



**Appeals Tribunal Disability Qualified
Member 2016**

Assessment Centre

December 2016

**Situational Judgement Exercise
Applicant Booklet**

Instructions to Applicants

You have 30 minutes to read and prepare your responses to the attached Situational Judgement Exercise.

Please read the information attached and prepare your answer to the set questions that follows. After your 30 minutes preparation time is up, the Selection Committee will allow you up to 15 minutes to respond to the set question, which will be followed by a number of follow up questions.

When your 15 minutes question and answer time is up, the Selection Committee will then move on to your interview questions. The interview questions will last for a further 20 minutes approximately.

The questions asked in the Situational Judgement Exercise are intended to primarily assess the following areas of the Personal Profile (but may also address other aspects of the Personal Profile):

- **Intellectual Capacity, Knowledge & Expertise**
- **Personal Qualities**
- **Communication Skills**
- **Management Skills**

You may write notes during the 30 minute preparation time and bring them into the interview to aid you in responding to the questions.

The Situational Judgement Exercise is provided overleaf.

The following papers are provided for your reference, if required.

- The relevant extracts from Legislation (Annex 1); and
- Personal Independence Payment Descriptors (Annex 2)

Situational Judgement Exercise

Your Role

For the purposes of the Situational Judgement Exercise assume you are sitting as a Disability Qualified Member of the Appeal Tribunals for Northern Ireland alongside a Legal (Chair) and Medical colleague. You are presented with the following case to hear.

You have also been provided with:

- The relevant extracts from Legislation (Annex 1); and
- Personal Independence Payment Descriptors (Annex 2)

The panel members will assess the evidence presented to ascertain if the appellant is eligible for a Personal independence Payment (PIP). In conjunction with the Legal and Medically qualified members, appeals will be decided by considering the facts, researching as necessary, and applying the relevant law to them.

Below is a summary of the notes of the case.

Summary

Maggie is a 56 year old woman with fibromyalgia. She applies for PIP but is given 0 points and so appeals to an Appeal Tribunal. You are the Disability Qualified Member on the Tribunal and you are sitting with a Legally Qualified Chair and a Medically Qualified Member.

Claim Pack

In her claim pack Maggie states that she suffers with severe and constant pain and was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and arthritis of her spine and knees 6 years ago. She has been seen in the past by rheumatologists who made these diagnoses. She now goes to the pain clinic every 6 weeks. She pays privately for acupuncture.

Her knees can lock, she has muscle spasms and fainting episodes because of a loss of balance and she has repetitive strain injury of her right wrist and right elbow.

Medication:

- Paracetamol 500mg QDS
- Ibuprofen 600mg TDS
- Gabapentin 100mg once a day

Maggie states that she has sharply increasing pain trying to peel and chop and that she is very often unable to do these tasks and relies on pre-prepared or precooked meals. She struggles to use a can opener or lift a kettle even one third full and needs help daily with these tasks.

Maggie also states that all movements of the limbs including lifting her arms sharply increase the pain and fatigue. She needs help to get in and out of the bath safely and needs help to wash, dry and deal with her hair.

She states that all bending, reaching, rising from sitting to standing to pull on/off clothing is very painful and difficult. She struggles with underwear, especially pulling up bra straps. She has to stop and rest several times as she gets so exhausted and dizzy.

Maggie states that there is little or no distance she can walk without severe discomfort and acute pain. She may fall indoors and outdoors because of her knees locking and sudden loss of balance, severe fatigue and dizziness. The falls are unpredictable but frequent in a week but so far no falls to the ground and no broken bones.

Health Care Professional (HCP) Assessment

Maggie is seen by an HCP who conducts a face to face examination. He confirms the medical conditions and the medication.

In his report he notes she lives alone in a first floor flat with 19 steps. She makes porridge for her breakfast, washes and dresses herself and can shower herself but not take a bath. She has a front fastening bra. She cooks salmon and chicken but uses pre-prepared vegetables.

She drives a car and drives to see her daughter every week which takes an hour.

She walks to the chiropractor which was estimated to be 300 metres. She does not use a walking aid.

She is a member of a gym and swims regularly.

If she carries shopping she has to make several journeys up the stairs.

She has good and bad days. In the previous month she has only had a few good days.

On examination she cried frequently and appeared depressed. She was dressed in a top and jeans and had nail varnish on her toes.

There was some weakness of the grip of her left hand but otherwise the examination was normal with full range of movement of her back, upper and lower limbs and no muscle wasting. Her gait was normal.

Please prepare your answers to the set question below:

- 1. What activities and descriptors are in issue here?**
- 2. What questions would you want to ask at an oral hearing?**
- 3. Would you award any points?**