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## What is DLA?

Disability Living Allowance is a tax-free, non-means-tested benefit for disabled children under the age of 16 to help with extra costs they may have because they are disabled. It is not based on disability but the needs arising from it.

## Is my child eligible?

- ✓ You can claim DLA at any time as long as your child has had the condition/disability/health problem that causes their additional care/supervision needs for at least 3 months prior to the claim and that the condition/disability is expected to last for at least the next 6 months.  
*As autism is a lifelong disorder the child has had from the early stages of development, these conditions are normally satisfied quite easily.*
- ✓ They must satisfy the residency rules. The general rules are:
  - they must be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
  - they must not be subject to immigration control
  - they must have lived in Great Britain for 2 of the last 3 years if over 3 years old (if under 6 months must have lived in Great Britain for at least 13 weeks or if aged between 6 months and 3 years must have lived in Great Britain for at least 26 of the last 156 weeks.)*If you are unsure if your child meets the residency rules please speak to a member of our Information and Advice Team on 01305 213135*
- ✓ For the care component, your child must have significantly greater personal care or supervision needs than another child of the same age without their condition/disability.  
*Personal care includes tasks like washing, dressing and eating but it also covers communicating and interacting with others. Supervision needs can include monitoring the child's mood, behaviour and keeping an eye on them to ensure they are safe.*
- ✓ For the mobility component, your child must have greater difficulties with the physical act of walking and/or needs more supervision when walking than another child of the same age without their condition/disability.

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## Components and rates

There are 2 components to DLA:

The **mobility component** is concerned with difficulties with walking and has 2 different rates.

The **lower rate** might be applicable if:

- ✓ The child is at least 5 years old
- ✓ The child needs someone with them when walking outside most of the time.  
*The child must need more supervision or support than another child of the same age without their condition/disability/difficulties.*

The **higher rate** might be applicable if:

- ✓ The child is at least 3 years old
- ✓ The child is unable or virtually unable to walk as a result of their condition/disability

The **care component** is concerned with personal care needs and has 3 different rates. All children have care needs so the care needs of the child have to be significantly greater than other children without their condition/disability.

The **lower rate** might be applicable if:

- ✓ The child has care needs for a portion of the day  
*Generally if the child requires additional help for at least an hour a day in total they might qualify.*

The **middle rate** might be applicable if:

- ✓ The child has continual, regular or frequent care or supervision needs throughout the day
- ✓ Or, has prolonged or repeated care or supervision needs during the night

The **higher rate** of care might be applicable if:

- ✓ The child has continual, regular or frequent care or supervision needs throughout the day and has prolonged or repeated care or supervision needs during the night.

## How to get a claim form

You can get a claim form by:

- ✓ **Calling 0345 7123456.** They will post you a form with 2 dates stamped on it. The first date is the date you requested the form and the second date should be 6 weeks later. If you complete and return your form so that the Department of Work and Pensions receive it by the second date and your claim is successful, the award will be back-dated to the first date. If you do not return the form within this time, the claim will still be valid but would not be back-dated. Instead, any award would start from the date the completed form was received by the DWP.

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✓ **Downloading an online form**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-living-allowance-for-children-claim-form>

You can either download a form to print and complete by hand or one to complete on your computer which you print and sign after completion.

This form will not be date stamped so any award would start from the date the completed form was received by the DWP.

## Other benefits of DLA

If your child's DLA claim is successful you may also be entitled to:

- ✓ **Carer's Allowance** is a benefit paid to people aged 16 or over who spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a disabled child. The child must have been awarded DLA at either the middle or higher rate of care before you can claim. There are other entitlement conditions including a limit on how much you can earn each week whilst claiming the benefit. For more info see <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview>
- ✓ **Carer's Credit** is a National Insurance credit that helps build your entitlement to the basic state pension and additional state pension. It makes sure there are no gaps in your National Insurance record. The child must have been awarded DLA at the middle or higher rate of care before you can claim however there are sometimes exceptions to this rule. For more info see: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-credit/overview>
- ✓ Extra money for some benefits such as child tax credits and housing benefit. Also the benefit cap doesn't apply to households where a child has been awarded DLA.

It is therefore important to inform the relevant agencies for any benefits you or a member of your household receive of any successful DLA claim.

Some places also offer discounts or schemes for people in receipt of DLA such as some theme parks will give children in receipt of DLA a pass to go to the front of the queue for rides so it is worth calling ahead before planning any days out to see what help might be available.

## Supporting Evidence

Any award for DLA is made based on the evidence received by the DWP. Your DLA form is the main evidence so the information you include on the form should be as thorough as possible.

It can also be helpful to send relevant supporting evidence with your claim as the decision maker will take this into account too.

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Useful supporting evidence can include:

- ✓ Letters/medical reports about your child's condition, medication, tests they have undergone or treatment they have
- ✓ Letters/reports about help at school, behavioural concerns, progress
- ✓ A copy of your child's statement of educational needs, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) if your child has one

Other supporting evidence can include:

- ✓ Letters from any other person who regularly supports your child detailing the help your child needs
- ✓ A diary detailing a typical day/week of the care your child needs (there is an example diary in the guidance notes section that comes with the DLA form)

It is important to read through any supporting evidence to ensure it doesn't contradict what is on your DLA form. It may be that when a professional wrote a report your child could do an activity independently but you have said they need help. It may still be ok to send the supporting evidence as long as you point out the difference in what you and the professional have said and the reason(s) behind this. You can use part 65 for Extra Information to explain anything like this. For example:

*The paediatrician report says my daughter can dress independently. She is physically able to dress however needs prompting and encouraging to dress as she can get distracted whilst dressing and sometimes refuses to dress.*

## After you have returned your claim pack

You should receive an acknowledgement of your claim within 5 working days of when the DWP have received it.

It can vary how long it will take for a decision to be made about your child's claim. The DWP guidance says it usually takes around 40 working days to deal with a DLA claim. The decision maker may request further information from your child's school, GP or specialist so it can be helpful to let these people know that you have made a claim for DLA for your child.

## If you are unhappy with the decision

If your child is not awarded DLA or you are unhappy with the award made, our Autism Advice Service is always happy to discuss your options – please contact us on **01305 213135** or email [advice@autismwessex.org.uk](mailto:advice@autismwessex.org.uk)

You can ask for the decision to be looked at again by the DWP – this is called a mandatory reconsideration. If you are still unhappy with the decision after the mandatory reconsideration there is the option to appeal to the tribunals service. There are deadlines involved for both reconsiderations and appeals (normally within one calendar month of the decision letter) so it is important to get advice as soon as possible.

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# Completing the form

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## General tips:

- Completing the form can be quite an emotional and draining process so try to set aside time when you are in a good frame of mind and don't try to do it all in one go.
- Read through and refer back to the guide you get with the form as it is very helpful and gives examples of how to complete questions if you are unsure.
- Be as detailed and as thorough as possible even if it means repeating yourself in different sections. It is better to take time over the form and include all the information and evidence you can as this should make it easier for the decision maker to come to a fair decision.
- Don't worry about sticking to the boxes as they are often too small for what you need to say. If you use additional sheets remember to write your child's name and date of birth at the top of each sheet and write what questions you are referring to.
- Write about what support your child needs or would benefit from – it doesn't matter if they do actually get this support all the time. For example, a child might need adult supervision to be able to play with their sibling but you might not always be able to provide this. If this is the case you can write about what happens when they don't get the support the need.
- When describing behaviour try to be specific. Avoid just saying "challenging behaviour" as this can mean different things to different people, instead say if the behaviour is physically aggressive, verbally abusive, destructive, anti-social, dangerous etc and describe what happens for example kicking, pushing, grabbing, biting, spitting, throwing, screaming, shouting, crying.
- Be honest. Describe what care needs your child has most of the time and also describe how your child's care needs may vary. It is ok to describe what happens on your child's worst day but only if this is put in context of how often this occurs and you also describe what generally happens day to day.
- Make a claim folder and keep copies of anything you intend to send as part of your claim (including the claim form once completed) and keep a record of any contact you have with the DWP about the claim including telephone calls and letters.

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## Timings Questions

Some questions ask you how often your child needs help and for how long each time. These are often the questions people find the most difficult to answer but they are important as this information helps the decision maker decide what level of award to make if your child is eligible for DLA.

If the help your child needs, and the time it takes to help them, can vary day to day, use a scale to show this.

For example:

*2-4 times a day*

*5-15 minutes each time*

You can then explain why these things vary in the box below the question for more information such as if your child's needs increase/decrease on school days/during the holidays or if they vary depending on your child's mood.

For example:

*Most days she needs help with dressing in her school uniform in the morning then again when she changes into her home clothes in the evening. On some days she may need help with changing into PE kit or getting dressed after we have gone swimming – about twice a week. Occasionally she can have an accident and wet herself and can need help to change into clean clothes. Usually the help required is prompting what order to dress and to stay on task however on some days – particularly in school holidays and on weekends she is reluctant to dress and can need lots of encouragement and/or physical help to get dressed so on these days the process takes longer.*

When thinking about how long your child needs help for, remember to consider if your child needs pre-warning of an activity/task and if there are times when your child gets distressed and needs help to calm before resuming the activity or abandoning it.

## “During the day”

Don't get confused when a question asks if your child needs help “during the day”. For the purposes of DLA, “during the day” means when the adults are still awake. “During the night” means when the household has shut down for the day and the adults have gone to bed. If your bedtime is affected by your child's needs then “during the night” can generally be considered as between 11pm to 7am.

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## About the child

This section is quite straight forward so shouldn't take too long

- 1. Surname or family name, all other names in full**
- 2. Child reference number** – this is your child's National Insurance number. It is ok to leave this section blank if you do not know this yet.
- 3. Date of birth**
- 4. Sex**
- 5. Address where the child lives**
- 6. Are you claiming for the child under the special rules?** - this only applies when a child has a progressive condition and is not expected to live longer than another 6 months
- 7. What is the child's nationality?**
- 8. Does the child normally live in Great Britain?**
- 9. Has the child been abroad for more than 4 weeks at a time in the last 3 years?**
- 10 & 11. Entitlement to other benefits from another EEA or Switzerland**
- 12. Is the child in a hospital or hospice now, or have they been admitted in the past 12 months?** You only need to mention any overnight stays
- 13. Is the child in a residential college or similar place now, or have they been in the past 12 months?**
- 14. In the last 12 months, has the child seen anyone apart from their GP about their illnesses or disabilities?** – this might be their paediatrician, a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist or someone from the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). If your child has seen a more than one professional you can list other contacts in the part 65 for "Extra Information".
- 15. Name of child's GP** – this question also asks for the date your child last saw their GP about their illness or condition. If your child doesn't see their GP about their autism it is ok to say this on the form.
- 16. Has the child had or are they waiting for tests to help diagnose, treat or monitor their illnesses or disabilities?** – if your child has had their diagnosis they will have been through a diagnostic assessment to achieve this. Your child may have had other tests depending on what difficulties/other conditions they have so include the details of any tests here.
- 17. Do you have any reports, letters or assessments about the child's illnesses or disabilities?** – see notes in About DLA pack about supporting evidence.
- 18. Name of child's school or nursery** – the named contact can be your child's teacher, SENCO, TA (whoever knows them best)
- 19. Does the child have or are they waiting to hear about an EHCP, IEP, IBP or statement of Special Educational Needs?**
- 20. Statement from someone else who knows the child** – this is optional. If you do want someone to write a supporting statement it may be easier to ask them to write a short statement on headed paper rather than on your form.
- 21. Consent**

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## About the child's illnesses or disabilities

**22. List the child's illnesses or disabilities** – it is important to list all conditions not just their main diagnosis of autism. So if your child has eczema, asthma, digestion problems, sleep disorder etc remember to list these on the form. Remember DLA considers all your child's care needs so any conditions that affect the care your child needs should be mentioned.

**23. Does the child use or have they been assessed for any aids or adaptations?** – these can be at home or school and include things like visual schedules, time out cards, sensory aids etc

**24. When the child needs help** – only choose the “varies” option if the help your child needs significantly varies for periods of time. For example if they have periods of being unwell/needing treatment and periods where they do not need this help. You will be able to describe any day to day variations in the main part of the form.

## Mobility

These initial questions relate to the higher rate of mobility and the child needs to be at least 3 years old to qualify. The higher rate of mobility is not usually applicable to children with autism unless they have additional conditions, as it relates to difficulties with the physical act of walking outdoors on a reasonably flat surface and is awarded in cases where the child is unable or virtually unable to walk due to their condition/disability.

There is however another way to qualify for the higher rate of mobility that may be applicable for some children with autism called the “severe mental impairment criteria”. To qualify this way a child must satisfy all of the following criteria.

The child must have:

- An arrested or incomplete development of the brain which includes severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning; **and**
- Behavioural problems causing extreme, unpredictable and disruptive behaviour requiring another person to be present whenever they are awake to guard against damage to people and property; **and**
- be in receipt of the highest rate of the care component for DLA

Some children with autism have also qualified for the higher rate of the mobility component because behaviours associated with their autism has meant they are “virtually unable to walk”. This type of award is rare and only tends to happen when a child's ability to walk is generally less than 50 meters.

If you feel your child does satisfy the Severe mental impairment or virtually unable to walk criteria, you can speak to a member of our Autism Advice Team at one of our DLA on 01305 213135 or [advice@autismwessex.org.uk](mailto:advice@autismwessex.org.uk) for further advice on how to complete this section and information on what supporting evidence you may need.

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**25. Can they physically walk?** It is likely you will answer yes to this question and will be able to skip questions 26-31

**26. Do they have physical difficulties walking?**

**27. Please tick the boxes that best describe how far they can walk without severe discomfort and how long it takes them**

**29. Please tick the box that best describes their walking speed**

**29. Please tick the box that best describes the way they walk**

**30. Does the effort of walking seriously affect their health?**

**31. If you want to tell us why you have ticked the boxes, how their needs vary or anything else you think we should know, use the box below.**

**32. Do they need guidance or supervision most of the time when they walk outdoors?**

This question applies to the lower rate of mobility. The child must be at least 5 years old to qualify. (However it is still worth completing this section if your child is under 5 to give a full picture of their needs and difficulties).

If your child is of an age where they are too young to be outdoors unsupervised they might still qualify for the lower rate of mobility if they require significantly more guidance and supervision than another child of the same age without their condition.

Go through the tick boxes on the form and where possible add extra information in parts 34 and 35 to explain about the help your child needs with walking outdoors.

**33. Do they fall due to their disability?** Consider if your child falls more than other children of the same age without their condition. Some children with autism have poor balance and co-ordination whereas some children with the condition have better balance and co-ordination than their peers.

**34 & 35. If you want to tell us why you have ticked the boxes, how their needs vary or anything else you think we should know, use the box below/If you want to tell us anything else about their mobility, use the box below.**

Consider your child's difficulties:

- Does your child get anxious about being outdoors in unfamiliar places?
- Do they get easily distracted/wander off (do they have special interests they need to investigate)?
- Can their behaviour put them or those around them in danger? Can they become physically or verbally aggressive? Could their behaviour attract unwanted attention? Are they vulnerable?
- Do they understand dangers such as crossing the road, stranger danger, do they have no sense of fear or danger in some situations (such as climbing on railings) or do they over-estimate dangers and will not attempt things on their own?
- Do they have any phobias and react in an unpredictable or dangerous way?
- If they got lost or hurt would they be able to ask for help?
- Do they have sensory issues such as an intolerance of loud noises, bright lights, smells etc? Do they distressed or suffer sensory overload in some environments?

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- Do they understand the rules and behaviours of certain environments (supermarkets, libraries, museums, fairgrounds) such as queuing, keeping quiet, not touching, paying for things before opening them or do they need reminding each time?
- Can their behaviour ever be sexually inappropriate such as trying to touch themselves or others?
- (For teenagers) Could they cope with using public transport?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

Do they cry, refuse to go out, become argumentative etc?

What care do they need because of these difficulties?

- Do they need lots of encouragement and motivating to go out?
- Do they need someone with them to reassure them if they get anxious or upset?
- Do they need someone with them to make sure they are safe (such as help to cross the road), reminding of dangers?
- Do they need someone with them to make sure they do not hurt themselves or others by their behaviour and to calm them down, explain their behaviour or remove them from the situation if their behaviour poses a risk?
- Might they need someone to communicate on their behalf or need someone to explain what people mean such as in shops etc?
- Do they need someone to explain what is appropriate behaviour in certain situations?

Explain if there are any specific things you do:

Such as insist on holding their hand at all times, use reins, travel by car more than you would like to because you can ensure their safety better. Does your child need 1-1 supervision and does this mean that you cannot go out as a family easily or need to make sure you have 2 or more adults if you do want to go out as a family.

If your child was not supervised what does/could happen?

- Would they avoid going out at all?
- Could have a panic attack and need "rescuing"?
- Do they get into trouble, fights?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to walk unsupervised in unfamiliar places?
- Or, if the child is too young to be completely without supervision, would another child of the same age need far less guidance, support and supervision?

### **36. When did the child's mobility needs you have told us about start?**

This question is asked to make sure the child has had their mobility needs/difficulties for at least 3 months prior to the claim being made. Think about when you first noticed your child needed more support/experiences more difficulties than their peers.

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## Care

Don't get confused about "during the day" in these questions– see page 2 of this pack. Any that falls "during the night" for the purposes of DLA should be detailed in question 53 later in the form.

### **37. Do they need encouragement, prompting, or physical help to get into or out of or settle in bed during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to go to bed and/or get up.
- Your child needs more help or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to go to bed and/or get up.
- Your child needs more telling or encouragement than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties.

Consider your child's difficulties:

- Do they have a sleep disorder that makes going to sleep difficult?
- Can they only settle in bed by following a set routine? If the routine is interrupted do you have to start again from the beginning? What happens if the routine cannot be followed?
- Do they get up repeatedly before going to sleep?
- Does your child get easily distracted when getting ready for bed?
- Does your teenager/child not realise when it is an appropriate time to go to bed or get absorbed in tasks?
- Are they reluctant or anxious about going to bed and/or getting up?
- Do they suffer from depression and lack the motivation to get up or go to bed?
- Do they find it hard to wake up/go to sleep due to broken sleep or medication?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child gets upset and fretful towards bedtime because they are worried about school the next day and they insist on asking lots of questions to talk through their fears and will not settle. Then, in the morning, they try to stay in bed, get upset or claim they are ill to try to avoid getting up for school.

What help do they need?

- Do they need lots of motivating, prompts and reminders to let them know when it is bed time, to stay on task when going to bed, and/or to get up?
- Do they need someone to tell them to go back to bed or to take them back to bed if they get up?
- Do they need someone to actively take part in the bedtime routine?
- Do they require lots of reassurance to try to calm anxieties and help them settle or to encourage them to get up?

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If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would your child not go to bed or get up until very late?
- Would they get distressed, angry, anxious and find it impossible to settle?
- Would they keep getting up and disturb the rest of the household?
- Would they frequently be late for school or tired during the school day?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to go to bed/get up independently or only need one prompt/reminder?
- Would another child of the same age take less time/need less help to settle in bed?

### **38. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to go to or use the toilet during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to go to attend to their toilet needs.
- Your child needs more help or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to attend to their toilet needs.
- Your child needs more telling or encouragement to attend to their toilet needs than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties.

For the anything else you think we should know box, you might consider:

- Does your child have difficulty using the toilet properly, do they make a mess?
- Is your child still in nappies?
- Do they have difficulty recognising when they need to use the toilet and have accidents?
- Does your child regularly suffer from constipation, diarrhoea, bladder infections which affect their ability to use the toilet?
- Do they get easily distracted or absorbed in activities and forget to go to the toilet?
- Do they get upset, anxious, angry when required to use the toilet?
- Do they have problems with buttons/zips on trousers?
- Can they clean themselves properly?
- Do they understand personal hygiene or have phobias relating to hygiene?
- Do they prefer to stay in soiled nappies or pants and are reluctant to change?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child only feels comfortable using your toilet at home so gets anxious and upset if they need to use the toilet when not at home and will try to avoid going causing occasional accidents.

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What help do they need?

- Does someone need to physically help them use the toilet, clean themselves or the bathroom afterwards or to dress/undress?
- Do they need someone to change their nappies?
- Do they need lots of reassurance to keep calm or comforting if upset when they have had an accident?
- Do they need lots of motivating, prompting and reminding to ensure they attend to their toilet needs, wash their hands etc?
- Do you use any visual supports to help with toileting?

If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would they have accidents?
- Could it result in ill health due to poor personal hygiene?
- Would they get distressed?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to attend to their own toilet needs, be out of nappies?
- Would they take less time, require less guidance/supervision/encouragement or get less distressed?

**39. Do they need encouragement , prompting , or physical help to move around indoors, use stairs or get into or out of a chair during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition/difficulties to move around indoors, use stairs or get into or out of a chair during the day.
- Your child needs more help or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to move around indoors, use stairs or get into or out of a chair during the day.
- Your child needs more telling or encouragement than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to move around indoors, use stairs or get into or out of a chair during the day.

For the anything else you think we should know about box, you might consider:

- Does your child/teenager spend all their time in one room?
- Do they lack body awareness or have co-ordination problems that mean they bump into things or fall over things easily?

What help do they need?

- Do you need to encourage your child to leave their room?

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- Do you need to limit obstacles in the house or reassure and comfort your child if they have bumped into something or fallen over?
- Do you have to help your child use the stairs safely?

**40. Do they need encouragement, prompting, or physical help to wash, bath, shower and check their appearance during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to wash/bath
- Your child needs more help or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to wash/bath

Consider your child's difficulties

- Does your child struggle with brushing their teeth, hair, washing themselves?
- Do they get upset, anxious, angry when required to wash?
- Do they have sensory issues which mean that brushing teeth, washing, cutting/brushing hair, cutting nails can be painful and distressing?
- Does your child get easily distracted when washing and forget what they are doing, come off task, take longer than they should or not wash properly as a result?
- Does your child/teenager lack the motivation to wash or fails to understand/accept the need for personal hygiene?
- Do they need to follow a set routine when washing/bathing?
- Can they be dangerous/destructive/messy if left unsupervised in the bathroom?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child resists having their teeth brushed due to sensitivity so gets upset every day when told to brush their teeth. Do they then refuse to do it which results in arguments and verbal abuse? Have they had lots of dental work due to poor oral hygiene?

What help do they need?

- Do they need guidance and support with washing tasks, is this verbal help or do you have to physically show/do tasks for them?
- Do they need reassurance to keep them calm?
- Do they need lots of motivating, prompting and reminding?
- Do they need extra coaching in good hygiene practice?
- Do they need help to run the bath to a safe temperature or supervision whilst in the bath to keep them safe or to make sure they wash appropriately/thoroughly?
- Does someone or a specific person have to actively take part in their washing routines?
- Do they need someone to encourage them to get out of the bath because they do not want to get out or to limit the times they wash their hands because they have phobias about germs?
- Do they need visual supports to help them with washing?

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If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would they fail to wash properly or at all (do they sometimes go out with dirty hair, hands etc) and does this add to any social problems they might have?
- Would their health suffer such as tooth decay?
- Could they scald themselves, leave taps running, use the whole bottle of shampoo?
- Would they stay in the bath until it was cold?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to do these tasks independently?
- Would they take less time to wash, require less guidance/supervision/encouragement or get less distressed?

#### **41. Do they need encouragement, prompting, or physical help to dress and undress during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to go to get dressed
- Your child needs more help or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to get dressed.
- Your child needs more telling or encouragement to dress and undress than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties.

Consider your child's difficulties:

- Does your child struggle with fastening buttons, laces, belts?
- Do they get upset, anxious, angry when required to dress/undress?
- Can they judge appropriate clothes for the weather/occasion?
- Do they insist on wearing certain clothes over and over?
- Can they judge when clothes are dirty? Do they dislike the feel of washed clothes?
- Do they have sensory issues that affect what clothes they can wear or do they prefer to be undressed?
- Does your child get easily distracted when dressing/undressing and forget what they are doing, come off task, take longer than they should or not dress/undress properly as a result?
- Do they have to follow a set routine when they dress/undress?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child's sensitivity to touch means that they get very irritated by certain fabrics and labels. Does this sensitivity then impact on their behaviour or their ability to focus/think clearly?

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If they need someone to physically dress them, do they co-operate with this or do they fight against it?

What help do they need?

- Does your child need help from someone to fasten buttons, tie laces etc?
- Does someone need to get clothes out for them, lay them out in order or check what clothes they have chosen?
- Do they need lots of reassurance to keep calm or comforting if upset when they cannot wear something?
- Does someone need to physically dress/undress the child?
- Do you have to buy certain clothes such as clothing without seams or labels that will irritate?
- Does someone, or a specific person, have to actively take part in their dressing/undressing routines?
- Do they need lots of motivating, prompting and reminding to ensure they dress/undress properly?
- Do they need any visual supports to help with dressing or undressing?

If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would they be physically unable to dress?
- Would they dress for summer in winter?
- Would they put on dirty clothes or wear clothing back-to-front/inside-out etc?
- Would they get distressed or irritated by clothing and not be able to concentrate at school or have more instances of aggressive behaviour?
- Would they always be late for school due to taking too long to dress without support?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to do these tasks independently, such as choose their own clothes?
- Would they take less time to dress/undress, require less guidance/supervision/encouragement or get less distressed?

**42. Do they need encouragement, prompting, or physical help to eat and drink during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to eat or drink.
- Your child needs more help or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to eat or drink.
- Your child needs more telling or encouragement to eat or drink than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties.

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Consider your child's difficulties:

- Does your child find it difficult to handle cutlery, cut up food, pour drinks etc?
- Do they have a very low or high appetite (perhaps due to medication)?
- Do they have to follow a strict routine when eating?
- Is your child very particular about what they eat, are they only willing to eat certain foods and can these change day to day?
- Do they have any food phobias or anxieties about foods?
- Are they unable to tolerate foods of certain textures or with certain smells?
- Will they only eat food if it is arranged/presented in a certain way on a plate such as not letting different foods touch each other?
- Does your child have any food intolerances?
- Do they have poor table manners?
- Do they get distressed when required to eat around other people?
- Do they get easily distracted when eating or required to eat and come off task or not eat/drink properly/enough as a result?
- Can they be dangerous when eating such as using cutlery to hurt others or themselves, eating food too quickly so there are choking risks?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child often refuses to eat what they are given and gets distressed when given food they do not want. Do they cry and scream, throw their food away or become argumentative?

What help do they need?

- Do they need someone to help them cut up food, pour drinks etc?
- Do they need extra coaching in skills such as using cutlery, table manners etc?
- Do they need someone, or a specific person, to actively take part in any eating/drinking routines?
- Do they need to have separate food cooked for them compared to others in the household or does it need to be processed or presented differently for them?
- Do they need lots of motivating, prompting and reminding to ensure they eat/drink enough or properly, to behave at the table or to stay on task?
- Do they need extra encouragement and reassurance to try to get them to eat a balanced diet or introduce new foods to their diet?
- Do they need monitoring and supervising when eating to make sure they, and those around them, are safe?
- Do they need any visual supports to help with meal times?

If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would they be under/overweight, unlikely to eat a balanced diet, not drink enough fluids, eat too much?
- Would they be unable to feed themselves or lack skills to be able to feed themselves appropriately?

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Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to eat/drink independently?
- Would they take less time, require less guidance/supervision/encouragement or get less distressed?

**43. Do they need encouragement, prompting, or physical help to take medicine or have therapy during the day?**

Tick yes if:

- Your child takes longer than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to take their medication.
- Your child needs more help, encouragement or supervision than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties to take any medication/have therapy.

Consider your child's difficulties:

- Does your child have difficulty preparing, taking/using medication?
- Do they forget to take medication?
- Do they dislike their medication and avoid taking it or get anxious about it?
- Do they know when they need to take medication such as an inhaler for asthma?
- Do they have any speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, counselling, play therapy? Are there exercises they need to do at home/school etc?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child gets distressed when you remind them about their medication and therapy and if you push the topic it can cause them to become overwhelmed so you have to carefully pace how and when you remind/encourage them.

What help do they need?

- Does your child need someone to support them to use/take their medication?
- Do they need someone to monitor their condition and to decide if they need to take medication?
- Do they need extra encouragement and reassurance to get them to take their medication or help to calm down if they get upset or anxious about their medication?
- Do they need lots of motivating, prompting and reminding to ensure they take any medication or do therapy?
- Do they need reminding about therapy appointments and or taking to appointments?
- Do they need help to do certain exercises for their therapy?
- Do they use any visual supports to help with medication or therapy?

If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would they forget to take, or avoid taking, medication or doing therapy and could this affect their health and wellbeing?

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Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to take their medication or do their therapy independently?
- Would they take less time, require less guidance/supervision/encouragement or get less distressed?

**44. Do they have difficulty seeing?**

This is not usually a problem associated with autism however if your child has additional difficulties that affects their sight tick yes and complete the tick boxes and extra information about their difficulty (when using aids like glasses or contact lenses).

**45. Do they have difficulty hearing?**

This is not usually a problem associated with autism however if your child has additional difficulties that affects their hearing tick yes and complete the tick boxes and extra information about their difficulty (when using their gearing aid).

Also some children with autism may have sensory processing difficulties which can affect their hearing all the time or at certain times/in certain environments or they may sometimes become overloaded which could affect what they hear. If these are issues for your child you may want to tick yes and explain in the anything else you want to tell us box.

For example:

- If you has to wear ear defenders in certain environments to block out noises that cause distress
- If you have to touch them and/or say their name before giving instructions in order to get their attention and for them to know what you are saying applies to them
- If you use visual supports in place of or alongside verbal information because your child finds them easier to process

**46. Do they have difficulty speaking?**

Tick yes if your child has difficulty forming/saying words out loud and talking clearly some or all of the time.

Consider your child's difficulties:

- Is your child non-verbal and unable to form words?
- Can your child only say limited words?
- Is your child selective mute/unable to speak in certain situations?
- Can your child speak but their speech is difficult to understand?
- Can your child take part in a conversation?
- Can their speech only be understood by people who know them well?

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### Explain the behaviour

For example if they get anxious when required to speak so avoid talking to people.

If they get frustrated that they can't say what they want or that people do not understand them and this causes their behaviour to become disruptive.

If they try to communicate by behaviour such as pulling someone to what they want/need.

### What help do they need?

- Do they need someone to speak on their behalf?
- Do they need speech and language therapy?
- Do they need reassurance and encouragement to speak?
- Do they need someone to explain and interpret what they have said?
- Do they need coaching in other methods of communication such as PECS, sign?
- Do they need visual supports to help with communication?

### **47. Do they have difficulty and need help communicating?**

Tick yes if your child has difficulty passing on information, asking and answering questions, telling people how they feel, giving and following instructions.

### Consider your child's difficulties:

- Do they have difficulty with understanding figurative language (such as "it's raining cats and dogs", "get the wrong end of the stick"), body language and facial expression?
- Do they struggle to start, continue, turn take in or end conversations?
- Do they struggle to understand sarcasm and humour?
- Do they have difficulty processing information so can find it hard to understand long sentences or sets of instructions?
- Does your child/teenager have difficulty understanding people on the telephone?
- Can your child only communicate by using PECS, signs, guiding someone or do they lack any communication skills?
- Do they suffer from anxiety when required to communicate? Do they refuse to communicate with certain people or in certain situations?
- Do they copy and echo sounds and phrases as a form of communication or can they echo words and phrases they have heard without understanding their meaning?
- Can they use inappropriate language or come across as rude or blunt by not understanding that others might find what they have said upsetting or offensive?
- Do they struggle to verbalise what they want to say?
- Do they often misunderstand what has been said by others?
- Does your child get distressed when other people do not understand them? Do people often misunderstand them?
- Do they struggle to use eye contact, tone and volume of voice appropriately?
- Does your child use behaviour to communicate such as when they cannot verbalise or explain their feelings?

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Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child gets upset due to frequently misunderstanding others and gets fretful and anxious when required to communicate with people.

Or if they get overloaded with information and “switch off” which can mean that they miss vital information and get into trouble for not paying attention.

What help do they need?

- Do they need help from someone who understands their difficulties to interpret and explain what is meant by other people also help explain what they are trying to communicate?
- Do they need extra reassurance to manage anxieties about communication difficulties?
- Do they need things broken down into smaller chunks of information, extra time for processing information and information to be repeated?
- Do they need extra coaching and time to help understand things like tone of voice, turn of phrase, facial expression etc?
- Do they benefit from having visual aids, pictures, charts etc?
- Does someone need to take their telephone calls?
- Do they need support to use a communication system such as PECS, signs etc or need someone with them most of the time to read any behavioural communication?
- Do they need someone to help keep them calm if they get frustrated, reassure them or speak for them when anxious?
- Do they need be allowed extra time to be able to say what they want/mean?

If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would there be misunderstandings that could lead to problems, conflicts, confusion, distress, danger?
- Would it impact on your child's progress in education?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age require less guidance and support or get less distressed when trying to understand others?
- Would another child of the same age require less guidance and support or get less distressed when trying to communicate with others?

#### **48. Do they have fits, blackouts, seizures or something similar?**

Children with autism are unlikely to have blackouts, fits or seizures unless they have additional medical conditions.

Tick yes if your child ever has blackouts, fits, seizures or something like this (“something like this” can include “absences”).

Use the anything else you want to tell us box to explain how your child is affected by their blackouts/fits/seizures and what help they need (before, during and after an episode).

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#### **49. Do they need to be supervised during the day to keep safe?**

Tick yes if you feel your child needs more supervision than another child of the same age without their condition.

##### Consider your child's difficulties:

- Is your child's behaviour unpredictable and volatile?
- Can their behaviour be destructive or dangerous (to themselves or others)?
- Are they always aware of dangers or can they put themselves in dangerous situations (using equipment dangerously, climbing on unstable structures, not paying attention to traffic or not being able to judge when it is safe to cross the road)?
- Do they try to escape from the house or wander off?
- Do they misinterpret situations which might lead them to come across as rude, confrontational, upset or confused?
- Do they suffer from anxiety in certain environments or when left alone?
- Does your child suffer from heightened anxiety levels most of the time?
- Can they suffer from paranoia or phobias?
- Do they try to harm themselves or have they ever expressed suicidal thoughts?
- Does their behaviour in a tantrum/meltdown present a danger to themselves or others such as head banging, kicking, biting or hitting out or can they try to break things when having a tantrum?
- Do they have difficulty recognising and managing their own emotions?
- Do they get distressed if there are changes to their routine?
- Do they suffer from periods of depression or low moods?
- Can their behaviour be verbally/physically aggressive?
- Do they have difficulty letting go of, or moving on from, bad things that have happened before and are worried/upset by them for a long time?
- Has their behaviour got them in trouble at school, with the police or members of the public?

##### Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child gets excessively distressed if things don't turn out as planned and loses control of their behaviour. Do they break things, throw things, lash out at people, kick, bite, spit?

Or if your child get very anxious and upset at the thought of change and suffers from nightmares, sleepless nights, gets very clingy and withdraws from situations/activities at times of change.

##### What help do they need?

- Does your child need lots of reassurance and support to cope with even minor problems?
- Do they need help to calm when upset?
- Do they need someone to monitor their moods to try to avoid them getting overly distressed, agitated, angry? Do they need coaching in how to manage emotions?

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- Do they need constant supervision to keep them and others safe if they become aggressive/destructive by restraining or separating them from others because their behaviour can be unpredictable and volatile?
- Do you have to try to maintain routines to avoid excessive anxiety and use aids like visual timetables?
- Do you have to spend a long time preparing for change, talking through worries etc?
- Do they need counselling, therapy, medication, have they been referred to the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS)?

#### **50. Do they need help with their development?**

Tick yes if you feel your child needs extra help to improve their understanding of how to behave and react to people, situations and things around them.

#### Consider your child's difficulties:

- Do they struggle to follow instructions if they involve too much information or too many stages, certain words or turns of phrase?
- Do they have a short attention span and get easily distracted? Can they have too much focus on some things at the expense of others?
- Do they take longer to learn new skills than other children of the same age without their condition?
- Are they unable to transfer learnt skills or acquired knowledge to new situations?
- Does your child often take things personally that weren't directed at them or get upset by things that weren't meant to be hurtful?
- Do they struggle with their interaction skills such as approaching others, taking turns in conversations, knowing what are appropriate topics of conversation?
- Does your child get anxious because of their difficulties?
- Do they misunderstand situations and react inappropriately such as being over-friendly or confrontational?
- Does your child have difficulty playing imaginatively?
- Do they tend to play with toys or games that are for younger children?
- Do they lack skills to play with others such as turn-taking, sharing etc?
- Do they take games too seriously and get excessively upset and/or angry if they don't win?
- Do they play aggressively or dangerously?
- Do they have no interest in playing with others?
- Do they sometimes come across as rude or blunt without intending to?
- Do they struggle to make/keep friendships? Have they been bullied?

#### Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if they switch off or get distracted when asked to do something and not complete tasks.

Or if they are anxious about social situations so try to avoid them by using behaviour, making excuses, becoming clingy and upset.

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Or if games regularly end in arguments and fights because your child gets distressed if others don't play how they feel they should.

#### What help do they need?

- Do they need instructions breaking down into bite-sized chunks, can they only follow one or two at a time?
- Does someone need to check on them to make sure they stay focussed and on task, repeat instructions and motivate?
- Do you need to allow extra time for your child to process information and use language they understand?
- Do you use visual aids, social stories etc to help with their behaviour and following instructions?
- Do they need encouraging and motivating to interact with others?
- Do they need coaching on social skills/play skills/boundaries?
- Do they need help to manage anxieties and comforting if they get upset?
- Do they need coaching on how to behave in different environments such as being quiet in libraries?
- Do they need encouragement and help to play age appropriate games – such as taking time to explain and remind them of the rules?
- Do they need coaching on skills such as turn-taking and learning to lose?
- Do they need supervision to monitor their mood and behaviour and to ensure they do not hurt or upset themselves or other children?
- Do they need motivating to play and need someone to help them engage in play?

#### What would/could happen if they did not get this help?

- Would they become socially isolated?
- Would they be unable to make and maintain friendships?
- Would they regularly get into trouble, confused, upset?

### **51. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help at school or nursery?**

You might want to check with your child's school what help they get with their:

- Learning - Do they get any 1:1 teaching, special groups, extra explanation, visual supports?
- Behaviour/Wellbeing/Social Skills - Do they get into trouble for their behaviour, do they have timeout cards if they need a break, social stories, do they use a nurture group, buddy system, get ELSA support?
- Sensory needs - Do they have a quiet area they can use or have a special area in the classroom? Do they have a sensory diet or any sensory equipment they use?

Mention if your child attends a special school, if they have any special arrangements in terms of exams/school trips etc.

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## **52. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to take part in hobbies, interests, social or religious activities?**

These questions relate to social and leisure activities and what help your child needs to access and participate in these.

Think about the types of things your child could/would do if they had the relevant support. If you are unsure because your child shows very little interest in social/leisure activities, think about what other children their age might do and use these as examples of what support your child would need to do to the same/similar things.

This question can be particularly difficult if your child is very young as all young children need some level of support with activities so remember to explain what extra help your child might need due to any difficulties associated with their condition.

### At home, examples could include:

- Help with a hobby such as model making, painting
- Learning to cook or learning other life skills
- Help with school work
- Playing games
- Using the internet, computer, games console, dvd player

### When they go out, examples could include:

- playing outdoors/at the park
- taking part in a club or activity such as football, dance class, youth club, gym
- visiting friends or relatives
- going on day trips or evenings out
- going to the cinema, swimming, eating out, going to church

### Help Needed

- Does your child need lots of motivating, prompting and reminding to ensure they stay on task?
- Do they need reassurance to limit their anxieties and to keep them calm if things don't go to plan?
- Do they need encouragement and motivating to participate, or even consider participating, in an activity?
- Do they need someone to monitor their mood and behaviour to try to limit distress or outbursts?
- Do they need someone with them who can safely restrain them if they do become violent to prevent them hurting others, themselves or breaking equipment etc?
- Do they specifically need someone who understands their condition and difficulties with them for support or a familiar person?

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- Do they need help to communicate or to interpret/explain what is going on to avoid distress/confusion/frustration such as breaking down a recipe into manageable chunks and explaining words they would not understand?
- Do they need visual supports?
- Do they need extra time in activities to process information or get tasks done?
- Do they need supervision to ensure they do not get bullied?
- Do they need help from someone to change into kit, wash or use the toilet?
- Do they need someone to drive/walk them to and from places or help them with public transport?

How often?

This could vary by example; for a hobby, club or activity this might be once or twice a week but for help with homework, playing games and using the internet it might be 7 days a week.

How long each time?

Do they need help throughout the activity or just for certain things like using equipment such as scissors or setting up the dvd player or getting to and from the activity? Remember to include the time it might take to encourage and motivate the child to do the activity.

**53. Do they wake and need help at night, or need someone to be awake to watch over them at night?**

Remember the night is when the adults in the house are in bed however if you are being kept up because of your child's difficulties, the night can be thought of as between 11pm and 7am.

Tick yes if:

- If you have to offer any help to your child during the night.
- If you have to supervise your child during the night.

You might consider:

- Does your child ever have accidents where they wet the bed during the night?
- Does your child have broken sleep patterns and have periods where they are awake at night?
- Do they have nightmares or sleepwalk?
- Do they find it difficult to resettle if they wake in the night?
- Do they need to take or use any medication during the night?
- Do they sometimes, or regularly, get up very early in the mornings before the rest of the house is awake?

Explain the behaviour for each situation and use examples where possible.

For example if your child often wakes in the night and gets out of bed to play with toys in their room noisily, wakes their siblings or tries to make themselves a snack in the kitchen?

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Or if they wake during the night when anxious and get upset and cry because they are worried about things at school or something that has happened recently.

What help do they need?

- Do they need someone to help change bed sheets if they have had an accident?
- Do they need comforting and reassuring to be able to go back to sleep?
- Do they need to go through their bedtime routine, or parts of it, again in order to resettle if they wake during the night? If so, remember to describe what the routine involves/how long it takes.
- Do they need help with medication?
- Do they need someone to get up and tell them to go back to bed if they have got up during the night, tell them to be quiet if they cannot sleep or supervise them to make sure they are safe?
- Do they need someone to get up very early with them if this is when they get up to keep them safe and to stop them disturbing the rest of the household and/or the neighbours?

If they didn't get this help what could/would happen?

- Would your child, and other members of the household, regularly not get enough sleep which would impact on their behaviour and make them less likely to be able to concentrate at school?
- Would they get distressed?
- Could it cause them harm/put them in danger?

Put your child's needs in the context of other children of the same age:

- Would another child of the same age be able to resettle themselves if they woke in during the night?
- Would they take less time to resettle, require less support/supervision/reassurance or get less distressed?

**54. If you want to tell us anything else about their care needs, use the box below.**

This is a space that can be used to explain any difficulties or needs your child has that did not fit anywhere else on the form.

You may also want to reiterate key difficulties and support needs your child has such as:

- Outbursts that cause harm to themselves or others
- high anxiety
- need for routines
- need for reminding, reassuring and motivating even for simple tasks
- lack of awareness of cause and effect/consequences to actions/dangers
- inability to transfer skills learnt to new situations meaning a need for skills to be re-taught and reminded over and over
- difficulty moving from one activity to another

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**If you need support or more information, please contact the Autism Advice team:**

01305 213135 | [advice@autismwessex.org.uk](mailto:advice@autismwessex.org.uk) | [www.autismwessex.org.uk](http://www.autismwessex.org.uk)

And summarise the key areas where your child needs more support than other children of the same age without their condition or difficulties:

- Are their peers able to go to the local shop, the park, youth club on their own or without adult supervision?
- Are their peers more able to manage their moods and behaviour?
- Are their peers quicker and more able to take care of their personal care needs?
- Are their peers quicker to learn new tasks?

You can also put this information in the context of any siblings your child has:

- Could you allow your child's siblings more freedom, independence and responsibility when they were the same age?
- Are younger siblings more able to do some things that your child with autism struggles with?

It can be useful to use this space to mention:

- If your child has sensory issues and how this can affect your child's behaviour/mood/ability to cope
- If your child's moods and/or behaviour can be unpredictable and volatile so you feel they need constant monitoring and supervision
- If your child can only do things on "their time" and trying to rush them only results in distress
- If your child can employ coping strategies for a certain length of time, such as at school, but this results in behavioural outbursts or increased difficulties at home due to the stresses of "holding in" certain behaviours
- If your child's care needs have regressed or changed from any diagnostic/school reports you wish to supply for supporting evidence such as if a diagnostic report says that your child can dress themselves but they still require support from you in terms of motivating and prompting then explain this. Sometimes a child with autism can do a task but will refuse or be unable to do it at other times so make sure you mention this if it applies to your child.

## **55. When did the child's care needs you have told us about start**

This question is asked to make sure the child has had their care needs/difficulties for at least 3 months prior to the claim being made.

For autism you can use an approximate date from when you noticed your child need more support than other children. You do not need to use a date of diagnosis as presumably your child had difficulties before any diagnosis process.

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## About you

Complete the details requested for whoever is claiming on behalf of the child.

56. Your name

57. Your date of birth

58. Your national insurance number

59. Address if different from the child's address

60. If you live in Wales would you like us to contact you in Welsh?

61. Your daytime phone number

62. What is your relationship to the child?

63. What is your nationality?

64. What is the child benefit number for the child?

## About Income Support

65. Are you getting or waiting to hear about income support?

66. Is anyone in your household getting or waiting to hear about income support?

## About tax credits

67. Is anyone in your household waiting to hear about child tax credit?

68. Is anyone in your household getting or waiting to hear about working tax credit?

## How we pay you

69. Please tell us your account details below

## Extra Information

70. Tell us anything else you think we should know about the child's claim

You can use this space for any extra information you would like to supply. You could list any other professional contacts who know your child here if they haven't been mentioned before such as a social worker, play worker, therapist, support worker.

If you didn't have space to answer any of the questions in the form fully you can use the space here or attach additional sheets.

## Declaration

71. Read this information carefully before signing the declaration.

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*Last updated 16.04.19*

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