

How to explain problems with: 7. Other people communicating with you

What this activity is about

This activity is about being able to understand communications from other people, either spoken or written.

The descriptors: what the law says you score points for

7. Understanding communication by—

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

(a) Cannot understand a simple message due to sensory impairment, such as the location of a fire escape. **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 apply. **0 points**

Support group alert

If 7(a) is accepted as applying to you, then you will be placed in the support group.

Completing the questionnaire

Please tick this box if you can understand other people without any difficulty.

Only tick this box if you're sure none of the descriptors apply to you.

Remember! If this activity causes you severe discomfort, pain, breathlessness or extreme fatigue or if you could do it once but not repeatedly or if your ability varies then you may count as not being able to do it. See the section on: 'How to show you score points even if you can actually do an activity' above.

Can you understand simple messages from other people by hearing or lip reading, without the help of another person?

- No.*
- Yes.*
- It varies*

Can you understand simple messages from other people by reading large size print or using braille?

- No.*
- Yes.*
- It varies*

If you tick 'No' for either of these questions, you are assessing yourself as scoring 15 points and as being eligible for the support group.

If you tick 'Yes' for both of them, you are not assessing yourself as scoring points for this whole activity, even though there are two lower scoring descriptors – see 'Warning – degree of difficulty!' below.

If you tick 'It varies', you will need to give full details in the 'Use this space' box. Your ability should be assessed based on what you can manage for the majority of the time.

It is your ability to understand verbal or non-verbal messages that is being assessed.

So if you have normal vision, but cannot hear at all and cannot lip read then you should score 15 points. If you have normal vision, but have significant difficulty or some difficulty hearing someone talking to you then you may score points.

Likewise, if you can hear without difficulty but cannot read 16 point print even with glasses and cannot read braille, then you should score 15 points. If you can hear without difficulty, but have significant difficulty or some difficulty reading 16 point print or braille, then you should score some points.

Warning – degree of difficulty!

You score 15 points if you 'cannot' understand a simple message, but you also score 15 points if you have 'significant difficulty' understanding a simple message from a stranger and 6 points if you have 'some difficulty' understanding a simple message from a stranger. If you can understand simple messages but only with difficulty then you may wish to write 'See Use this space' rather than ticking any of the boxes, and then give details there.

Warning – stranger!

The questions on the form are highly misleading. To score 15 points and be put in the support group you need to show that you cannot understand a simple message. However, you also score 15 points if you have significant difficulty, and 6 points if you have some difficulty, understanding a simple message 'from a stranger'. So, as well as the issue of degree of difficulty there is also the issue of strangers.

If you can understand communications from people you know, but have difficulty understanding strangers then you should score points.

Use this space

It's a good idea to give information about any problems you have with the following activities, as these are ones you are likely to be asked about if you have a medical, according to the WCA Handbook:

- Consider any restrictions reported in the typical day with communication such as difficulty socialising, shopping and engaging in hobbies.
- Note the use of any accessory aids such as headphones or loop system amplification for TV, radio, or video; amplification for telephone handset; loud front door bells or door lights.
- Consider day to day tasks where contact with other people is likely or there is a need to understand the written word, such as in the supermarket, using public transport etc.
- Consider their visual abilities, such as reading a newspaper, e-mails, use of the internet, watching TV etc. using subtitles on the television, reading numbers on buses, packaging on supermarkets, etc
- Note the use of any accessory aids such as reading glasses, large print books, magnifying glasses, talking books etc.

If you have been prescribed a hearing aid but have found it to be ineffective in your case, give details here.

The WCA Handbook states that the level of lip reading required is very basic and that 'it is expected that the vast majority of people would meet this level of proficiency' other than, for example, those with severe pre-lingual deafness and people with a visual impairment who cannot adequately see a person's face.

If you have tinnitus or Meniere's disease, describe any effects on your ability to hear and also any treatment you have received which may show the seriousness of your condition, such as: referral to a specialist; use of hearing aids, prescription of vasodilators, anti-depressants or sedatives. If your condition affects your concentration or your mood also consider completing the mental function section of this questionnaire.

Sample answer

I was born without correctly functioning nerve receptors in my middle ear, which has resulted in tone and frequency loss. The hearing loss is present in both ears but it is worse in my right side. The frequencies that I struggle most to hear are those contained in speech. Also, doorbells, the sound of people walking and certain sirens. If there is a lot of background noise such as the television, crowds of people, traffic etc I am not able to hear what an individual is saying to me particularly if their voice is quite high or deep. I often won't hear warning sounds like car horns, shouts or someone running up behind me. Shopping can become quite stressful, as I usually have to ask shop assistants to repeat themselves or talk more clearly. I was fitted with hearing aids a couple of years ago but I find they give me headaches because for the first time in my life I can hear everything and it is incredibly overwhelming and disorientating to wear them in busy places like shopping centres and supermarkets. At home I have a loop system and a doorbell that flashes the house lights when rung.

Because of my visual impairment I also have great difficulty in reading ordinary type or handwriting and in lipreading.

If you have a medical

The Atos health professional will observe your response to their speaking in an ordinary or quiet voice. In some cases they may carry out a 'Conversational Voice test in which the claimant is asked to respond to questions whilst facing away from the health professional.

Your ability to read 16 point print will be assessed if you have a visual impairment.

More details about this are given in the WCA Handbook.