

CLAIMING FOR PIP WITH EPILEPSY

FACTSHEET

"How do your seizures affect you"

- Do you lose consciousness, are you confused, unaware of what is happening around you.
- How often do these occur. Do you have warning signs before a seizure, if so how long is it and are you always able to reach safety within this time.
- If you receive no warning signs, how do they affect you when you are unaware i.e. do you feel anxious being alone, going outside, are you able to plan ahead.
- Does anything happen to you just before a seizure, are there any risks. Are there any 'Triggers' which offset your seizures.
- Do you have seizures during the day and night i.e. do you wander around at night during seizures and need someone to keep you safe.
- Are you likely to injure/injure yourself during a seizure? If so what happened, have you any hospital/gp reports. Are there any dangers if you have a seizure, i.e. if you fall over without warning what are the risks. If you have had injuries in the past when in these situations what has happened.
- Do you need care and assistance afterwards i.e. someone to keep you safe, help you to recover, if not what could happen if there was no-one around to help you.
- After a seizure do you feel very fatigued and need to sleep to recover? Are there certain places you will be when this happens and do you need help with this, do you recover quickly or do you feel the after effects for a long time afterwards. Do you have incontinence during a seizure?
- If your seizures have a lasting affect i.e. fatigue, confusion, safety risk, mood changes, memory loss? Explain this.
- Do you need to take a shower rather than have a bath in case you have a seizure?
- Do you need supervision i.e. someone with you most or all of the time due to unpredictable and sudden seizures. Are there any risks to your safety in activities i.e. travelling on public transport, shopping, cooking, gardening?
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Explain what would happen:

- If there was no-one to support you when a seizure occurs and why it may be dangerous. Explain why you need to have someone support and care for you, even if you do not have this already in place.
Are there everyday tasks you are unable to do because of your epilepsy in case of accidents during a seizure which means you have to have someone do them for you i.e. Cooking, Ironing, if so state the reasons why you are unable to do these tasks, and what could happen if you did.
- Do you need supervision/help from others to do other tasks, what are they?

Epilepsy is not just a physical condition it can also have a psychological impact:

Include any effects this has on your emotional, mental health and your quality of life, so it can be taken into account.

- Does your epilepsy or living with seizures affect your mood, i.e. worrying, becoming anxious. Do you have mood swings, anxiety or depression. Do these make seizures more likely.
- If you have concentration or memory problems, including help you need to remind or motivate you i.e. taking medication
- Do you take medication, if so, does it make you drowsy, sleepy. Do you remember to take your medication or need someone to remind you?
- Do you need any medical equipment? Do you need equipment i.e. seizure alarm, to help keep you safe.
- Have you been assessed by an Occupational therapist

Tips you may find helpful:

- Give yourself plenty of time, focusing on how they affect your daily living. Your form will have a date as to when it has to be returned. If you are running out of time, ring Dwp and request an extension, they will give you an extra two weeks.
- Your answers can make the difference between getting, or being refused the benefit.
- Complete the form in sections using pencil first or you can complete the example form online. This gives you the opportunity to amend any mistakes.
- Make sure the person reading the form will have a clear picture and understanding of how your condition affects you on a daily basis.
- Answer all questions fully and repeat information each time it is relevant. Provide extra information if you can. i.e. medical information, clinic letter or psychological report from doctors, or information from a social worker or occupational therapist. Keep copies of all paperwork for your records.
- Your friends or family can be helpful reminding you of situations when your condition has affected you.
- Have you given examples explaining how your epilepsy affects you. Try to focus on how your epilepsy makes things difficult.

It is important to describe any difficulties you have with personal hygiene etc to provide a complete picture with these tasks. They need to understand fully how your condition affects you in order to assess your situation, and make an accurate decision on your claim, so that you get the help that you need.

- Do not worry about using the correct 'medical terms' use words you would normally use. If you know a medical name for the types of seizure you have, you can use it, but it is more important to describe what happens to you. Not everyone's seizures are the same.
- i.e. if you use the term 'complex focal seizures', explain what happens to you during your seizure. I
- Be clear and explain your epilepsy, the assessor reading your form may not know much about epilepsy, nor understand how epilepsy can affect someone's life.

- Each individual living with epilepsy will have their own experience: something that affects you may not have the same impact on someone else.
- Explain what your epilepsy is like and how it affects you. Think of a 'bad day' when you have had a seizure/s and write about what happened.....including what could have happened, if you had injured yourself or been in a dangerous situation.
- Create a seizure diary this will help to show how often and what happens. Give as much relevant information as possible
- Think about your everyday routine: what you do, what you would like to do, and how your epilepsy affects this. If you need to use extra sheets of paper for your answers, put your name and reference number on each sheet.
- Keep a copy of your form so you can refer to it at a later date, or take to the assessment to remind you of what you have written. It can be helpful if you need to ask for your claim to be reconsidered or you need to appeal against a decision.