PIP law, you must be able to complete an activity in all four of these ways for it to count as "completed." If you fail on even one, you should be scoring points.

Safely

Can you do it without risk of harm to yourself or others? If you leave the hob on, cut yourself, fall, or put yourself in danger — that's not safe.

Repeatedly

Can you do it as many times as needed throughout the day? If you can manage it once but you're exhausted, in pain, or unable to do it again — that's not repeatable.

To an acceptable standard

Can you do it properly? If you wash but miss areas, prepare food but it's not nutritious, or dress but your clothes are inappropriate — that's not an acceptable standard.

In a reasonable time

Can you do it without taking significantly longer than someone without your condition? If it takes you twice as long, state that.

The key sentence: If you cannot complete an activity safely, repeatedly, to an acceptable standard, and in a reasonable time — you cannot do it reliably. Write that on your form.

Three Activities — Weak vs Strong Wording

Here are three of the most common PIP activities where NI claimants lose points because of wording. For each one, we show you what most people write — and what you should write instead.

Activity 1: Preparing Food

X Weak: "I can make simple meals like toast or microwave meals."

✓ Strong: "I am unable to prepare a cooked meal reliably. I cannot safely use the hob or oven due to concentration difficulties and have left pans burning on multiple occasions. I rely on microwave meals or food prepared by others. On the majority of days, I require prompting to eat at all. Without supervision, I would be at risk of harm in the kitchen."

Why it works: The strong version names the risk (burning pans), shows frequency (majority of days), identifies the supervision needed (prompting + supervision), and explains what happens without help (risk of harm). The weak version just describes what you *can* do — which scores zero points.

Activity 2: Managing Medication

X Weak: "I take my medication every day."

✓ Strong: "I am unable to manage my medication reliably without daily prompting. I frequently forget to take prescribed medication, take incorrect doses, or take it at the wrong time. A family member has set alarms and a pill organiser for me, and must verbally prompt me each time. Without this support, I would miss doses regularly, which has previously led to [specific consequence]."

Why it works: It shows the support already in place (alarms, pill organiser, verbal prompting), names the consequences of not having help, and makes clear this happens daily — not occasionally.

Activity 3: Washing and Bathing

X Weak: "I can wash myself but it takes me a long time."

✓ Strong: "I cannot wash and bathe reliably without assistance. Due to fatigue and pain, I am unable to get in and out of the bath safely and require a shower seat and grab rails. I cannot wash my hair or lower body without physical assistance. This takes approximately twice as long as someone without my condition, and on the majority of days I require encouragement to attempt it at all. Without support, I would not wash to an acceptable standard."

Why it works: It references all four reliability tests — safety (can't get in/out safely), acceptable standard (wouldn't wash properly), reasonable time (twice as long), and shows the aids and

adaptations already in use.

What To Do Next

This guide covers the reliability rule and three example activities. But PIP has **12 activities** across daily living and mobility — and each one needs the same level of detail.

The **NI PIP Answer Bank** gives you:

- Strong wording examples for all 12 PIP activities
- Weak vs strong comparisons so you can spot mistakes in your own form
- 30+ examples covering autism, ADHD, learning disability, epilepsy, and physical conditions
- The "What If I Wasn't There?" framework — the question that unlocks higher scores
- NI-specific assessment preparation and checklist
- Bonus templates: symptom diary, personal statement, parent letter, GP brief

Ready for the full Answer Bank?

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Built by an NI parent, for NI families.

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