

SHS disability flag: questions and answers

1. **Should we only complete this question for people who have a disability or long-term health condition?**

No. This question needs to be completed for every client, including children, who has a new support period, commencing on or after 1 July 2013. Clients who do not have any limitations due to a long-term health condition or disability should be recorded as *Have no difficulty*. It is important to collect data on every client so that the proportion of clients who have a restriction due to long-term health condition or disability can be measured.

2. **Do we have to complete this item for ongoing clients or just new clients after 1 July 2013?**

You should only complete this item for each new support period created on or after 1 July 2013.

3. **How can we tell whether a person's everyday activity is restricted?**

It is the client's perception about whether a long-term health condition or disability restricts their everyday activities that is important. If queried, these questions are seeking to identify if, due to a long-term health condition or disability, a client cannot undertake everyday activities that other people in a similar age group would normally be able to carry out.

4. **Does a long-term health condition or disability have to be medically diagnosed or can it be self-reported?**

This does not have to be medically diagnosed-it can be self-reported from the perspective of the client or a carer answering on their behalf.

5. **From whose perspective is this item reported? Can the agency worker make a judgement or is this always client self-reported?**

This should be reported from the perspective of the client. For example, the agency worker may presume that the client is experiencing difficulty but the client may have found ways of overcoming their limitations and report that they have no difficulty. Alternatively, the client may be experiencing difficulties that are not readily apparent to the worker.

6. **What if a client takes medication or has medical assistance to alleviate their condition?**

If the client does not experience limitations of everyday activities as a result of taking medication or receiving medical assistance, then report this under *Don't have difficulty, but uses aids/equipment*. Examples could include medications for severe asthma, diabetes, blood pressure, mental health condition, or dialysis for kidney disease.

7. **What if the client's everyday activities are restricted by alcohol or other drugs use?**

The questions are about any restrictions that arise from having a long-term health condition or disability which for some clients might be alcohol or drug misuse, or conditions related to the misuse. As for other conditions that are being treated (see question 6), if clients don't have any activity limitations while on treatment, then report this under *Don't have difficulty, but uses aids/equipment*.

8. **What if the client is pregnant?**

Pregnancy is not a disability or long-term health condition. If a client has developed an adverse health condition as a result of their pregnancy which has lasted, or is expected to last, 6 months or more, then the client should report any restrictions that arise from having this long-term health condition.

9. **What does communication include?**

Communication can include both written and verbal communication (in one's own language), and also applies to the ability to make oneself understood on the telephone. If the client's health condition impacts on their ability to read and write, then this should be reported. This does not refer to situations where the client can't read or write because they did not have an opportunity to access schooling.

10. **What if the client cannot communicate because they speak another language and need an interpreter?**

This question is directly related to restrictions caused by a disability or a long-term health condition, and speaking a different language is not considered to be a disability.

11. **What if the client cannot communicate in written form because they are illiterate and need our help to fill out forms, write job applications, and so on?**

This question refers to whether a long-term health condition or disability affects the client's ability to read and write-do not include this if the illiteracy came about due to lack of schooling or language barriers.

12. **Does 'self-care' include the ability to prepare food?**

No, it includes eating food that has been served, but not preparing the food. There may be additional questions added to the SHS collection in the future that ask about restrictions to everyday domestic activities, which will include activities such as preparing food and shopping.

13. **What about young children who need constant help and supervision?**

The constant supervision that children need should only be reported if they have additional needs as a result of a disability or a long-term health condition. Otherwise, select Have no difficulty.

14. **What if a child has developmental issues that are obvious to the case worker, but the parent disagrees?**

This item should be reported from the client's perspective and therefore the worker's perspective cannot be included.