

Universal Credit

If you have Parkinson's, you may be worried about how you'll manage financially. If you can't work, or need help with your day-to-day needs, this can lead to extra costs. But there is financial support available, so it's important to find out what benefits you're entitled to.

This information explains what Universal Credit is, who qualifies and how you can claim.

The information in this publication is correct as of June 2021, but is subject to change. Our most up-to-date information is on our website at parkinsons.org.uk/benefits. Our helpline can also give advice on benefits. Call **0808 800 0303** or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk

What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is a new means-tested benefit for people of working age. It replaces six existing benefits with a single payment for those who are out of work or on a low income.

Universal Credit is currently being phased in across the UK. It will replace the following benefits:

- Housing Benefit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit

Since January 2019, anyone making a new claim for a working-age means-tested benefit will usually claim Universal Credit rather than the older benefits listed above.

Who can claim?

To claim Universal Credit, you need to meet the following basic conditions. You must:

- be aged 18 or over (or 16 to 17 in certain cases)
- be under Pension Credit qualifying age (now State Pension age)
- be in Great Britain and not be subject to immigration control

- not be in education (unless you're claiming a disability benefit, see below), **and**
- have accepted a claimant commitment (see 'Your responsibilities' section below)
- details of any other benefits that you (or your partner) receive
- if you have children, their Child Benefit reference

In addition, you must meet the financial conditions:

- You (and your partner, if you're making a joint claim) must not have capital of more than £16,000, **and**
- Your earnings or other income (and that of your partner, if making a joint claim) must not be too high for Universal Credit to be payable (see section 'How much is Universal Credit?').

Joint claims

If you live with a partner, you'll need to make a joint claim for Universal Credit. In a joint claim, you and your partner must usually meet all the basic conditions above.

In education

You can still qualify for Universal Credit when you're in full-time education, if you get a disability benefit such as Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, and you have been assessed as having a limited capability for work. This is tested under the Work Capability Assessment.

How do I claim Universal Credit?

You should normally claim Universal Credit online at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit

If you're unable to apply online or need help, contact the Universal Credit Helpline on **0800 328 5644** (textphone **0800 328 1344**).

You should have the following information available when you begin your claim:

- your postcode
- your (and your partner's) National Insurance number
- details of your bank or building society account
- any rent agreement you may have
- details of your (and your partner's) income, savings or capital
- details of your (and your partner's) earnings

The initial interview

Once you've made your claim, you'll need to attend an interview at your local Jobcentre Plus office. This is to confirm the information you gave when you made the claim and to discuss what you'll need to do to receive the benefit.

Due to the pandemic most interviews are currently being done on the phone. The Department for Work and Pensions intends to return to face-to-face interviews during 2021-2022.

If you have a disability or health condition that means you'll find it hard to attend or take part in the interview, you can ask the Jobcentre to make 'reasonable adjustments'. For example, it may be possible to hold the interview somewhere you can get to more easily, or do the interview over the phone.

You may also want someone with you at the interview for support or assistance, such as a friend, relative or a professional.

At the interview a work coach will discuss your work prospects with you, and the support you may need to help you find work, or agree an exemption from looking for a job.

The work coach will draw up a 'claimant commitment' outlining the responsibilities and work-related requirements that you must meet to keep getting the benefit in full (see 'What conditions do I have to meet?' section below).

The Work Capability Assessment

If you have a health condition or disability that prevents you from working, or limits the amount of work you can do, you may be able to get Universal Credit without needing to meet the work-related requirements. You may also be eligible for an extra amount in your benefit.

You'll be assessed under the 'Work Capability Assessment'. You'll need to provide details of your health condition or disability when you apply online

and you may need to complete a 'capability for work' questionnaire. The Department for Work and Pensions decision-maker will use this to assess whether:

- you have a 'limited capability for work' – in this case you won't be expected to search for work, but you may have to fulfil some work-related requirements to do with getting ready for work
- you have a 'limited capability for work-related activity' – in this case you won't have to meet any work-related requirements and you'll be eligible for the 'limited capability for work-related activity' amount of Universal Credit

For more details about the points system used to make this assessment, see Appendices 1 and 2 in this information. For guidance on completing the capability for work questionnaire, see Appendix 3.

What conditions do I have to meet?

To qualify for Universal Credit, you may need to meet certain work-related conditions. These are known as 'requirements' and are recorded in the claimant commitment drawn up by the work coach at your work search interview.

Your benefit is likely to be reduced ('sanctioned') if you fail to meet a requirement.

The tasks you agree will depend on your personal situation. In some circumstances, none of the work-related requirements will apply to you.

You're exempt if you:

- are responsible for a child under the age of one
- have regular and substantial caring responsibilities for a severely disabled person, **or**
- have a limited capability for work-related activity. This is tested under the Work Capability Assessment (see above)
- are a carer, not necessarily in receipt of Carer's Allowance, but entitled to the Carer's Element in the calculation
- are a couple where one is over pension age. The person over pension age will be exempt from all the 'work-related requirements'
- fit the student exemption criteria

- have been threatened with or experienced domestic violence (in the last six months)
- can show exceptional circumstances

If work-related requirements do apply, there are four different types of requirement that may be included in your claimant commitment, depending on your situation. These are:

- the work-focused interview requirement
- the work-preparation requirement
- the work-search requirement
- the work-availability requirement

The work-focused interview requirement

Here you need to take part in one or more work-focused interviews. These are designed to assess your prospects and help or encourage you to move into, or stay in, work.

The work-preparation requirement

Here you're expected to take action to improve your chances of getting work. This can include taking part in training, an employment programme or work experience.

The work-search requirement

You're required to take reasonable action to get paid work (or more work if you're already working part-time). This can include searching for work, applying for jobs, creating and maintaining an online profile or registering with employment agencies.

You'll be expected to search for work for a minimum amount of time each week – usually set at 35 hours. The work you're searching for must also amount to at least 35 hours a week.

In each case, the Department for Work and Pensions may agree to less than 35 hours if you have caring responsibilities or a physical or mental impairment.

The work-availability requirement

You're normally required to be able and willing to take up paid work (or more work if you're already working part-time) immediately – you must also be able and willing to attend a job interview immediately.

If you're caring for a child or someone with a physical or mental impairment, the Department for Work

and Pensions can allow you up to one month to take up paid work, and up to 48 hours to attend a job interview, so that you can make alternative care arrangements.

If you have a 'physical or mental impairment that has a substantial adverse effect' on your ability to carry out work of a particular nature or in a particular place, you're not expected to be available for such work or in such a place.

How much is Universal Credit?

The amount of Universal Credit you're paid depends on your circumstances. It's worked out on a monthly basis by comparing your financial needs with financial resources. Set amounts for different needs are added together to give a 'maximum amount' – the basic amount the law says you need to live on each month.

Your maximum amount is made up of a 'standard allowance' and different 'amounts' (see below). From this figure, deductions are made for any earnings and other income you receive – the resulting figure will be your Universal Credit for that month.

The standard allowance

This is the basic allowance that's always included in your maximum amount. The amount you're entitled to depends on your age, and whether you're claiming as a single person or with a partner.

The standard allowance per month is:

- single claimant aged under 25 – £344
- single claimant aged 25 or over – £411.51
- joint claimants both aged under 25 – £490.60
- joint claimants where either is 25 or over – £596.58

These rates are currently expected to drop by £20 a week in October 2021.

The 'amounts'

These are paid to cover different needs. Any amounts you're eligible for will be added to the standard allowance to make your maximum amount. There are five types:

- The limited capability for work-related activity amount – you may be eligible for an amount of £343.63 a month if you're unable to work

because of a disability or health condition such as Parkinson's. This is tested under the Work Capability Assessment (see previous section on this).

- The carer amount – an amount of £163.73 is included if you have regular and substantial caring responsibilities for a severely disabled person.
- The housing costs amount – this may be included in your award if you pay rent. It can also cover certain service charge payments.
- The child amount – this is included in your award for each child (or qualifying young person) who lives with you up to a maximum of two children (unless you're exempt from this restriction). An additional amount is included for every child who is disabled.
- The childcare costs amount – this is included in your award if you pay for registered child care in order to stay in work.

Capital and savings

The capital limit for Universal Credit is £16,000, whether you're single or a couple. If you have savings or capital over £16,000, you can't get Universal Credit. If you have savings or capital under £6,000, this is disregarded (which means you can receive Universal Credit in full).

If your capital is between £6,000 and £16,000, it is treated as generating a monthly income of £4.35 for each £250 (or part of £250) above the lower limit of £6,000. For instance, if you have capital of £6,300, it is treated as generating a monthly income of £8.70.

Earnings and income

If you're employed, your Universal Credit reduces gradually as you earn more. For every pound you earn (after tax and any deductions such as National Insurance or pension contributions) your Universal Credit payment reduces by 63p.

In some situations, you're allowed to keep some of your earnings up to a certain limit before your Universal Credit is affected. This is known as the 'work allowance'. You may be eligible for a work allowance if you have limited capability for work, or responsibility for children.

If you have income other than earnings, such as other benefits, these will usually be taken into account in full, so that your Universal Credit is reduced pound for pound.

Some benefits are completely ignored, for example Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment.

How is Universal Credit paid?

Universal Credit will automatically be paid monthly in arrears, however you can ask for it to be paid more frequently. In Scotland and Northern Ireland you have an automatic right to be paid bi-monthly.

If you have a partner, you can choose who receives the payment.

It should normally take around five weeks to get your first payment of Universal Credit once you have made your claim.

If you have difficulty budgeting at the beginning of your claim, you can ask for an advance payment, which you'll have to repay. To apply for a Universal Credit advance, call **0800 328 5644** (textphone **0800 328 1344**), or speak to your job coach.

Supplementary guidance on the Work Capability Assessment

The 'Work Capability Assessment' is the test used by the Department for Work and Pensions to assess whether people applying for Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance have:

- a limited capability for work
- a limited capability for work-related activity

This will determine whether you're entitled to the 'limited capability for work-related activity' amount of Universal Credit and what work-related requirements, if any, you must meet to keep receiving the benefit in full.

The guidance below provides details of the criteria used in the 'limited capability for work' and 'limited capability for work-related activity' parts of the assessment (Appendices 1 and 2) and provides advice and example responses for the questions in the 'capability for work' questionnaire (Appendix 3).

APPENDIX 1. The limited capability for work assessment: the points

The first part of the Work Capability Assessment looks at whether you have a 'limited capability for work'.

To be assessed as having a limited capability for work, you need to score 15 points or more. Add together the highest score from each activity heading that applies to you. If any tasks marked in bold apply, you will also satisfy the 'limited capability for work-related activity' assessment.

The assessment takes into account your abilities when using any aid or appliance you would normally or could reasonably use.

1. Mobilising unaided by another person, with or without a walking stick, manual wheelchair or other aid if such aid is normally or could reasonably be worn or used

- A. Cannot, unaided by another person, either:
(i) mobilise more than 50 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion, or

(ii) repeatedly mobilise 50 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion. **15 points**

- B. Cannot, unaided by another person, mount or descend two steps even with the support of a handrail. **9 points**

- C. Cannot, unaided by another person, either:
(i) mobilise more than 100 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion, **or**
(ii) repeatedly mobilise 100 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion. **9 points**

- D. Cannot, unaided by another person, either:
(i) mobilise more than 200 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion, **or**
(ii) repeatedly mobilise 200 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion. **6 points**

- E. None of the above applies. **0 points**

2. Standing and sitting

- A. Cannot move between one seated position and another seated position which are located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from another person. **15 points**

- B. Cannot, for the majority of the time, remain at a work station:
(i) standing unassisted by another person (even if free to move around)
(ii) sitting (even in an adjustable chair), **or**
(iii) a combination of paragraphs (i) and (ii) for more than 30 minutes, before needing to move away in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion. **9 points**

- C. Cannot, for the majority of the time, remain at a work station:
(i) standing unassisted by another person (even if free to move around)
(ii) sitting (even in an adjustable chair), **or**
(iii) a combination of paragraphs (i) and (ii) for more than an hour before needing to move

away in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

3. Reaching

A. Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a jacket. **15 points**

B. Cannot raise either arm to top of head as if to put on a hat. **9 points**

C. Cannot raise either arm above head height as if to reach for something. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

4. Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms

A. Cannot pick up and move a 0.5 litre carton full of liquid. **15 points**

B. Cannot pick up and move a one litre carton full of liquid. **9 points**

C. Cannot transfer a light but bulky object such as an empty cardboard box. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

5. Manual dexterity

A. Cannot press a button (such as a telephone keypad) with either hand or cannot turn the pages of a book with either hand. **15 points**

B. Cannot pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with either hand. **15 points**

C. Cannot use a pen or pencil to make a meaningful mark with either hand. **9 points**

D. Cannot single-handedly use a suitable keyboard or mouse. **9 points**

E. None of the above applies. **0 points**

6. Making self understood through speaking, writing, typing, or other means which are normally or could reasonably be used, unaided by another person

A. Cannot convey a simple message, such as the presence of a hazard. **15 points**

B. Has significant difficulty conveying a simple message to strangers. **15 points**

C. Has some difficulty conveying a simple message to strangers. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

7. Understanding communication by: (i) verbal means (such as hearing or lip reading) alone (ii) non-verbal means (such as reading 16-point print or Braille) alone, or (iii) a combination of (i) and (ii) using any aid that is normally or could reasonably be used, unaided by another person

A. Cannot understand a simple message, such as the location of a fire escape, due to sensory impairment. **15 points**

B. Has significant difficulty understanding a simple message from a stranger due to sensory impairment. **15 points**

C. Has some difficulty understanding a simple message from a stranger due to sensory impairment. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

8. Navigation and maintaining safety, using a guide dog or other aid if either or both are normally used or could reasonably be used

A. Unable to navigate around familiar surroundings, without being accompanied by another person, due to sensory impairment. **15 points**

B. Cannot safely complete a potentially hazardous task such as crossing the road, without being accompanied by another person, due to sensory impairment. **15 points**

C. Unable to navigate around unfamiliar surroundings, without being accompanied by another person, due to sensory impairment. **9 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

9. Absence or loss of control while conscious leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or bladder, other than enuresis (bed-wetting), despite the wearing or use of any aids or adaptations which are normally or could reasonably be worn or used

A. At least once a month experiences:
(i) loss of control leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or voiding of the bladder, **or**
(ii) substantial leakage of the contents of a collecting device, sufficient to require cleaning and a change in clothing. **15 points**

B. The majority of the time is at risk of loss of control leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or voiding of the bladder, sufficient to require cleaning and a change in clothing, if not able to reach a toilet quickly. **6 points**

C. None of the above applies. **0 points**

10. Consciousness during waking moments

A. At least once a week, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration. **15 points**

B. At least once a month, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration. **6 points**

C. Neither of the above applies. **0 points**

11. Learning tasks

A. Cannot learn how to complete a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock. **15 points**

B. Cannot learn anything beyond a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock. **9 points**

C. Cannot learn anything beyond a moderately complex task, such as the steps involved in operating a washing machine to clean clothes. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

12. Awareness of everyday hazards (such as boiling water or sharp objects)

A. Reduced awareness of everyday hazards leads to a significant risk of:
(i) injury to self or others, **or**
(ii) damage to property or possessions such that the claimant requires supervision for the majority of the time to maintain safety. **15 points**

B. Reduced awareness of everyday hazards leads to a significant risk of:
(i) injury to self or others, **or**
(ii) damage to property or possessions such that the claimant frequently requires supervision to maintain safety. **9 points**

C. Reduced awareness of everyday hazards leads to a significant risk of:
(i) injury to self or others, **or**
(ii) damage to property or possessions such that the claimant occasionally requires supervision to maintain safety. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

13. Initiating and completing personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks)

A. Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions. **15 points**

B. Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions for the majority of the time. **9 points**

C. Frequently cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

14. Coping with change

A. Cannot cope with any change to the extent that day-to-day life cannot be managed. **15 points**

B. Cannot cope with minor planned change (such as a pre-arranged change to the routine time scheduled for a lunch break), to the extent that, overall, day-to-day life is made significantly more difficult. **9 points**

C. Cannot cope with minor unplanned change (such as the timing of an appointment on the day it is due to happen), to the extent that, overall, day-to-day life is made significantly more difficult. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

15 Getting about

A. Cannot get to any place outside of the claimant's home with which the claimant is familiar. **15 points**

B. Is unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is familiar, without being accompanied by another person. **9 points**

C. Is unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is unfamiliar without being accompanied by another person. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

16. Coping with social engagement due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder

A. Engagement in social contact is always precluded due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the claimant. **15 points**

B. Engagement in social contact with someone unfamiliar to the claimant is always precluded due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the claimant. **9 points**

C. Engagement in social contact with someone unfamiliar to the claimant is not possible for the majority of the time due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the claimant. **6 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

17. Appropriateness of behaviour with other people due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder

A. Has, on a daily basis, uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or disinhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any workplace. **15 points**

B. Frequently has uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or disinhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any workplace. **15 points**

C. Occasionally has uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or disinhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any workplace. **9 points**

D. None of the above applies. **0 points**

APPENDIX 2. The limited capability for work-related activity assessment

The second part of the assessment looks at whether you have a 'limited capability for work-related activity'. For this to be the case, one or more of the following descriptors must apply to you.

1. Mobilising unaided by another person with or without a walking stick, manual wheelchair or other aid if such aid is normally or could reasonably be worn or used

Cannot either:

- A. mobilise more than 50 metres on level ground without stopping in order to avoid significant discomfort or exhaustion, **or**
- B. repeatedly mobilise 50 metres within a reasonable timescale because of significant discomfort or exhaustion.

2. Transferring from one seated position to another

Cannot move between one seated position and another seated position located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from another person.

3. Reaching

Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat or jacket.

4. Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms (excluding standing, sitting, bending or kneeling and all other activities specified in this appendix)

Cannot pick up and move a 0.5 litre carton full of liquid.

5. Manual dexterity

Cannot press a button (such as a telephone keypad) with either hand or cannot turn the pages of a book with either hand.

6. Making self understood through speaking, writing, typing, or other means which are normally, or could reasonably be, used unaided by another person

Cannot convey a simple message, such as the presence of a hazard.

7. Understanding communication by: (i) verbal means (such as hearing or lip reading) alone (ii) non-verbal means (such as reading 16-point print or Braille) alone, or (iii) a combination of (i) and (ii) using any aid that could normally or reasonably be, used unaided by another person

Cannot understand a simple message, such as the location of a fire escape, due to sensory impairment.

8. Absence or loss of control while conscious leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or voiding of the bladder, other than enuresis (bed-wetting), despite the wearing or use of any aids or adaptations which are normally or could reasonably be worn or used

At least once a week experiences:

- A. loss of control leading to extensive evacuation of the bowel and/or voiding of the bladder, **or**
- B. substantial leakage of contents of a collecting device, sufficient to require the individual to clean themselves and change clothing.

9. Learning tasks

Cannot learn how to complete a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock, due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder.

10. Awareness of hazard

Reduced awareness of everyday hazards, due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder, leads to a significant risk of:

- A. injury to self or others, **or**

B. damage to property or possessions such that the claimant requires supervision for the majority of the time to maintain safety.

- (i) physical assistance from someone else, **or**
- (ii) regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence.

11. Initiating and completing personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks)

Cannot, due to impaired mental function, reliably initiate or complete at least two sequential personal actions.

12. Coping with change

Cannot cope with any change, due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder, to the extent that day-to-day life cannot be managed.

13. Coping with social engagement, due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder

Engagement in social contact is always precluded due to difficulty relating to others or significant distress experienced by the claimant.

14. Appropriateness of behaviour with other people, due to cognitive impairment or mental disorder

Has, on a daily basis, uncontrollable episodes of aggressive or disinhibited behaviour that would be unreasonable in any workplace.

15. Conveying food or drink to the mouth

- A. Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without receiving physical assistance from someone else.
- B. Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without repeatedly stopping or experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort.
- C. Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's physical presence, **or**
- D. Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without receiving:

16. Chewing or swallowing food or drink

- A. Cannot chew or swallow food or drink.
- B. Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort.
- C. Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence, **or**
- D. Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to:
 - (i) chew or swallow food or drink, **or**
 - (ii) chew or swallow food or drink without regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence.

APPENDIX 3. Capability for work questionnaire: advice and examples

Here we look at some of the activity headings in the questionnaire in more detail and provide some example responses. The headings used here are sometimes worded differently to those in Appendices 1 and 2, where we give the exact wording of the law.

Activities 1–10 cover physical functions.

Moving round and using steps (Activity 1 in Appendix 1)

This includes using aids like crutches, a walking stick or a manual wheelchair (but not an electric wheelchair), if you normally or could reasonably use them. So if, for example, you can't use crutches or a stick because it would be too painful or difficult, or if you don't use a manual wheelchair because it wouldn't make getting around any easier, then you should explain why.

Most people with Parkinson's experience problems with moving around. They may not be able to physically move, or may feel so tired from doing so that they need to stabilise themselves by leaning on furniture. Some people may feel so sick, exhausted and 'off' that they often have to lie down.

Example response:

"On most days, I can stand and move using walking sticks and manage about 20 to 30 metres, before I need to stop due to tiredness. I then need to sit down for five to 10 minutes. My condition changes from day to day, and sometimes I can't move very well at all. I fall often if I don't use my walking sticks, and my balance is badly affected."

Picking up and moving things (Activity 4 in Appendix 1)

This looks at your ability to pick up and move light objects (such as a carton of liquid or an empty cardboard box). You may have a tendency to drop such things, due to poor grip or tremor. If you have dropped items like this in the past, write down what happened. This way, you may be able to show that you can't do the task in question reliably.

Example response:

"My grip in both hands is poor, and on most days I have tremor. Trying to drink a glass of juice at

mealtimes can be very difficult and I often end up spilling most of it."

Manual dexterity (Activity 5 in Appendix 1)

This test is assessing whether you can manage the tasks with either hand. Some people with Parkinson's may have problems with their grip and fine finger movements. Tremor can also cause problems with manual dexterity.

Example response:

"Because of my tremor I can't use my computer anymore. I press the wrong keys and end up typing nonsense. I can't use the mouse, and keep managing to delete anything I have typed. My daughter tells me she can't read my handwriting."

Communicating – speaking, writing and typing (Activity 6 in Appendix 1)

This may be relevant if your condition affects your speech and you also have difficulties in writing or typing. It asks if you can convey a simple message through any of these means. So, if you think this applies, you should give details of all difficulties with speech, writing, typing and any other means (for example, texting on a mobile phone) explaining why this is difficult. Even if you've already mentioned dexterity problems in Activity 5, you should mention them here too, as each stage of the test is assessed separately.

Example response:

"I find verbal communication very difficult. My voice is very quiet and sometimes my speech is slurred. I also find it hard to type or write because of tremor."

Controlling your bowels or bladder and using a collecting device (Activity 9 in Appendix 1)

Some people with Parkinson's will develop problems with their bladder and bowels, such as incontinence. Some people may also have problems reaching the toilet in time, due to difficulties with movement. Some people with Parkinson's may need to use continence pads, or need someone to help them go to the toilet.

Example response:

"I have a lot of difficulty with bladder and bowel problems. I have to visit the toilet several times during the night. This can be incredibly difficult, because

sometimes I can't move quickly enough to get to the toilet on time and I have an accident. My daughter needs to clean up afterwards. She needs to do this about once a week."

Activities 11–17 cover mental, cognitive and intellectual functions.

Learning how to do tasks (Activity 11 in Appendix 1)

This might apply if you have memory problems.

Example response:

"Parkinson's has caused me to have memory problems, so I have difficulty remembering instructions I have just been given. Even if someone tells me how to do something two or three times, I tend to forget. I need visual prompts, such as notices around the house to remind me to do everyday tasks. Learning anything beyond a simple task is now beyond me."

Awareness of hazards or danger (Activity 12 in Appendix 1)

This may apply if your concentration has been affected, so you're less aware of potential risks. Mention any accidents you've had because of this and list any injuries you sustained as a result. Also, if you don't try certain activities because of the risks, then say so and explain why.

Example response:

"My mind tends to wander and I can forget that I have started doing something. I left a pan of beans on the hob last month and it burnt dry. Fortunately a neighbour noticed before fire took hold. Three weeks ago I turned on the bath taps and flooded the bathroom. My daughter comes round several times a week now, to ensure I am safe."

Coping with social situations (Activity 16 in Appendix 1)

Some people with Parkinson's may get extremely anxious or distressed meeting people and may need constant support to engage. This may be due to cognitive issues, such as dementia.

Example response:

"Anxiety is a symptom of Parkinson's and I experience this quite often, especially when in crowds of people. Because I often 'freeze' this makes anxiety a lot worse, so social situations are difficult for me. I have difficulty

making facial expressions because of rigid facial muscles. This makes it difficult to express my emotions, and I am often misunderstood. I am no longer able to mix with people I don't know."

Eating and drinking (Activities 15 and 16 in Appendix 2)

This relates to your ability to get food and drink to your mouth without help and also your ability to chew and swallow food. It may be difficult to put food or drink to your mouth because of tremor or weakness. Some people with Parkinson's will need help to eat food or drink, because of swallowing problems, which can cause choking. They may also need prompting because of memory problems.

Example response:

"I have problems eating because I have swallowing problems. This causes a fear of choking, so I don't eat unless I have help, which has led to weight loss. I need prompting and encouragement to help me eat and often need help to cut up food, as I find it difficult to grip cutlery."

More information and support

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email **hello@parkinsons.org.uk**.

Our helpline can put you in touch with one of our Parkinson's local advisers, who give one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can also provide links to local groups and services.

Our website **parkinsons.org.uk** has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition.

Visit **parkinsons.org.uk/forum** to chat to other people with similar experiences on our online discussion forum.

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses provide expert advice and support to people with Parkinson's and those who care for them. They can also make contact with other health and social care professionals to make sure your needs are met.

The role of the Parkinson's nurse varies. Each will offer different services, aiming to meet local needs. Some nurses are based in the community, whereas others are based in hospital settings.

Many Parkinson's nurses are independent prescribers. This means they can prescribe and make adjustments to medication, so someone with Parkinson's doesn't always need to see their specialist for changes to or queries about their Parkinson's drugs.

Parkinson's nurses may not be available in every area, but your GP or specialist can give you more details on local services.

You can find out more at **parkinsons.org.uk/nurses**

Thank you

Thank you to benefits specialist Barbara Knight for helping to update this information.

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at parkinsons.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Our information

All of our most up-to-date information is available at parkinsons.org.uk/information-support. If you'd prefer to read one of our printed leaflets or booklets, find out how to place an order at parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources or by calling **0300 123 3689**.

We make every effort to ensure that our services provide current, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, including references and the sources of evidence we use, please contact us at healthcontent@parkinsons.org.uk



Universal Credit (INFOS0040/2021)

Do you have any feedback about this information? Your comments will help us ensure our resources are as useful and easy to understand as possible. Please return to [Information Content team, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/information-content-team), or email healthcontent@parkinsons.org.uk. Thank you!

1. Please choose the option that best fits you.

- I have Parkinson's and was diagnosed in I care for someone with Parkinson's
 I have a friend or family member with Parkinson's I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's
 Other (please specify)

2. Where did you get this information from?

- GP Specialist Parkinson's nurse Parkinson's UK local group Parkinson's UK local adviser
 Ordered directly from us Call to the helpline
 Other (please specify)

3. Has it answered all your questions?

- Yes, completely Yes, mostly Not sure Partly Not at all

4. How easy was it to understand?

- Very easy Easy Not sure Quite difficult Very difficult

We're the Parkinson's charity that drives better care, treatments and quality of life.

Together we can bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's.

Parkinson's UK
215 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 1EJ

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**
(Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm).
Interpreting available.

Relay UK **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices). For more information see **www.relayuk.bt.com**

hello@parkinsons.org.uk
parkinsons.org.uk

Order code: INFOS0040

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Please check our website for the most up-to-date versions of all our information.

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 **Helplines**
Partnership



5. Has it helped you manage your condition better, or make choices that have improved your life in some way?

It helped a lot It helped a little No change It didn't help It made things worse

6. What is your ethnic background?*

Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese Mixed White British White other
 Other (please specify)

*We ask about your ethnicity to ensure our information is reaching a broad range of people. However, this question is optional.

Want to hear more from us?

I would like a response to my feedback I would like to be a member of Parkinson's UK
 I'm interested in joining the information review group, to offer feedback on Parkinson's UK information

If you've answered yes to any of these options, please complete your details below.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

How would you prefer us to contact you? Email Post Phone

We will not pass on your details to any other organisation or third party. To find out more, read our privacy policy at [parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions)